

PRESS RELEASE

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From kimono to mini-skirts: EU companies seize the opportunities of Japanese Fashion market

“Japanese consumers appreciate European fashion and at the same time want their own characteristic, unique and creative clothing. This is a great opportunity for a small design company as we are!”, says Aleksandra Paszkowska, designer and director of the Belgian fashion company Y-dress?.

Y-dress? is one of the 28 companies from 14 European countries* heading to Japan today to attend “WEAREUROPE”, a Fashion Design trade mission organised in the context of the programme EU Gateway to Japan.

Latvian design company NJ Studija already benefited from a Gateway Fashion trade mission to Japan in April this year. Director-Designer Natalija Jansone said: *“We expect this mission to be even more beneficial than the first one! The upcoming mission will allow us to strengthen current contacts and develop new ones: with existing knowledge we can exploit the possibilities more efficiently.”*

Big opportunities for EU SMEs in the Japanese apparel market

SMEs have a natural competitive advantage in Japan, where “small” is considered “beautiful and profitable”. Bigger companies cannot supply customized clothing, whereas smaller companies can. This is a key for European firms’ success, together with being considered by the Japanese the best expression of “high fashion”.

Despite a recent contraction, Japan is still the world’s second largest market for apparel after the US, with more than 60% of it being retail for women’s clothing. Young working women are the main trend-drivers and the largest spending segment in Japan, using up to 10% of their annual salary on fashion items. WEAREUROPE therefore represents a large opportunity for EU designers, whose products aim at women in the age group 22 to 45 years.

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, co-ordinates the promotion of this programme in Europe.

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

(*) From Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

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