

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 30 October 2006

EU companies have designs on Japan **First trade mission of new Gateway to Japan Programme starts today**

26 design companies from 12 EU Member States* will participate in a Trade Mission on Interior Lifestyle starting today, as part of the export-support programme "EU Gateway to Japan" (GTJ). The companies will have the opportunity to display their products and meet with Japanese business people of the same sector.

"European design has a positive image in Japan in terms of originality and creativity. It is considered to be a benchmark for quality when opposed to imports from Asia and other regions. The GTJ Trade Mission will give the participants a unique opportunity to promote their products directly to their Japanese counterparts, and hopefully facilitate their entry in a rapidly growing market", said Eric Hamelinck, Project Manager Gateway to Japan, DG Relex, Unit for Relations with Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand, European Commission.

The event, taking place from 30 October to 3 November in Tokyo, is the first of the Gateway to Japan 3 Plus campaign, launched by the European Commission in April 2006 and due to host 6 additional events until mid-2007.

Jacqueline Heijs-Pham, designer for Belgian company "JHP Concept", takes part in the Interior Lifestyle Trade Mission for the second time. She says: *"I would absolutely recommend this experience to anyone interested in the Japanese market. You can't get in without the knowledge and understanding that events like this facilitate."*

The GTJ Trade Mission will coincide with an important moment for the Design sector in Japan: the "Tokyo Designer's Week" (2-6 November), one of the major events of the kind in Japan, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year.

On 1 November, the "European Design Award" will be conferred to young designers living in Japan. The award is part of the EU-Japan Design Competition, launched in April 2006 by the European Commission Delegation in Japan and the Finnish Presidency.

The participants of the GTJ Trade Mission will take advantage of all these initiatives aiming to promote EU-Japan co-operation in the area of design and to raise awareness in Japan about European design.

EU Gateway to Japan – A success story

EU Gateway to Japan has been successfully implemented for more than 10 years. In the third phase of the programme (Gateway to Japan 3, 2002-2006), 32 events were organised for almost 900 European companies. Nearly 1 in 2 participating companies are now regularly exporting to Japan, with a total trade amounting to €22 mln (figures collected 9 months after participation).

EU Gateway to Japan is funded and managed by the European Commission. EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, co-ordinates the promotion of this programme in Europe.

For more information on the campaign: www.gatewaytojapan.org



EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents 45 national associations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, a European network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers with over 18 million member enterprises in Europe.



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* Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden.

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