

May this year bring new inspirations, new achievements and a bright future!



Greeting from the Director

Despite the difficulties in travel between Europe and Japan, the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic was a year of new initiatives.

After an unprecedented first year of the pandemic, we were able to maintain our operations by making use of those functions that were still operable and by using alternative approaches, such as conducting activities online. We had hoped that travel would resume by the end of the year, but such hopes were dashed in 2021, as we were unable to dispatch staff from Kyoto and were forced to operate remotely with local staff.

In this context, we were pleased that we could actively support research and education exchange activities, including the first online international symposium with University of Bordeaux and joint call for matching funds under the Strategic Partnership with University of Zurich and Universität Hamburg, and the 8th HeKKSaGOn German-Japanese University Presidents' Conference, which was held online for the first time.

I was also impressed by the DNA for ECRs initiative and the HeKKSaGOn Spin-off Program, both of which support early career researchers and enable them to take on new challenges using the existing network of the European Center (details can be found in the contents of this letter). It is precisely at times like these that we realize the importance of working hard to nurture the researchers of the future.

In terms of educational support, we have been able to meet many European students and staff through our online *Meet and Greet under the Camphor Tree* event, and we have continued to provide information and opportunities for short-term programs in Europe.

Thanks to the support and cooperation of our many stakeholders and partner universities and institutions in Europe, we have been able to carry on our activities in spite of all the difficulties of the past year, and for that I would like to express my sincere gratitude.

The year 2022 marks the 125th anniversary of Kyoto University. The anniversary slogan is "Illuminating the Future," and all of us at the European Centre hope that 2022 will see us emerge from the dark tunnel of the COVID-19 pandemic, and head towards a bright future.

Mika Yokoyama
Director, Kyoto University European Center

Courtesy Visits and Meetings with European Partners and Delegates in 2021

Below is a list of courtesy visits and meetings with European partners and delegates attended by President Nagahiro Minato in 2021. Although the meetings had to be conducted online, they enabled the maintenance of face-to-face contact with the heads of strategic partner institutions and other parties with which Kyoto University is actively collaborating. Such direct contact is vital in maintaining good international links and facilitating new research collaboration.

January	Rector, University of Vienna
February	President, University of Bordeaux
April	Rector, University of Zurich
April	President, University of Hamburg
June	Rector, Heidelberg University
July	Consul General of France
August	Swiss President, Swiss Ambassador, and Others
December	German Ambassador and his delegation



Middle on the left: President of Switzerland, Mr. Guy Parmelin
President Minato is on the screen (upper left)

New Developments with Strategic Partners in Europe



On February 18 and 19, a two-day symposium was organized in collaboration between Kyoto University and the University of Bordeaux. The symposium aimed to bring together researchers in the three fields of energy science, medicine, and African studies to share knowledge relating to the future of Africa. In addition to researchers, representatives from international organizations such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the African Development Bank also took part in the productive discussions.

Matching fund programs were launched with University of Zurich and the Universität Hamburg to aid the development of new and existing research exchange. A diverse range of projects were selected to receive funding through the programs, some aiming to deepen ongoing collaboration, some to establish new projects, and some to provide opportunities to young researchers.

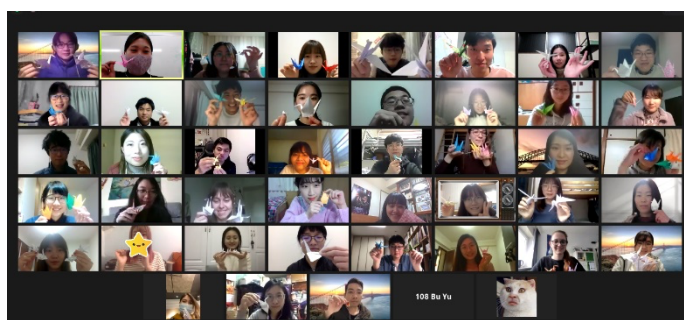
The European Center plays a key role in ensuring effective communication and coordination between Kyoto University and its partners to facilitate such collaborative initiatives and promote the advancement of productive research cooperation with European partners

Seasonal Student Exchange Programs

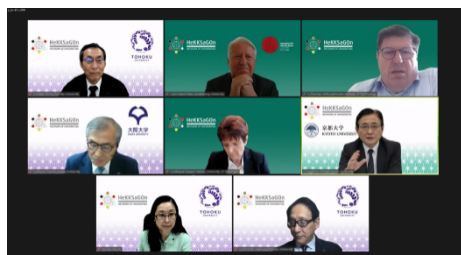
The Kyoto Summer Program, which is usually held annually in Kyoto every summer, was held twice in 2021. The 2020 program, which had to be cancelled due the COVID-19 pandemic, was held belatedly in February as the Kyoto Spring Program, and the regular Summer Program was also held in August. Both programs were conducted online.

This year, on the recommendation of the European Center, students from Heidelberg University, University of Vienna, University of Zurich and Universität Hamburg participated in the Program. We hope to resume the regular face-to-face format of the program in the summer of 2022.

Kyoto University was unable to send any students to Europe for short exchange programs during 2021, and all such exchanges had to be conducted online. Despite the virtual nature of their experiences, our students enjoyed these valuable occasions for international networking, and we are grateful to our partners for providing us with such opportunities.



The 8th HeKKSaGOn Presidents' Conference



The 8th Presidents' Conference of the German-Japanese university alliance HeKKSaGOn, was hosted online by Tohoku University on September 9 and 10.

The representatives of the HeKKSaGOn's six member universities discussed the conference theme of "how universities can contribute to building healthy, safe and resilient societies," and confirmed that the knowledge produced by universities is vital in addressing global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The next concrete steps to be taken by the network were outlined in Joint Statement, which was discussed and adopted at the conference.

Now in its second phase (2019-), HeKKSaGOn provides support to eight diverse research projects that were selected through an open call for funding in 2020. During the conference, the leaders of each project reported on their activities and achievements, and it was evident that the current barriers to conducting physical exchange visits are not preventing the research groups from engaging in fruitful collaboration

Fostering Early-Career Researchers

Providing support to young researchers is one of the key objectives of the European Center, and in 2021 two new initiatives were launched to contribute to that goal: the DNA for ECRs (Doitsu-Nihon Academy for Early-Career Researchers) program and the HeKKSaGOn Spin-off Program.

DNA for ECRs is a training program co-organized with DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service). It is a program which enables young researchers from Kyoto University and institutions in Germany to work together and acquire essential research skills. Four courses were held in 2021—two during the summer and two during the autumn. The summer courses focused on the topics of "self-presentation in international academia" and "international networking and collaboration in global science," and the autumn courses on "time management" and "project management."

Group work and social events were incorporated to help participants form personal networks. The courses received positive feedback, with comments such as "I recognized the importance of interacting with a diverse group of people," and "I learned a lot from working in a group with multicultural members."

The feedback reaffirmed the importance of providing young researchers with such opportunities, particularly during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

DNA for ECRs
Doitsu-Nihon Academy for Early Career Researchers
powered by DAAD and Kyoto University

Plan your career	Improve your skills	Build your network
① Time Management Workshop: November 13th, 2021 (Sat.) 16:00-20:00 JST / 8:00-12:00 CET Get to know each other before the workshop: November 12th, 2021 (Fri.) 21:00-22:00 JST / 13:00-14:00 CET *All workshops will be held online. Participation in both workshops required.	② Project Management Workshop: December 11th, 2021 (Sat.) 16:00-20:00 JST / 8:00-12:00 CET Social event after the workshop: 21:00-22:00 JST / 13:00-14:00 CET Language: English Trainer: Dr. Iris Wleczorek A German expert on academic career development and research management with nearly 30 years of experience in Japan.	Target group Current MA and PhD students with interest in an academic career in Germany or Japan who are affiliated with DAAD (scholarship students or alumni) or Kyoto University. German-Japanese Networking Each workshop will start or end with a social event where you can get to know the other participants.

Certificate of Participation
If you complete both workshops.

Registration Deadline
Wednesday, October 27th, 2021

Organizers: DAAD, Kyoto University, IRIS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN SCIENCE

Five Dialogues for Future Research and Science with Early Career Researchers

Registration Required
Online Forum

November 23rd, 2021
1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Speakers: Dr. Iris Wleczorek, Dr. Yukihiro Kato, Dr. Yukihiro Kato, Dr. Yukihiro Kato, Dr. Yukihiro Kato

The HeKKSaGOn Spin-off Program consisted of an online event titled "Five Dialogues for Future Research and Science with Early Career Researchers," which was held on November 23. The event was co-organized by Kyoto University's Program for the Development of Next-generation Leading Scientists with Global Insight (L-INSIGHT) and fellow HeKKSaGOn member institutions Heidelberg University and Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). The L-INSIGHT researchers led discussions on topics relating to transdisciplinary research with early career researchers from the two German universities.

The event was intended to be a starting point for subsequent visits to Germany by members of L-INSIGHT that aim to progressively deepen and expand the experiences provided to the participating ECRs. The European Center is looking forward to supporting forthcoming events in the series.

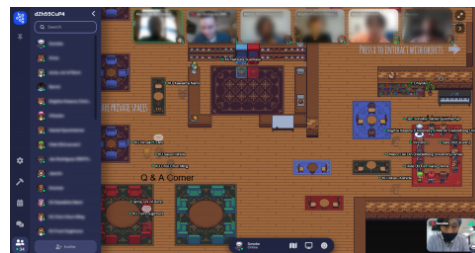
Networking Events and Meetings in 2021

In September 2021, the European Center's online "Meet and Greet" event for European students who are interested in studying at Kyoto University was revamped and renamed "Meet and Greet under the Camphor Tree." The main aim of the upgrade was to make the event more accessible, with a more casual feeling. The meet and greet networking event after the info session took place in a virtual space which participants can access using a mobile app. Participants attend the event in form of avatars, who gather under a virtual camphor tree (the symbol of Kyoto University) to communicate and interact with each other. Current Kyoto University students were also invited to the virtual space to provide their perspectives on student life in Kyoto. In this way the event also provides Japanese students, who cannot currently travel abroad, with a virtual opportunity to interact with students in Europe.

In November, the European Center attended JANET Forum 2021, organized by the Japan Academic Network in Europe (JANET). This year, the forum was held online for the first time, and comprised a wide range of activities in the course of its four days, including a general meeting, poster sessions, and panel discussions. Throughout the forum, HeKKSaGOn was repeatedly mentioned as an example of a successful European university alliance, and on the forum's final day, the Joint Statement of the HeKKSaGOn Presidents' Conference in September was quoted as an example of a proactive stance by universities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Information Session via ZOOM



Heidelberg Tayori: Keeping Kyoto University Connected to European Research

Each month, the European Center sends out an email newsletter, mainly to Kyoto University's campus community. The newsletter includes a column titled "Heidelberg Tayori (a Letter from Heidelberg)," which provides information about the latest developments in Europe (it can also be accessed on the European Center website).

In 2021, some editions of the column included a section called "What's trending in Europe?", that covered various research topics, and introduced academic papers by researchers at partner institutions in Europe.

The topics covered throughout the year were as follows:

<i>April</i>	<i>AI and Medicine</i>
<i>May</i>	<i>Cancer Research</i>
<i>June</i>	<i>African Studies in Europe</i>
<i>July</i>	<i>"European Research and Innovation Days 2021"</i>
<i>August</i>	<i>Climate Change and Zero Carbon</i>
<i>September</i>	<i>Democracy as a Political System</i>
<i>October</i>	<i>Research in Agriculture</i>

We are looking forward to seeing you soon, in person!

Kyoto University European Center

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