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“Trade with Japan is running smoothly”

Interview with Felix Rosenberger, SECO’s Deputy Head of Asia/Oceania Section

Felix Rosenberger is Deputy Head of Asia/Oceania Section, Adviser on East Asia at the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). He is in charge of bilateral economic relations with all countries and territories in this region.

Even though Japan is only one country among several others, Mr. Rosenberger has a lot of interest in Japan. He pursued Japanese Studies and Political Science at the University of Zurich as well as at the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies and then at the Kyoto Doshisha University.

What is your role at the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs?

Many of my colleagues look at the content. We look at countries / regions. We make sure that we put issues also in a bilateral relations perspective. Whenever it is a bilateral contact with an economic aspect, we are involved in preparing, together with my colleagues from the SECO and other organizations. If companies call the Federal Administration, my colleagues and I



Felix Rosenberger, Deputy Head of Asia/Oceania Section, Adviser on East Asia, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

of the bilateral service are the first level support. We look at what is about, who is best suited to respond — and also whether the issue shall be handled by another organization, such as S-GE or JETRO.

What is the importance of Japan in Asia / Oceania region?

Trade with Japan is running smoothly. We receive almost no question about Japan. I think

companies tend to focus their attention on other countries, but they do not have any problem with Japan.

Swiss State Secretary for Economic Affairs Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch, visited Japan from October 12th to 15th. What has been the purpose of this economic mission? What have been the results?

We have to visit our friends from time to time! We do not have many problems with Japan. Our mission did not only consist in meetings with ministries (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs), but also with Swiss business communities.

Another focus was on the Japan-Switzerland Free Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (FTEPA), in force since September 2009.

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会見

INTERVIEW

(Continued from page one)

A Joint Committee established under the FTEPA took place to oversee the implementation of the agreement.

The FTEPA is already quite “old”. And compared to the ones we conclude now, it lacks some elements. Our new FTAs now include a chapter on trade and sustainable development (dealing with environmental, social and labor issues). They further include provisions related to trade facilitation. Last but not least, as the FTEPA fore-

sees, we believe it is time to review the tariff concessions we accorded each other and see where we can improve them further.

Is the FTEPA still being used?

Yes, it is used. The biggest companies make use of any agreement. For small companies, free trade agreements are often too complicated to use.

A plurality in the middle can be convinced there is a profit for them. My credo is that companies have to be able to make their business decision. We just have to in-

form them about their possibilities.

What are the most attractive sectors in Japan for Swiss companies?

I would not pretend to speak on behalf of Swiss companies. It is up to companies to identify the most attractive sectors.

We do not have an industrial policy nor a ministry of industry in Switzerland. We are too small and too integrated for that. But we believe that companies know better what to do.

Japan's current economic situation

動向

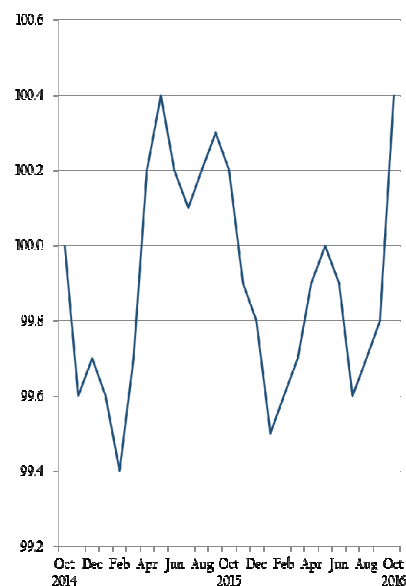
SITUATION

According to the Bank of Japan (BoJ), “Japan's economy has continued its moderate recovery trend, although exports and production have been sluggish due mainly to the effects of the slowdown in emerging economies” (Outlook for Economic Activity and Prices, October 2016).

Indeed Japan's exports declined 10.3% in October, to JPY 5870.4 billion from the same month in the preceding year. On the same period, exports were down 10.4% in North America, 9.9% in Asia and 6.9% in Western Europe. However, exports to Switzerland were up 34.9%.

On the domestic demand side, as BoJ mentioned, “private consumption has been resilient, although relatively weak developments have been seen in some indicators”.

The average of monthly income per household increased 0.1% in nominal terms to JPY 485,827 in October from the previous year. The consumer price index for Japan in October was 100.4 (2015=100), up 0.6% from the previous month, and up 0.1% over the year (see graph). The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.0% in October, marking a decrease of the number of unemployed persons by 6.3% or 130,000 people.



Consumer Price Index (2015=100)
Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal
Affairs and Communications

Invest Japan seminars in Basel and Geneva



Othmar Pfannes, CEO, Genedata
Basel seminar, November 4th, 2016



Charles Ochsner, Attorney at law, CHPM
Geneva seminar, November 1st 2016



Geneva seminar, November 1st 2016

活動

ACTIVITY

JETRO Geneva held two morning Invest Japan seminars: on November 1st in Geneva, and November 4th in Basel.

These seminars, jointly organized by the CCIG and the Handelskammer beider Basel, were dedicated to the promotion of investment in Japan. They were joined by about

50 companies. The seminars provided an overview of the current economic climate in Japan and of the measures taken by the Japanese government to attract foreign direct investment.

It was also an opportunity to learn more about the experience in Japan of the Swiss companies Sika and

Genedata. Charles Ochsner, attorney at law, supporting Swiss companies wishing to set up in Japan, outlined how to avoid mistakes when entering the Japanese market; he underlined a market where preparation and patience are the keys to success.

METI sponsors Fukushima's new technologies

Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) sponsors the Fukushima Innovation Coast Scheme, a program to develop innovative technologies, including robots, energy-related, medical and environmental technologies along coastal areas in Fukushima Prefecture.

In August, the scheme took on 34 different R&D projects submitted by companies from across Japan, with support from both the nation-

al and local government.

Among other projects, Kyoeiseiki Corporation is collaborating with IHI Corporation to develop a new type of drone (see picture). This new drone will be able to provide emergency supplies into areas isolated by large-scale disasters.

The scheme also supports projects to address the issue of aging society. WALK-MATE LAB's wearable robot helps support seniors with mobility impairments.



Drone designed by IHI Corporation
Source: METI

政策

POLICY

革新

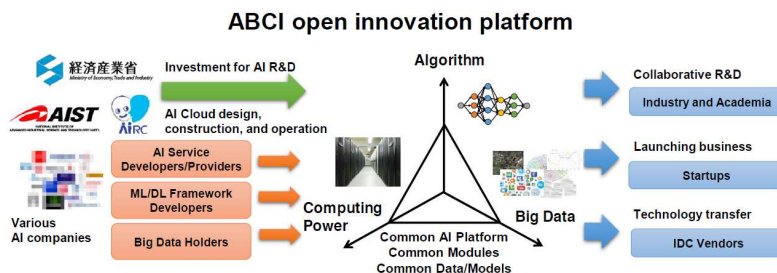
INNOVATION

Japan to develop world's fastest supercomputer

Japan's National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology is planning to develop AI Bridging Cloud Infrastructure (ABCI). It is scheduled to be completed by 2017.

With a planned performance of 130 quadrillion calculations per year (130 petaFLOPS), the ABCI is expected to be the world's fastest supercomputer.

It will be used in ultra-fast "deep learning" calculations, in order to improve Artificial Intelligence



National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST)

(AI), in the fields of driverless cars, robotics and medical diagnosis.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry will provide a contri-

bution of JPY 19.5 billion (approx. CHF 180 million).

Agenda

日程

AGENDA

- ✓ 21st Feb.: JETRO / S-GE Seminar on the Fourth Industrial Revolution in Japan
S-GE, Stampfenbachstrasse 85, 8006 Zurich

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online:
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

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