

PRESS RELEASE

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Doing business with style

“Gateway to Japan” successfully concludes last Fashion Trade Mission

“It is the first time I take part in this programme, and I feel I have taken a big step into the Japanese market. Now, we will continue our efforts towards Japan: we learned that people here like our design but we also learned that it takes time to start selling here.” This was the comment of Dana Kleinert, Designer and Director of Slovak company Dana Kleinert Design s.r.o., upon coming back from Tokyo where she attended “WEAREUROPE”, the last Fashion Design trade mission organised in the framework of the “EU Gateway to Japan 3” programme.

The event, held from 12-16 March, allowed 30 fashion companies from 14 European countries* to display their products directly to their Japanese counterparts and to benefit from the momentum created by the “Tokyo Fashion Week”, taking place at the same time.

Japan is the world’s fourth largest apparel market in the world, offering significant business opportunities to European companies. But appealing collections are not enough to conquer this highly competitive market and to seduce extremely demanding Japanese consumers.

Eric Hamelinck, Project Manager of Gateway to Japan in the European Commission, said: *“In Japanese business culture, personal relationships and mutual trust with potential trading partners are crucial. The Gateway to Japan programme briefs participating companies on how to overcome the main cultural obstacles when dealing with Japanese counterparts, allowing them to install long-term business relationships.”*

Since 2003, 105 European designers have attended a Fashion trade mission in the context of the Gateway 3 campaign, with a high satisfaction level: 81% of participants indicated that their knowledge of the Japanese market had increased substantially, and while 37% had already signed contracts during the trade mission, 83% expected to do so soon after the event.

“European companies have the natural advantage of being perceived by Japanese consumers as the point of origin for the latest fashion style trends. ‘WEAREUROPE’ allows them to set their potential free,” concluded Mr Hamelinck.

EU Gateway to Japan

EU Gateway to Japan, an export-support programme for European SMEs, is funded and managed by the European Commission. EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, implements the programme in Europe.

For more information on the campaign and a promotional video of “WEAREUROPE”: www.gatewaytojapan.org

* Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, The Netherlands, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain.

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