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North Rhine-Westphalia

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North Rhine-Westphalia and Japan: Connecting through people, business and digital transformation

In the 1950s, Japanese trading house executives were the first to settle in Duesseldorf, the state capital of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). The growing Japanese community established schools, banks, shops and restaurants, and today nearly 15,000 Japanese nationals call NRW home.

More than 600 Japanese companies have established a presence in the region, employing more than 50,000 people. Located in the heart of Europe, Duesseldorf's location is a key factor for Japanese investors.

"Duesseldorf has the largest conglomeration of international companies in the heart of Europe," said Gerhard Eschenbaum, deputy executive director and director of the Duesseldorf Chamber of Industry and Commerce's International Business Division. "Within a 500 km radius of Duesseldorf, companies have access to one-third of the European Union's popula-



Masato Iso, Japanese Consul-General in Duesseldorf

tion and half of the total EU population's purchasing power."

On a national level, government-to-government initiatives have strengthened the relationship between Japan and Germany.

"Japan and Germany share

fundamental values such as the rule of law, democracy, pluralism and free trade," said Consul-General Masato Iso. "In recent years, both countries have further developed their relationship and are actively working together to address challenges such as protectionist tendencies and the economic and political rise of new global players."

In February this year, the EU and Japan signed an economic partnership agreement (EPA). The removal of trade barriers is expected to shape the future of global trade and send a message that protectionism has been rejected by two of the world's largest economies.

"With the EPA agreement we can expect a win-win outcome for both sides," said Andreas Pinkwart, minister of economic affairs, innovation, digitalization and energy of NRW. "In NRW we have created the infrastructure and eco-



Andreas Pinkwart, Minister of Economic Affairs, Innovation, Digitalization and Energy of North Rhine-Westphalia

ence. German companies are also investing in Japan."

NRW is paying close attention to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games as the state recently unveiled an ambitious 13-city plan to host the 2032 Games.

"We are very confident in our 2032 bid as we already have the infrastructure in place, in addition to already having 80 percent of the required venues," said Pinkwart. "As Japan prepares to host the 2020 Games we hope to learn as much as we can, especially in the area of digital infrastructure. In the coming years we will be working closely with Japan to improve NRW's digital infrastructure and utilize technologies that enhance real-life interactions between people. With the help of Japan, our goal is to take these technologies to the next level by 2032." ♦

www.duesseldorf.hk.de
www.dus.emb-japan.go.jp
www.wirtschaft.nrw

Duesseldorf: 'The Little Tokyo on the Rhine'

Duesseldorf has successfully attracted Japanese companies for over 60 years and today is home to more than 400 Japanese companies within the city boundaries and more than 600 in the region. The Office of Economic Development is continuing to actively strengthen the city's ties to Japan. The office supports Japanese companies doing business in the region and continues to invite companies from Japan to Duesseldorf.

"Japanese executives appreciate Duesseldorf's location in the heart of Europe that provides access to the largest B2B market on the continent," said Annette Klerks, head of department, International Business Services. "The Japanese community in



Benjamin Leonhardt (left) and Sabine Heber (right), Senior Project Managers of the Japan Desk; Annette Klerks (center), Department Head of the International Business Services

Duesseldorf and the people of Duesseldorf continue to hold their long-term relationship in the highest regard."

The office's Japan Desk provides a range of services for Japanese companies

establishing, relocating or investing in the North Rhine-Westphalia capital and works closely with Japanese organizations.

"We continuously support bilateral exchanges, existing partnerships and

new ventures between Duesseldorf and Japan," said Benjamin Leonhardt, senior project manager, Japan Desk. "We help businesses forge new partnerships, facilitate the incubation of startup companies and understand that while building relationships in Japan is a long-term commitment, the results can be hugely rewarding."

Today, Duesseldorf is evolving into an innovation-driven technology hub.

"Innovation is at an all-time-high and in recent years we have successfully developed a 'startup' business environment," said Sabine Heber, senior project manager of the Japan Desk. "With the city's economic and industrial heritage, we are in a strong position to balance our traditional economy and way of doing business with today's cutting-edge developments being driven by the 'startup' culture."

"Duesseldorf and Japan will strengthen their ties in the coming years," said Klerks. "Our close friendship and trusted partnership will facilitate successful business and enable us to continue to exchange ideas." ♦

www.duesseldorf.de/international/office-of-economic-development/jp.html



City of Düsseldorf

Economic Development

Fujitsu General (Euro) delivers air conditioning solutions to Europe and beyond

Headquartered in Duesseldorf, Fujitsu General (Euro), a European subsidiary of Japanese parent company Fujitsu General Ltd., is responsible for marketing the company's air conditioning technology and heat pumps to all of the countries in Europe and Russia.

The company delivers swift and expert services and provides innovative products and systems designed to suit architectural requirements and meet environmental regulations in all of its territory.



Takashi Harada, Managing Director of Fujitsu General (Euro)

Fujitsu General (Euro) established the company's first European Research and Development Center in 2017. The center delivers product solutions to customers across Europe, a market noted for strict environmental regulations.

"Since we opened the Research and Development Center our engineering team has doubled in size and is committed to developing unique environmentally friendly products," said Takashi Harada, Fujitsu General (Euro) managing director.

In Europe, Fujitsu General's J-III unit is proving popular for both residential and commercial use. The unit is equipped with many environmentally friendly technologies. The easy-to-install unit has high-energy efficiency levels, and its small size and reduced sound output makes the J-III unit suitable for Europe's densely populated urban areas.

"Each country has different environmental requirements," said Harada. "Our challenge is to understand these differences in order to better serve our clients and

maximize the efficiency of our products to reduce environmental impact."

"We have built strong relationships with our distributors and each one has a deep understanding of the country in which they operate," said Harada.

"As we build on our successes, we believe our new showroom and training center in Duesseldorf will enable us to better serve our distributors, partners and clients." ♦

www.fujitsu-general.com

FUJITSU GENERAL

Creating a future energy world on the foundation of technology and innovation

With evermore requirements and applications for lithium ion (li-ion) battery cells (and packs), manufacturing production capacity is set to grow to meet the expected demand of 600 GWh by 2025. We are seeing battery cell usage move from traditional portable consumer electronic devices toward electric transportation vehicles and large-scale energy storage solutions. With a societal shift underway, countries are looking to create energy more sustainably through solar, wind and hydro and then develop more dependable ways to store, transport and use the energy these processes create.



Jonathan Richards, European Marketing Manager for Hitachi High-Technologies Europe (HTE)

Hitachi High-Technologies is listed and consolidated under the Hitachi company and is creating a future energy world on the foundation of technology and innovation. As a global leading provider of li-ion batteries and electronic materials solutions, Hitachi's innovation and excellence in the form of measuring, viewing and analyzing equipment can help support this global shift.

Hitachi High-Technologies Europe (HTE) is able to support li-ion manufacturing across the areas of research and development, failure analysis and quality assurance and environmental equipment with a wide

range of technologies that improve electrochemical performance and production capabilities.

"From calendaring, stacking and electrode cutting to assembly machines, we focus on providing high-quality systems and bespoke solutions to enhance mass production processes. Our N-methylpyrrolidone recovery and dehumidifiers systems are critical for making suitably safe environments for battery manufacturing," commented Jonathan Richards, European marketing manager for HTE. "When we add our electron and atomic force microscopes and metal contaminant analyzers into this manufactur-

ing equation, HTE becomes a truly unique supplier that can support everything from the development of evermore sophisticated battery materials to delivering enhancements to maximize productivity." ♦

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HITACHI
Inspire the Next

Unlock the future with the power of light

Japanese and German consumers both attach great importance to quality, reliability and top-notch performance. Nikon Corp. of Japan specializes in precision optics and imaging solutions, and the company's products are well received in the German market. Nikon GmbH, with its regional headquarters in Duesseldorf, is a leading provider of image capture devices ranging from digital cameras and lenses to advanced microscope solutions.

"We are active in very competitive markets in which the technology is constantly evolving," said Lukas Jufer, president of Nikon GmbH. "While Nikon remains at the forefront of imaging technology, we believe that our greatest strength lies in our ability to both listen to our customers and remain true to the essence of photography and scientific imaging."

Last autumn, Nikon introduced the new and long-awaited mirrorless full-frame Z-mount system. To do so, the company reimaged what a mirrorless camera can do to provide optimum optical performance within a compact body. In recognition of their technical capabilities and their usability, the Nikon Z 6 and Z 7 mirrorless camera models have earned the highest scores from some of Germany's leading test organizations such as Stiftung Warentest.

"Our new Z 6 and Z 7 mirrorless cameras have inherited the full Nikon tradition of quality, superior imaging tech-



Lukas Jufer, President of Nikon GmbH

nology, ergonomics and high reliability," Jufer explained.

"Our passion for light drives us to master every aspect of capturing and guiding it," Jufer continued. "We are unique at Nikon in manufacturing our own glass for our lenses. We also have some of the strictest quality controls in our industry. Only with this total focus and commitment can we harness light and its endless possibilities, and create the tools that photographers and researchers demand and rightly expect from us."

Nikon Germany has established a strong community of users who appreciate and remain loyal to the Nikon brand. The company operates a Nikon

School to educate and instruct photographers, and holds regular workshops, photo walks and events. A select corps of Nikon ambassadors also share their techniques and ideas to help customers further grow and refine their photography skills.

While Nikon is best known for its cameras and lenses, more than half of the company's global business consists of providing precision optics solutions such as flat-panel displays and semiconductor lithography, along with measuring and microscope systems that are used in various fields such as the electronics, automotive and health care sectors.

"Light is all around us and at the origin of everything," Lukas Jufer said. "And as our society continues to undergo major transformations in technology, Nikon strives to provide the 'eyes' that will be needed by industries and individuals alike. In doing so, Nikon is truly unlocking the future with the power of light." ♦

www.nikon.de



UBE Europe: Diversity and opportunity lead to success

Headquartered in Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan, the UBE Group is active in chemicals, construction materials and machinery across key international markets. Having conducted business in Europe for over 50 years, today UBE Europe GmbH in Duesseldorf, North Rhine-Westphalia, is reaching out to new markets across the EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa) regions.

UBE Europe GmbH is responsible for the sales and marketing of a range of innovative technology-driven products. The company handles sales for over 200 products, including polyamides, special machinery, ceramic electronic components, polyimides, polybutadiene and gas separation membranes.

"Just four years ago we employed only 30 people here in Duesseldorf," said Jeronimo Porras, president of UBE Europe GmbH. "We have grown by creating a diverse and multicultural sales team and our employees understand the complexities of doing business in different markets. Today we have 50 employees from over 10 different countries who converse with clients in 15 different languages."

This drive for diversity has been a key factor in UBE Europe's cross-border success in recent years.

"Emerging markets in EMEA are showing signs of economic growth and we have succeeded in establishing new partnerships in many countries," said Porras. "To do business internationally, it's important to have an understanding of local cultures and employ appropriate business etiquette. An international city such as Duesseldorf in the heart of Europe is advantageous as we are able to attract top talent from different countries and travel more easily to clients across EMEA."

In the early 2010s, the UBE Group showed its commitment to Europe by investing in a \$290 million manufacturing facility in Castellón, Spain; still one of the largest Japanese investments in the coun-



Jeronimo Porras, President of UBE Europe GmbH

try. To enable closer scientific collaboration between Japan and Europe, a research and development center was also established; the first for the UBE Group outside of Japan.

"Today, as we grow our business, we are open to new ventures, investments and mergers and acquisitions in Europe," said Porras.

"We will continue to increase our sales volume by taking advantage of opportunities, establishing collaborations, diversifying our business and introducing innovative products that contribute to the needs of modern society. Our Japanese colleagues fully support us and the trust we share has led to our success. UBE Europe GmbH is not conducting business in the 'usual' manner; we are doing something new and innovative, and this approach will continue to move the company forward." ♦

www.ube.es/en



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