



KYOTO UNIVERSITY EUROPEAN CENTER SEASON'S GREETINGS 2023

Greetings

In 2023 international operations—which had stalled because of the corona pandemic—were back in full swing. Face-to-face symposia were held with strategic partner universities, the University of Zurich and the Universität Hamburg. For the first time in four years the HeKKSaGOn Alliance of German and Japanese universities could meet on-site in Göttingen. We were able to visit European universities and institutions in a greater extent than prior years. Additionally, many European universities, institutions and organizations visited Kyoto University, thereby laying the foundations for new collaborations on various levels and international research projects.

Meanwhile, the social situation remains unstable and various global issues are piling up before us. However, we take up these challenges and work towards their solutions, for example, with the Universität Hamburg on Planetary Health and HeKKSaGOn on AI in research and education. We will continue to face these challenges by bringing together excellent researchers from Europe and Japan to cooperate towards a better world while remaining proud of our position in academia.

With the positive developments, daunting challenges and visions for a better future in mind, we wish you all a happy new year.

HeKKSaGOn Presidents' Conference 2023

The 9th Presidents' Conference of the German-Japanese university alliance HeKKSaGOn, held at the University of Göttingen, marked the first successful in-person gathering since 2019. It brought together over 100 participants, including presidents, vice-presidents, researchers, students, and staff from the six member universities Heidelberg University, Kyoto University, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Tohoku University (Sendai), University of Göttingen and Osaka University.



Participants of HeKKSaGOn Presidents' Conference 2023 in Göttingen

The conference kicked off with a panel featuring the leading representatives of the six universities, who candidly exchanged their views on the

conference's main theme "What Opportunities and Challenges does Artificial Intelligence offer to the Higher Education Sector?" Presentations by the presidents of each university followed, showing their efforts to contribute to the goals of HeKKSaGOn.

In parallel sessions, researchers discussed their respective projects. A notable inclusion was the spin-off project HeKKSaGOn x L-INSIGHT, whose Japanese and German early career researcher members could meet in-person for the first time. In their presentation, they emphasized the significance of cross-disciplinary research networks and made recommendations to the presidents to foster such collaborations.

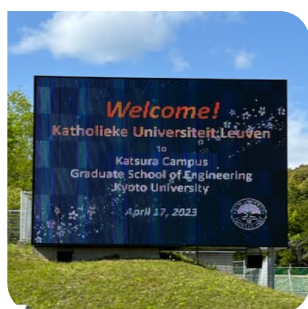
The Closed Presidents' Meeting addressed the alliance's future and development strategies. Key takeaways included acknowledging the importance of AI in research and teaching, supporting early-career researchers, collaborating in entrepreneurship and technology transfer as well as establishing regular dialogue between universities and societies. These points were consolidated into a joint statement.

The next HeKKSaGOn Presidents' Conference will take place at Osaka University in 2025. The Kyoto University Europe Center, as HeKKSaGOn's liaison office in Germany, will continue to serve as a bridge between Germany and Japan, facilitating further collaboration and exchange.

Please check this link to get more information on HeKKSaGOn



KURA x KUEC Academic Research Development Seminars



Welcome sign for KU Leuven at Kyoto University's Katsura Campus

With the resumption of personal exchanges, many delegations from European universities were hosted in Kyoto this year. In an attempt to establish new research contacts with these universities, the European Center co-organized two seminars in collaboration with KURA (Kyoto University Research Administration Center), under the name of "KURA x KUEC Academic Research Development Seminar".

Following the visit of Rector Luc Sels to Kyoto in December 2022, we have accepted a delegation of 17 researchers and policy adviser from KU Leuven, led by Prof. Gerard Govers, Vice Rector of Science, Engineering and Technology Group on April 17. After the introduction on research activities and PhD program at Kyoto University, the delegation were spread into groups to visit several faculties and graduate schools such as Graduate School of Engineering at both Yoshida Campus and Graduate School of Agriculture and Graduate School of Science and Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies. on Katsura Campus.

Members of KUEC, KURA and KU Leuven meet online to follow-up the visit and will continue to support new collaboration of the researchers.

Seizing the visit of a delegation from École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), KUEC organized another seminar in conjunction with KURA on October 19. This was a research-matching event to promote academic exchange in the fields of artificial intelligence (AI) and well-being. The seminar featured presentations from early career researchers (ECRs) from Kyoto University's Graduate School of Letters, Graduate School of Informatics, and Institute for the Future of Human Society (IFoHS). The subsequent plenary discussion was a lively exchange of ideas, with participants raising questions and engaging in stimulating dialogue. KUEC, together with KURA is planning another seminar to be held at EHESS in 2024.

The Kyoto University European Center expressed its commitment to fostering further collaboration with these two institutions, recognizing the immense potential for mutually beneficial partnerships.



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Shaping the Future: Scientific Collaboration with Kyoto University's Strategic Partners



Presentation by ECRs at the joint symposium with University of Zurich

Kyoto University European Center serves as the important connecting point to our strategic partners in Europe. In 2023, Kyoto University held two separate joint symposia supported by KUEC with its strategic partners University of Zurich and Universität Hamburg.

The "Kyoto University-University of Zurich Strategic Partnership Joint Symposium 2023: Data Science and Social Impact" was held in Kyoto on March 7 and 8. Researchers in regenerative medicine, law, plant science, and medical data came together to discuss data science and their field of research. They shared their perspectives on how their research intersects with data and AI, emphasizing the potential and challenges associated with these emerging technologies. The symposium also provided a platform for early-career researchers to present their work and engage with colleagues from other institutions.

The Universität Hamburg-Kyoto University symposium was held on June 19 and 20 in Hamburg, celebrating the renewal of their strategic partnership agreement. It tackled the interconnected themes of planetary health. Researchers focused on four key areas: infection research, climate



Researchers and representatives of Universität Hamburg and Kyoto University at their joint event research, environmental economics, and biodiversity. Participants engaged in lively dialogues and cross-disciplinary exchanges, underscoring the significance of addressing these intricate issues from a holistic perspective. A highlight of the symposium was the active involvement of early-career researchers, who gained valuable insights and expanded their professional networks.

Both symposia concluded with renewed optimism and a resolute determination to continue fostering scientific exchange and collaboration. In 2024, Kyoto University will continue such events with its other strategic partners, University of Bordeaux and the University of Vienna.

An overview of Kyoto University strategic partnerships is provided on our website.



Nurturing the Next Generation of Researchers



Young researchers networking at the DNA for ECRs event

In the years past, Kyoto University and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) have established a strong partnership to promote academic exchange and collaboration among early-career researchers (ECRs).

The DNA (Doitsu-Nihon-Academy) for ECRs workshops provide Japanese and German ECRs essential skills for career success and enables them to navigate the global research landscape effectively. This

year's workshop was the sixth iteration in row since 2021, organized jointly with DAAD and led by professionals to encourage ECRs to hone their soft skills and build lasting international networks. Its theme was „Expanding your Reach: A Primer to Networking and Collaboration for Early Career

Reserachers", which motivated many ECRs to apply. We had 16 participants in total, with a diversity in gender, academic career stages and disciplines.

Another joint initiative is the DAAD-Kyoto University Partnership Programme towards SDGs. This funding program enables short-term research exchanges between ECRs from German institutions and facilitates with Kyoto University in collaborative research projects focused on addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This provides a platform for ECRs to gain valuable international research experience and contribute to meaningful solutions for global challenges. The recent extension of the support by Kyoto University and the DAAD to two years further underscores the commitment of both institutions to foster deeper connections among ECRs and maximizing the impact of their collaborative research.



More information on how we support ECRs is available here.

Resuming Student Mobility

Re-starting in-person mobility between Europe and Japan, short-term study abroad programs like the Kyoto Summer Program thrive again.

The program provides students with a unique opportunity to experience Japanese culture and academics while immersing themselves in the vibrant city of Kyoto. It is designed for undergraduate students from partner universities worldwide. Participants take a variety of courses on Japanese language, culture, and history. The program is accompanied field trips and cultural activities. Participants will experience the real student life with their buddies and our students will learn new culture and values from the international students, which motivate them to study abroad. This year, four spots were given to KUEC which we provided to our partner universities. The key part is the interaction with our students in Kyoto.

One of KUEC's important tasks is to find and introduce short-term programs to motivate excellent students to participate in. We are very grateful for the fee waiver for summer schools offered by partners such as Heidel-



Students at the Kyoto Summer Program

berg University and our strategic partner University of Vienna for its Winter School. Thankfully this year, RWTH Aachen has newly offered to our students to participate in their summer programme, even offering them some scholarship. Many of the participating students of these programs consider a longer stay after these experience.

We hope that sending students on short-term programs will be a solution to the problem of the imbalance between incoming and outgoing students. We also see it as a chance to let students turn their gaze towards global opportunities.

Get more information about this program here.



Activities and Foreign Visits in 2023

In the past year, we were again able to see our partners and travel Europe to participate in events and make new networks. While at our office in Heidelberg we also received many students from Japan and Europe. However, we also welcomed guest from all over Europe in Kyoto. The map below represents our travels and the visits of our European partners.

- Events
- Delegations to Kyoto University
- ▲ Visits by Kyoto University European Center



Fostering Global Connections through Academic and Political Exchanges



German Academic Exchange Service Representatives at Kyoto University

Kyoto University—as a leading research institution in Japan—has been actively engaging with international partners from academia and politics to expand its global reach and foster collaborations in various fields of study. After the pandemic hiatus, receiving European representatives to Kyoto highlights its commitment to international cooperation and its role in shaping the future of research and education.

Kyoto University has welcomed delegations from prestigious universities across Europe, including the University of Nottingham, CNRS, EHESS, KU Leuven, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, University of Glasgow, University College Dublin, Ludwig Maximilian University and the Technical University of Munich among others. These visits have resulted in discussions on potential research partnerships, student exchange opportunities, and events to strengthen collaboration and promote the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

To show the significance of international exchange and mobility of researchers at an early stage of their careers, an informal round-table meeting at the Kyoto University's beautiful Izumi-dono was organized for

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). In this meeting, four Kyoto University students and young researchers talked about their experiences with DAAD-Kyoto University Partnership Programme towards SDGs.

Kyoto University has also engaged with political representatives from around Europe. President Nagahiro Minato met with Dr. Igor Papič (Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation) and ambassador-designate H.E. Mr. Jurij Rifelj of the Republic of Slovenia to Japan to explore potential collaborations and exchange ideas. Additionally, H.E. Mr. Jean-Eric Paquet (Ambassador of the European Union to Japan) visited Kyoto University to discuss ways to strengthen ties between the university and European institutions. Another delegation from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) of the Netherlands discussed academic and research opportunities in the Netherlands.

Kyoto University's active engagement with academic institutions and political representatives from around the world demonstrates its dedication to fostering partnerships that will advance knowledge, promote innovation, and strengthen international cooperation. Kyoto University European Center serves as a bridge with Europe to actively engage with European partners to address global challenges, and foster a more interconnected and collaborative world.

More about courtesy visits is on the webpage of Kyoto University



Kyoto University Presidential Visits to Europe

In June 2023, Professor Kyoko Inagaki (Executive Vice-President for Gender Equality and International Affairs, and External Affairs) visited our office. During her visit, she discussed measures, support, and policies with Heidelberg University representatives to strengthen gender equality, which enables researchers to reach their full potential.



Delegation led by EVP Inagaki visiting Kyoto University European Center

EVP Inagaki also had a meaningful conversation with Kyoto University's students from the Joint Degree Master of Arts Program in Transcultural Studies. They exchanged insights into their research experiences, exploring the challenges and opportunities of navigating cultural and academic differences. The discussion highlighted the importance of going abroad to experience a diverse and inclusive academic environment that prepares students for success as international scholars.

In a separate visit to Heidelberg University in September 2023, President Prof. Nagahiro Minato paid his respects to outgoing Rector Prof. Berndhard Eitel, who played a pivotal role in strengthening the relationship between Japan and Germany through the HeKKSaGOn Alliance. Both presidents also visited our office in the former student prison of Heidelberg University. They acknowledged its vital role as a bridge between the two universities and its importance as a stepping-stone for Japanese researchers to Europe and vice versa.



President Minato and former Rector Eitel at Kyoto University European Center

These visits exemplify the power of international collaboration on a high level and are an example for productive partnerships that empower and inspire future generations of scholars.

You can find reports on visits, news and activities on our website.



Editorial



Taro Sonobe at a meeting presenting AIDA

The European Center, established on May 3, 2014, will celebrate its 10th anniversary next year. Although we regret that we have been interrupted by an unprecedented period of impeded border-crossing, we are nevertheless proud that we have been able to expand our network with top European universities and contribute to the sending and receiving of many researchers and students.

In recognition of our role as a bridge for academic exchange between Europe and Japan, we intend to further strengthen our role in the future, and we are planning an event in September 2024 to commemorate this. We prepare an event for wide range of people and hope to meet you there.

As the team of Kyoto University European Center, we are looking forward to meeting you in 2024.

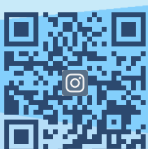
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