

## PRESS RELEASE

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### ***The Japanese IT sector offers good opportunities for European SMEs***

#### ***Second Information Technologies Trade Mission to Japan***

This week, 20 European small and medium sized companies from Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands came back from an Information Technologies Trade Mission in Japan. The event took place in Tokyo from 12 to 16 April 2004. It included a mini trade fair during which a wide range of information technologies products such as PC games, e-language learning solutions, IT security systems, workstation to archive medical data and digital imaging software were presented.

After three years of decline, IT investments are heading for a positive growth in 2004 and are expected to rise to 2.9% in 2007. In general, the expected growth in the Japanese IT sector for 2004 is 2.2%, the largest growth being expected for IT materials related to the medical and transportation sector. Furthermore, network security systems are becoming increasingly important as more and more data is available which can easily be corrupted and needs protection. Moreover, the growing number of internet subscribers, at present there are 10 million in Japan, has led to Japan becoming one of the biggest markets for e-commerce with the US, South Korea and Singapore.

A specifically targeted audience of 176 Japanese companies from the IT sector including system integrators, software developers and hardware manufacturers attended the Mini Trade Fair which led to a large number of individual business meetings resulting in some promising leads. After the event, one participant said: *"I got exactly what I was expecting and I have now plenty of very good contacts [and] I believe that I can come into business with them."*

Around 90 representatives of Japanese IT companies attended the Reception which was hosted by the European Commission on the Thursday. This offered a good opportunity for EU companies to consolidate contacts and develop relationships with Japanese industry representatives in a more social environment.

The next EU Gateway to Japan event is again a trade mission including a Mini Trade Fair in Tokyo which will be held from 17-21 May 2004 and will bring European SMEs from the Outdoor Lifestyle sector to Japan. More information on the EU Gateway to Japan programme and upcoming events can be found under: [www.eugatewaytojapan.org](http://www.eugatewaytojapan.org)

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