

Welcome Address  
At the “Europe/Japan Career Day”  
Takashi Onishi, President, Science Council of Japan

Monday, May 20, 2013  
Delegation of the European Union to Japan

Ms. Barbara Rhode, Head of S&T Section, EU Delegation in Japan,  
Honored Guests, Fellow Researchers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to have an opportunity to offer a few words of congratulation on the occasion of the Europe/Japan Career Day.

Science Council of Japan is representing a broad range of scientific disciplines including humanities, social sciences and natural sciences with its primary purpose of fulfilling social responsibilities of the Japanese scientists’ community through the development of science.

In this regard, we have been presenting a large number of scientific documents to the government, industries and the society.

As you may know, the Great East Japan Earthquake in March, 2011, raised a serious question about the role of science in society.

Science Council of Japan has made and will make a lot of efforts to answer this question regarding the expected role of science in society and to contribute toward the development and the promotion of science for the future.

Besides, since its establishment in 1949, Science Council of Japan has constantly promoted international exchange in the field of science. To this end, we have hosted many international conferences held in Japan, and dispatched many researchers to conferences held abroad, through which we have deepened our bonds with global academic research organizations and international academic institutions.

In addition to them, Science Council of Japan has supported many international conferences, one of which is this conference.

I have heard that in this event, Japanese as well as EU researchers and policy makers will make presentations and discussions on the theme of grants and mechanisms enhancing researcher's mobility between Japan and EU.

Today, the influence of science on society is getting stronger, thus the employment of people who have strong scientific backgrounds has become more important than before. As a result, human resources development in the field of science is also getting much more important topic than ever.

We, Science Council of Japan, published more than twenty statements during the last five years regarding how to develop human resources useful to create the future of science, technology and innovation.

Those statements have pointed out the tendency in Japan, that researchers, especially young researchers are likely to avoid doing their research abroad, and also to be reluctant to challenge ambitious or time-consuming research topics.

Unfortunately, this tendency appeared in the statistics of Japanese researches behavior.

While the number of students studying abroad has been increasing on the global basis, the number of Japanese students

studying abroad has been decreasing every year since 2004. In 2010, Japanese students studying abroad were about 60,000 in number. Following this tendency, the number of Japanese students studying in Europe has been also decreasing.

On the other hand, the number of foreign students studying in Japan has been increasing and reach about 130,000 in 2012, after having achieved the government goal of “Project on accepting 100,000 students from overseas” in 2003.

However, students from Europe are not many as compared with those from China and Korea.

In the context of the performance of science shown in the form of academic papers, the number of papers written by co-authors of different countries under international joint researches was 230,000 in 2010. This means that about 20% of the total amount of academic papers in the world is written based on the international joint researches.

Both the number and the share of international joint academic papers have been increasing throughout the world, however these figures in Japan fell down against global tendency.

For instance, the ratio of international joint academic papers in England and France, two top countries, has risen to be over 50% from 10% level thirty years ago. In the same period, it has risen only to 26% from about 6% thirty years ago in Japan.

As the nationalities of co-authors of Japanese researchers conducting international joint researches, United States occupied the highest shares before, but decreased its share nowadays.

The share of international joint academic papers among European countries was high in the past and has been increasing more currently.

However, European countries strengthened their bonds inside Europe and weakened them with countries other than Europe.

Regrettably, as the nationality of co-authors for European scientists, the share of Japan seems to be decreasing.

These facts simply indicate that Japanese researchers are not so active to pay their interest toward international research arena.

However, today, as global competition is getting fierce in all fields, it is becoming more difficult for researchers to conduct great scientific performances if they are confined to their own countries. Therefore scientists who wish to have great success need to find various opportunities of scientific exchanges globally for developing their researches.

Therefore, it is an urgent task to create a systematic way to support researchers who wish to develop their ability to catch up with top class researches in the world in this strong global competitive era.

From this point of view, I think that such effort as “framework program” led by EU is very suggestive. It is important to materialize many individual successful cases under this system constantly.

Before closing my welcome address, I sincerely wish that all participants will gain some fruitful results through today’s event.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.