

## PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 26 February 2004

### Healthcare Trade Mission Generates Immediate Results European Commission supports EU SMEs to export to Japan

From 16 to 22 February 2004, 25 companies from 11 EU Member States\* participated in a one week Trade Mission in Tokyo. A previous Trade Mission in the Healthcare sector took place in Tokyo in April 2003. The 2004 event included a Technical Seminar during which companies gave a presentation on their healthcare related products to a targeted audience. The range of products presented varied considerably from a variety of medical welfare equipment to homecare and healthcare products such as anatomical head pillows, support cushions, mattresses, allergy testing kits and orthopaedic implants.

The Japanese healthcare market offers real prospects for EU companies wanting to export. A survey published by the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) states that there is a steady increase in Japanese imports of medical equipment – nearly 30% of which are already taken up by EU Member States' imports. Furthermore, an ageing population and a falling birth-rate increase the demand for medical supplies and equipment.

#### A first success

One participant producing rehabilitation products signed an official contract with a Japanese distributor concerning a specific segment of customers and is presently negotiating with another distributor for a different segment also.

Nearly all of the participating companies intend to follow-up this trade mission by sending samples, returning to Japan or inviting their Japanese contacts to Europe.

*"For companies which have a real interest and commitment to doing business in Japan", says the participant from the French company Askle Sante, "this programme eases and accelerates the process."*

The next EU Gateway to Japan trade mission will bring small and medium-sized companies of the environmental technologies sector to Osaka from 22 to 26 March 2004.

More information on the upcoming events and the EU Gateway to Japan programme is available on: [www.gatewaytojapan.org](http://www.gatewaytojapan.org)

-----  
\* 25 EU companies from: Austria (1), Denmark (1), Finland (1), France (6), Germany (5), Ireland (2), Italy (3), Luxembourg (1), Sweden (1), the Netherlands (3), UK (1)

#### Your contacts at EUROCHAMBRES:

**Project Manager:** Mr. Dirk Vantghem, [vantghem@eurochambres.be](mailto:vantghem@eurochambres.be), tel +32 2 282 08 78, fax +32 2 280 01 91  
**Press Contact:** Mrs. Catherine Bourdeau, [bourdeau@eurochambres.be](mailto:bourdeau@eurochambres.be), tel +32 2 282 08 56, fax +32 2 280 01 91