



Japan's Friendship Ties Program "MIRAI" Completion Report (Budget of Fiscal 2024)

I. Executive Summary

1. Background and Purpose

"Japan's Friendship Ties Programs", the international exchange programs promoted by the Japanese Government, aim to encourage a deeper understanding of Japan's politics, economy, society, culture, history, and diplomatic policy, and to enhance an increase of support for Japan by inviting/dispatching future leaders (including online exchange and follow-up programs) in the development of bilateral and regional relations between Japan and the various nations and regions of the Asia-Pacific, North America, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean, along with in sharing information in the world. Participants of online exchange and invitation/dispatching programs are expected to share proactively Japan's foreign policies and charms of Japan through social media with the aims to strengthen information dissemination to the world and to solidify Japan's diplomatic foundation. "Japan's Friendship Ties Programs" have been launched and promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan since 2015.

The European regional component of this exchange program is called "MIRAI" ¹ with a feature of intellectual exchange between promising young leaders from Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, and Japanese students and researchers of the same generation and experts.

Inbound Program

The in-person inbound program was conducted in the following six groups by the theme/ region. Total 84 participants)

Group Theme	Locations	Date	# of Participant
Group 1 Peacebuilding	Tokyo, Hiroshima	Dec 4 – Dec 10, 2024	14 (Including 1 chaperone from RYCO)
Group 2 Diplomacy and Security Policy	Tokyo, Saitama	Nov 6 – Nov 12, 2024	16
Group 3 Economy and Business	Tokyo, Yamanashi	Nov 6 – Nov 12, 2024	12
Group 4 Science and Technology	Tokyo, Saitama, Ibaraki	Dec 4 – Dec 10, 2024	15
Group 5 Environment and Green	Tokyo, Kanagawa, Yamanashi	Nov 6 – Nov 12, 2024	15
Group 6 Rule of Law	Tokyo, Yamanashi	Jan 14 – Jan 20, 2025	12
Total			84

¹ MIRAI (Mutual-understanding, Intellectual Relations and Academic Exchange Initiative)

Follow-up Program (Alumni Program : Online Program)

The 2024 Follow-up Program was implemented within the following three frameworks to promote their support for Japan and facilitate the expansion of networks between alumni and Japan as well as among the alumni themselves.

Theme	Number of implementations	# of Participant
MIRAI2024 Alumni Meeting with Japanese Organizations with Global Reach	7 times	184
MIRAI 2024 Follow-Up Program Online Visiting Japan Program	5 times	111
MIRAI2024 Opinion Exchange Meeting between Japan's Experts and MIRAI Alumni on MIRAI Program	1 time	24
Total		319

2. Achievements**1) Pre-exchange Program**

The following pre-exchange programs were implemented online for all participants in order to provide prior learning before in-person visits and to build cross-national networks between Japan and participating countries. In addition, pre-departure orientation programs were conducted 6 times for participants of inbound programs for each of 6 different themes.

Pre-study Program	Theme	Date	Target	# of Participant
On-demand video viewing	Overview of the Japan's Friendship Ties Program "MIRAI"	From September 6 (Fri) to September 13 (Fri), 2024	All	84
Orientation for all groups	- Welcome address by Mr. KAKIHARA Motoo, Director, European Policy Division, European Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan - Lecture: "A personal collection of Japanese cultural trivia" Lecturer: Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkin, a narrator, writer, and actor - Group-based program (Group discussions and exchange)	September 14 (Sat), 2024	All	84
Pre-departure orientation	Sharing the information necessary to visit Japan (personal effects, travel procedure), explanation of the places to visit, Q & A	Oct 22, 2024	Group 2	16
		Oct 22, 2024	Group3	12
		Oct 22, 2024	Group5	15
		Nov 18, 2024	Group1	14
		Nov 18, 2024	Group4	15
		Dec 26, 2024	Group6	12

(1) Pre-exchange Program 0 (Video distribution)

An overview of the Japan's Friendship Ties Program "MIRAI", including its objectives and mission, was explained and shared in a video for MIRAI participants. Through a digest video of last fiscal year's "MIRAI" program (photos and videos), the entire flow of the program and post-participation activities (including the online alumni program) were introduced to deepen understanding about the program.

(2) Pre-exchange Program (Lecture on Understanding of Japan)

This lecture was conducted online on understanding of Japan and exchange among participants for the purpose of prior learning before the visit to Japan and building a network among participants.

In the 1st part, the lecture was provided by Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkin, a British narrator, writer, and actor, who has lived in Japan since the 1970s. Mr. Atkin has been involved in narrating for the NHK World, providing a guest commentary for Sumo English broadcasts, and introducing the charms of Japanese culture to Japan and abroad through wiring and translating activities. Participants shared the charms of various traditional Japanese cultures, which were discovered through Mr. Atkin's activities as supporters and experts of Japan, and thus deepened their understanding of Japan. In the 2nd part, the participants actively exchanged opinions about their impressions of the lecture and matters of interest regarding Japan in small group discussions, deepening exchanges in preparation for the visit to Japan.

(3) Pre-exchange Program 2 (Pre-departure Orientation)

Two weeks prior to the visit to Japan, the necessary information for the trip was explained online. Specific explanation included confirmation of the purpose and mission of the MIRAI program in Japan, the introduction of JICE staff members in charge of MIRAI, what to bring to Japan and necessary procedure for travel, and what to do in case of infection during stay in Japan. In addition, an explanation about the places to visit in Japan was given before the questions and answers session.

2) Inbound Program (In-person): Main Program

For the selection was conducted on the basis of transparency and fairness at overseas diplomatic missions of the countries and RYCO (Regional Youth Cooperation Office), and eventually, a total of 84 participants of undergraduate/graduate students and young professionals.

The visiting Japan program is 8 days and 6 nights program, participants attended relevant lectures and visited places in Japan to learn about initiatives in Japan by the theme through observations, exchanges, discussions, and cultural experiences.

At the university that they visited, participants conducted intellectual exchanges with the Japanese students of the same generation to build a network among the future leaders from Europe and Japan.

Participants are expected to deepen their understanding of Japan through participation of the program, presentation of an action plan at the reporting session (presentation of their actions after return home) and share proactively information on Japan's charms after their return home through social media.

Group 1 (Peacebuilding)

The Western Balkans Youth Cooperation Organization (RYCO) cooperated in the selection of participants for this program, which targeted six countries in the Western Balkans. 13 undergraduate and graduate students studying peacebuilding who were approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were invited, as well as one supervisor from RYCO to accompany them.

Participants exchanged with Japanese students actively under the hosting of Professor Komatsu Taro, Dept. of Education, Faculty of Human Sciences at Sophia University in Tokyo. At JICA, participants learned about Japan's cooperation in the Western Balkan region and exchanged opinions with JICA officers. In Hiroshima, participants deepened their understanding of tragedy of the war and importance of peace at the atomic bomb related facilities guided by the second generation of atomic bomb survivors. They also experienced Japanese culture through calligraphy and visit to historical sites such as Miyajima and Itsukushima Shrine.

On the final day, this group along with Group 4 of "Science and Technology" jointly paid a courtesy call on Mr. MATSUMOTO Hisashi, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, and reported the program result. In the reporting session, the JICE certificate of completion was awarded to the participants.

Group 2 (Diplomacy and Security Policy)

This program invited 16 undergraduate/graduate students from 16 European countries, and they attended the lectures delivered by experts, visited related institutions, and exchanged views and opinions in Tokyo.

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participants attended a lecture on Japan's national security policy, and at the Ministry of Defense, they attended a lecture on Japan's self-defense policy. Participants also deepened their understanding of Japan through a multifaceted approach, including JICA's efforts in human security, and the situation surrounding Japanese territory and sovereignty. Through a school exchange at Keio University, they listened to a lecture on "The evolution of Japan's foreign and security policy" under the hosting of Professor HOSODA Yuichi, Faculty of Law, and Associate Professor TSURUOKA Michito, Faculty of Policy Management, and had an intellectual exchange through exchanging views with the students of the same generation. During the visit to Japan Grand Self-Defense Force Public Information Center, participants had an opportunity to learn about the activities of self-defense force by experience. In addition, they walked around Senso-ji Temple, Rikugi-en, and Imperial Palace East Garden to appreciate historical buildings and Japanese gardens with beautiful autumn leaves. At the Tokyo National Museum, they appreciated cultural assets such as designated national treasures and important cultural properties of Asian Regions and Japa. They also experienced powdered tea at Oukyo-kan.

On the final day, this group along with Group 3 of Economy and Business, and Group 5 of Environment and Green jointly paid a courtesy call on Mr. FUKAZAWA Yoichi, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, and reported the program result. In the reporting session, the JICE certificate of completion was awarded to the participants.

Group 3 (Economy and Business)

This program invited 12 undergraduate/graduate students from 12 European countries. They visited Tokyo and Yamanashi, where they attended lectures by experts, visited related institutions, and exchanged views and opinions.

In Tokyo, they learned about a wide range of initiatives regarding Japan's economy and business through the visit to the Tokyo Stock Exchange, the largest stock exchange in Japan, the exchange of views at start-up companies, and strolling in Asakusa shopping street. They also learned about the activities of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's business support program for domestic and international business and were exposed to the attractiveness of Tokyo as a business city. Through a school exchange at Hitotsubashi University, participants had an intellectual exchange with students of the same generation under the hosting of Associate Professor TAKEUCHI Kan, Graduate School of Economics, Hitotsubashi University. In Yamanashi, participants saw the towering Mt. Fuji and Yamanashi Prefectural Fujisan World Heritage Center to receive a lecture on Mt. Fuji, as a World Heritage and were exposed to Japan's nature and culture.

The participants deepened their interest and understanding of Japan in terms of society, policy, history, culture and discussed the attractiveness of Japan and the better future that can be created by cooperation between Japan and the world.

On the final day, participants jointly with Group 2 of Diplomacy and Security Policy, Group 5 of Environment and Green, paid a courtesy call on Mr. Fukazawa Yoichi, Parliamentary Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where they reported the program result. The JICE certificate of completion was awarded to the participants.

Group 4 (Science and Technology)

This program invited 14 undergraduate/graduate students from 14 European countries. Participants visited Tokyo and Ibaraki, where they attended lectures by experts and related institutions, and exchanged views and opinions.

In Tokyo, they visited research and development facilities of neuroscience technology, and start-up companies engaged in innovation, and learned about Japan's technology and its social contribution by listening directly to researchers and development specialists. Under the hosting of Professor KATO Kyoko, Business and Management, College of Engineering and Design at Shibaura Institute of Technology,

participants engaged in intellectual exchanges with students of the same generation to deepen mutual understanding.

In Ibaraki Prefecture, participants observed facilities of cutting-edge-technology and cybernics technology in Tsukuba Science City and learned about Japanese history and tradition through experiencing to wear Samurai Warrior's helmet and armor, and 12-layered kimono at Mito City along with a tea ceremony experience.

On the final day, this group along with Group 1 of peacebuilding jointly paid a courtesy call on Mr. MATSUMOTO Hisashi, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, and reported the program result. In the reporting session, the JICE certificate of completion was awarded to the participants.

Group 5 (Environment and Green)

This program invited 15 undergraduate/graduate students from 15 countries. Participants visited Tokyo and Yamanashi, where they attended lectures by experts and visited related institutions, and exchanged views and opinions.

Through school exchange at Waseda University, participants had an intellectual exchange with students of the same generation under the hosting of Professor NOZU Takashi, Graduate School of Environment and Energy Engineering, Waseda University.

During the observation tour to LiSE (Kawasaki Life Science and Environmental Research Centre), the participants learned about Kawasaki's history of tackling pollution problems, as well as about Japan's outstanding environmental initiatives and environmental technologies. In addition, at the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO) and the Ministry of Economy and Industry, participants deepened their understanding of the theme through lectures and exchanges of opinions, as well as sharing measures and issues related to climate change countermeasures, high-level use of new energy, and social implementation.

On the final day, participants jointly with Group 2 of Diplomacy and Security Policy and Group 3 of Environment and Green, paid a courtesy call on Mr. FUKAZAWA Yoichi, Parliamentary Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and reported the program results. The JICE certificate was awarded to the participants.

Group 6 (Rule of Law)

This program invited 12 undergraduate/graduate students and young professionals from 8 countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus under the theme of "Rule of Law". Participants visited Tokyo and Yamanashi to have exchanges, observations, and cultural experiences including lectures and exchange of opinions.

In Tokyo, they had a lecture and visited the Supreme Court, facilities of the Ministry of Justice, and a law firm to learn about Japan's legal system. In Tokyo, they had a lecture and visited the Supreme Court, facilities of the Ministry of Justice, and a law firm to learn about Japan's legal system. Through school exchange at Keio University under the hosting of Professor MATSUO Hiroshi, Keio University Law School, Director of Keio Institute for Global Law and Development (KEIGLAD), participants engaged in intellectual exchange with students of the same generation to build a future network between Japan and Central Asia and the Caucasus. They deepened their understanding of Japan in terms of history and culture through experiencing tea ceremony and visiting the historical temple in Asakusa.

On the final day, the group paid a courtesy call on Mr. MATSUMOTO Hisashi, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, and reported the program result. In the reporting session, the JICE certificate of completion was awarded to the participants.

3) Follow-up Programs

(1) Online Alumni Meeting with Japanese Organizations with Global Reach "Reconnecting Japan "

	Date	Theme	Attendee
1	August 23(Fri), 2024	" Reconnecting Japan" In cooperation with the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO)	23
2	October. 18 (Fri), 2024	"Reconnecting Japan" In cooperation INPEX	14
3	January 10(Fri) , 2025	"Reconnecting Japan" In cooperation with JETRO	45
4	February 4 (Tue), 2025	"Reconnecting Japan" In cooperation with TOPPAN	26
5	February 12(Wed), 2025	"Reconnecting Japan" In cooperation with Casio	27
6	February 20(Thu), 2025	"Reconnecting Japan" In Cooperation with YAMAHA Motor, Europe	24
7	February 26(Wed), 2025	"Reconnecting Japan" In Cooperation with Bandai Namco, U.K.	25
		Total	184

(2) Follow-up Online Visiting Japan Program

	Date	Theme	Attendee
1	September 25(Wed), 2024	Online Visiting Japan Program "School Exchange	19
2	September 26 (Thu), 2024	Online Visiting Japan Program "Japanese Language Lesson Part I	32
3	September 27(Fri), 2024	Online Visiting Japan Program "Japanese Language Lesson Part II	24
4	October 5(Sat), 2024	Online Visiting Japan Program "Home Visit	13
5	October 7(Mon), 2024	Online Visiting Japan Program "Rakugo in English	23
		Total	111

(3) Opinion Exchange Meeting between Japan's Experts and MIRAI Alumni on MIRAI

	Date	Theme	Attendee
1	March 4 th , 2025	Opinion Exchange Meeting between Japan's Experts and MIRAI Alumni on MIRAI	24

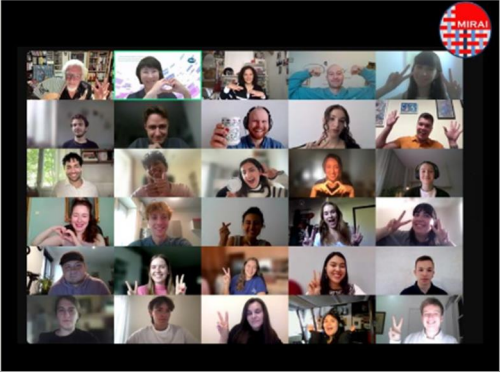
【Presenters】

- (1) Ms. Liubov Shloma (Ukraine, MIRAI2018 Visiting Japan Program) : Active participant in the MIRAI 2024 Alumni Program
- (2) Mr. Rodion Krupin (Estonia, MIRAI2024 Visiting Japan Program, Group3 Economy and Business)
- (3) Ms. Chiara Cusi (Italy, MIRAI2022 Visiting Japan Program) : Studied in Japan after participating in MIRAI and wrote a master's thesis related to MIRAI (JICE coordinator)

II. Good Practices Selected from Social Media Posts and Media Article

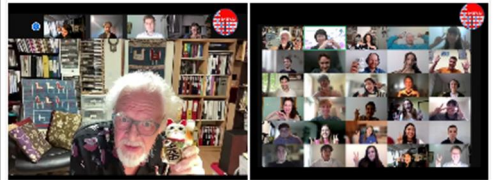
1. Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts

1) Pre-Exchange Program

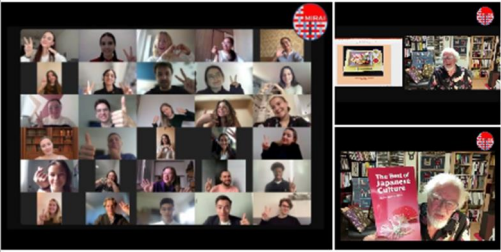
Dissemination of Social Media	Text
Group1 (Peacebuilding)	
Last week, I had my first orientation meeting, marking the exciting beginning of my journey with the "Western Balkans Meet Japan" program - more beautifully named MIRAI! 🌟🌟 I had the pleasure of meeting the amazing individuals I'll be sharing this incredible MIRAI experience with when we all visit Japan together in a few months. It's inspiring to see such a diverse and passionate group, and I'm eager to learn, collaborate, and grow together as we dive deeper into Japanese culture and perspectives. This is just the start, and I can't wait to see where this journey takes us! #MIRAI2024 #sharemyMIRAI 	September 14, 2024 (LinkedIn) Graduate Student (North Macedonia) I had my first orientation meeting, marking the exciting beginning of my journey with the "Western Balkans Meet Japan" program - more beautifully named MIRAI! I had the pleasure of meeting the amazing individuals I'll be sharing this incredible MIRAI experience with when we all visit Japan together in a few months. It's inspiring to see such a diverse and passionate group, and I'm eager to learn, collaborate, and grow together as we dive deeper into Japanese culture and perspectives. This is just the start, and I can't wait to see where this journey takes us!
Group2 (Diplomacy and Security Policy)	
Konnichiwa everybody! Let me introduce the MIRAI program, which I am part of for the 2024/2025 season 🇯🇵: this year, 83 participants from all around the world are bound to travel to Japan at the beginning of November, to learn more about its political and economic institutions, and to strengthen the country's cultural and academic links abroad 🌐. Today's meeting, which you can see a cheerful picture of, was about exchanging with other participants and organizers, as well as getting a lecture by Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkins, an Englishman who has been living in Japan for years, who gave us a small insight into Japanese culture 🇯🇵! I most thoroughly look forward to meeting the other participants in person, and setting foot in Japanese land! Arigato gozaimasu to the Japan International Cooperation Center for the opportunity, cannot wait for the next step 🙏 #mirai2024 #sharemyMIRAI 顔文字を見る 	September 14, 2024 (Facebook) Undergraduate Student (France) Konnichiwa everybody! Let me introduce the MIRAI program, which I am part of for the 2024/25 season. This year, 83 participants from all around the world are bound to travel to Japan, to learn more about its political and economic institutions, and to strengthen the country's cultural and academic links abroad. Today's meeting, which you can see a cheerful picture of, was about exchanging with other participants and organizers, as well as getting a lecture by Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkins, an Englishman who has been living in Japan for years, who gave us a small insight into Japanese culture! I most thoroughly look forward to meeting the other participants in person, and setting foot in Japanese land! Cannot wait for the next step.

II. 1 Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts

1) Pre-Exchange Program

Group3 (Economy and Business) Today was the joint orientation for the #MIRAI program 2024/2025! 🌍 Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkin, a British living in Japan for decades, gave us a very interesting lecture about Japan and its culture! We learned about chopstick etiquette, traditional forms of Japanese theater and much more! 🍴 The most exciting part was meeting and connecting with the other participants of my G3 group, Business and Economy! Today's orientation was a very exciting experience and I am looking forward to gaining even more through the program! I am very thankful to @jice_exchange for the opportunity and their guidance! #MIRAIalumni #sharemyMIRAI #MIRAI2024 #Japan 	September 14, 2024 (Facebook) Undergraduate Student (Greece) Today was the joint orientation for the MIRAI program 2024/2025! Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkin, a British living in Japan for decades, gave us a very interesting lecture about Japan and its culture! We learned about chopstick etiquette, traditional forms of Japanese theater and much more! The most exciting part was meeting and connecting with the other participants of my G3 group, Economy and Business! Today's orientation was a very exciting experience and I am looking forward to gaining even more through the program! I am very thankful to JICE for the opportunity and their guidance!
Group4 (Science and Technology) I'm excited to share that I've been selected to participate in the MIRAI program for young future leaders, specifically in the Science and Technology group! This prestigious program brings together students and young professionals from Europe for an unforgettable week in Japan, where we will engage in discussions, visit local government institutions, explore educational centers and companies, and immerse ourselves in Japanese culture. The purpose of this program is to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation, promote intellectual debate, and build strong ties between Japan and Europe. During today's pre-program, an amazing lecture on Japanese culture was given by a British, residing in Japan since the 1970s, Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkin – „A Personal Collection of Japanese Cultural Trivia“. Through his insightful presentation, I learned so much about Japan's rich cultural heritage, including its deep-rooted traditions, values, and the nuances of everyday life that shape the country's identity. Mr. Varnam-Atkin's vast knowledge and engaging delivery made the session both educational and inspiring. Also, had an amazing discussion with the Science and technology group participants. It was a fantastic introduction that has only heightened my excitement for the MIRAI program! I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the JICE, Embassy of Japan in Lithuania and the Life Sciences Center for this opportunity and I cannot wait to learn more and share this experience with everyone! #MIRAI2024 #sharemyMIRAI 	September 14, 2024 (LinkedIn) Lithuania I'm excited to share that I've been selected to participate in the MIRAI program for young future leaders, specifically in the Science and Technology group! This prestigious program brings together students and young professionals from Europe for an unforgettable week in Japan, where we will engage in discussions, visit government institutions, explore educational centers and companies, and immerse ourselves in Japanese culture. The purpose of this program is to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation, promote intellectual debate, and build strong ties between Japan and Europe. During today's pre-program, an amazing lecture on Japanese culture was given by a British, residing in Japan since the 1970s, Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkin – „A Personal Collection of Japanese Cultural Trivia“. Through his insightful presentation, I learned so much about Japan's rich cultural heritage, including its deep-rooted traditions, values, and the nuances of everyday life that shape the country's identity. Mr. Varnam-Atkin's vast knowledge and engaging delivery made the session both educational and inspiring. Also, had an amazing discussion with the Science and technology group participants. It was a fantastic introduction that has only heightened my excitement for the MIRAI program!

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1) Pre-Exchange Program

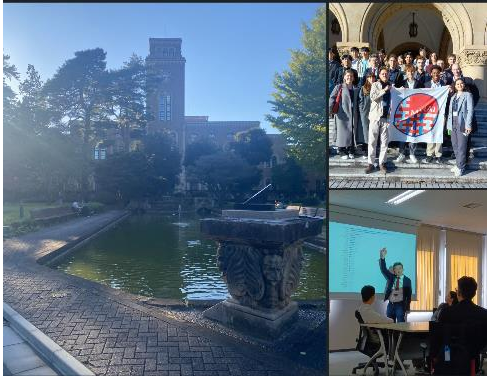
Group5 (Environment and Green) I am incredibly excited for the opportunity to be part of the MIRAI - 2024 cultural exchange scheme, a program that offers an opportunity for European and Japan to build academic ties with the hopes of promoting the economy, society, history, culture, politics, and foreign policy of Japan. Introducing us to the program today was Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkin, providing us with an exciting lecture on his personal collection of Japanese culture, including the factors that influenced his immigration from the UK to Japan. Divulging into his experiences in Japan, Mr. Varnam-Atkin displayed various cultural artefacts alongside their history, including lucky cats, calligraphy brushes, yen notes, and his experiences with presenting and watching sumo wrestling. This introduction has been invaluable, furthering both my cultural knowledge and my excitement of visiting Japan as a participant of the MIRAI program. #MIRAI2024 #sharemyMIRAI	September 14, 2024 (LinkedIn) Graduate Student (UK) I am incredibly excited for the opportunity to be part of the MIRAI - 2024 cultural exchange scheme, a program that offers an opportunity for European and Japan to build academic ties with the hopes of promoting the economy, society, history, culture, politics, and foreign policy of Japan. Introducing us to the program today was Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkin, providing us with an exciting lecture on his personal collection of Japanese culture, including the factors that influenced his immigration from the UK to Japan. Divulging into his experiences in Japan, Mr. Varnam-Atkin displayed various cultural artefacts alongside their history, including lucky cats, calligraphy brushes, yen notes, and his experiences with presenting and watching sumo wrestling. This introduction has been invaluable, furthering both my cultural knowledge and my excitement of visiting Japan as a participant of the MIRAI program.
Group6 (Rule of Law) 「I was fortunate enough to be selected as a participant of Japan's MIRAI Programme organized by 一般財団法人日本国際協カセンター and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan as a member of the Rule of Law. Although those with some understanding of Japanese might translate 'MIRAI' as 'future', here it stands for the Mutual-understanding Intellectual Relations Academic-exchange Initiative. The MIRAI Programme endeavours to promote friendship between Central Asia and Japan, aiming to increase the understanding of future generations in all things Japan. The first online orientation program of "MIRAI" was held on September 14th. More than 83 participants from Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia joined the program. In this orientation we had an informative and exciting lecture with Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkin who introduced us to Japanese culture. Afterwards we had the chance to network among other participants who will visit Japan in 2024/2025. I am excited to share and learn more during our visit to Japan with #MIRAI 🌸 #JapanExchange #GlobalUnderstanding #sharemyMIRAI 	September 14, 2024 (LinkedIn) Uzbekistan I was fortunate enough to be selected as a participant of Japan's MIRAI Programme organized by Japan International Cooperation Center and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan as a member of the Rule of Law. Although those with some understanding of Japanese might translate 'MIRAI' as 'future', here it stands for the Mutual-understanding Intellectual Relations Academic-exchange Initiative. The MIRAI Programme endeavours to promote friendship between Central Asia and Japan, aiming to increase the understanding of future generations in all things Japan. The first online orientation program of "MIRAI" was held on September 14th. 83 participants from Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia joined the program. In this orientation we had an informative and exciting lecture with Mr. Stuart Varnam-Atkin who introduced us to Japanese culture. Afterwards we had the chance to network among other participants who will visit Japan in 2024/2025.

II. 1 Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts
3) Online Inbound (Online Visiting Japan Program)

2) Inbound (Visiting Japan Program)

Dissemination of Social Media	Text
Group1 (Peacebuilding)	
I'm honored to represent Serbia in the prestigious MIRAI program organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan alongside an inspiring group of participants from the Western Balkans. Our program focuses on the critical theme of reconciliation, fostering dialogue and understanding across cultures and states. One of the most impactful experiences so far has been our walk through Hiroshima with Mr. Shin, whose family survived the atomic bombing. His openness and powerful story leave a lasting impression and further reinforce the importance of peace and mutual respect. We are also participating in thought-provoking lectures and engaging with students at a Japanese university, exchanging ideas and learning from each other. I'm excited to continue this journey and deepen my knowledge. A heartfelt thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and all the organizers for making this unforgettable experience possible. #sharemymirai #mirai2024 	December 8, 2024 (Instagram) Undergraduate Student (Serbia) I'm honored to represent Serbia in the prestigious MIRAI program organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan alongside an inspiring group of participants from the Western Balkans. Our program focuses on the critical theme of reconciliation, fostering dialogue and understanding across cultures and states. One of the most impactful experiences so far has been our walk through Hiroshima with our guide, whose family survived the atomic bombing. His openness and powerful story left a lasting impression and further reinforced the importance of peace and mutual respect. We are also participating in thought-provoking lectures and engaging with students at a Japanese university, exchanging ideas and learning from each other. I'm excited to continue this journey and deepen my knowledge. A heartfelt thanks to all the organizers for making this unforgettable experience possible.
Dissemination of Social Media	Text
Group2 (Diplomacy and Security Policy)	
During the week in Japan with #mirai2024 I had many new experiences and met a lot of wonderful people. As part of Group 2: Diplomacy and Security Policy, we visited various institutions: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Ministry of Defense, The National Diet, Keio University, etc. Here we attended many interesting and insightful lectures regarding Japan's diplomacy policy and got the opportunity to discuss Japan's diplomacy and security policy, with a special focus on The Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). We had the opportunity to hear from the #mirai participant's countries and their thoughts on the current world situation. One week in Japan is way too short of a time to learn and experience everything the Japanese culture has to offer. Even good things must come to an end, but I'm looking forward to visiting Japan countless times again in the future. Thank you MIRAI JICE's International Exchange Programs #mirai2024 #sharemyMIRAI #mirai2024alumni 	November 11, 2024 (Facebook) Undergraduate Student (Denmark) During the week in Japan with Mirai2024 I had many new experiences and met a lot of wonderful people. As part of Group 2: Diplomacy and Security Policy, we visited various institutions: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the National Diet, Keio University, etc. Here we attended many interesting and insightful lectures regarding Japan's diplomacy policy and got the opportunity to discuss Japan's diplomacy and security policy, with a special focus on the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). We had the opportunity to hear from the Mirai participant's countries and their thoughts on the current world situation. One week in Japan is way too short of a time to learn and experience everything the Japanese culture has to offer. Even good things must come

II . 1 Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts
3) Online Inbound (Online Visiting Japan Program)

	to an end, but I'm looking forward to visiting Japan countless times again in the future. Thank you MIRAI.
Dissemination of Social Media	Text
Group3 (Economy and Business)	
Thrilled to share that I was selected as the UK delegate for the MIRAI Japanese Visiting Program (Economics and Business Group) from thousands of applicants across Europe! As a law student, I was surprised and grateful for the chance to represent the UK in a program typically geared towards finance and economics. Hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JICE, this experience provided unique insights into Japan's economic frameworks and business landscape. On our first day, I visited Hitotsubashi University, renowned for its focus on economics. I joined Dr. Takeuchi Kan and his students for a seminar, where we explored the concept of Game Theory through a spirited round of 'Jan-Ken' (rock-paper-scissors), discussing its relevance in business decision-making today. Looking forward to sharing more from this incredible experience! #MIRAI2024 #MIRAIProgram #MIRAI 	November 7, 2024 (LinkedIn) Undergraduate Student (UK) Thrilled to share that I was selected as the UK delegate for the MIRAI Japanese Visiting Program (Economics and Business Group) from thousands of applicants across Europe! As a law student, I was surprised and grateful for the chance to represent the UK in a program typically geared towards finance and economics. Hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JICE, this experience provided unique insights into Japan's economic frameworks and business landscape. On our first day, I visited Hitotsubashi University, renowned for its focus on economics. I joined Dr. Takeuchi Kan and his students for a seminar, where we explored the concept of Game Theory through a spirited round of 'Jan-Ken' (rock-paper-scissors), discussing its relevance in business decision-making today. Looking forward to sharing more from this incredible experience!
Group4 (Science and Technology)	
I am incredibly honored to be part of the MIRAI 2024 program under the theme of science and technology, joining 14 amazing individuals from across Europe. Over the past few days, we've had the opportunity to dive into Japan's rich culture, cutting-edge innovation, and groundbreaking research. From exploring advanced labs and sustainable technologies to experiencing life-changing assistive devices and even visiting Japan's gateway to space exploration, every moment has been absolutely inspiring. The food, the people, and the hospitality have been nothing short of amazing! I want to sincerely thank the Japanese government for giving me this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of such a transformative experience. I will forever treasure the knowledge and memories gained during this incredible journey. #sharemyMIRAI #MIRAI2024 	December 7, 2024 (Facebook) Iceland I'm in Japan! I am incredibly honored to be part of the MIRAI 2024 program under the theme of science and technology, joining 14 amazing individuals from across Europe. Over the past few days, we've had the opportunity to dive into Japan's rich culture, cutting-edge innovation and groundbreaking research. From exploring advanced labs and sustainable technologies to experiencing life-changing assistive devices and even visiting Japan's gateway to space exploration, every moment has been absolutely inspiring. The food, the people, and the hospitality have been nothing short of amazing! I will forever treasure the knowledge and memories gained during this incredible journey.

II. 1 Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts
3) Online Inbound (Online Visiting Japan Program)

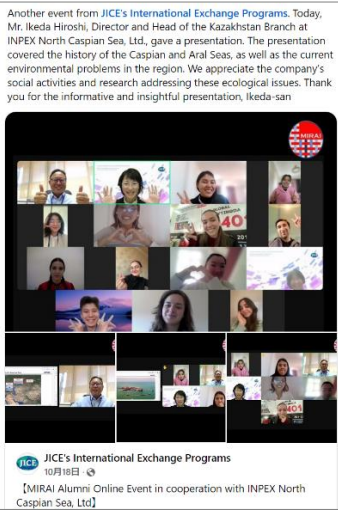
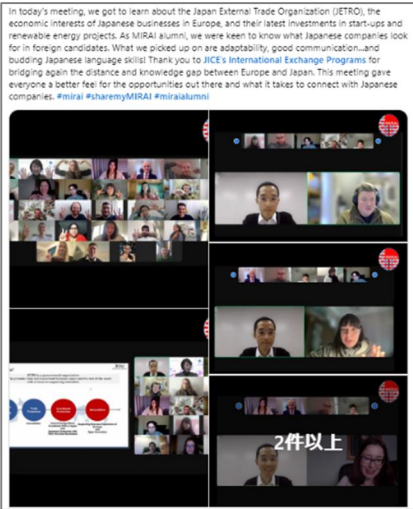
Dissemination of Social Media	Text
Group5 (Environment and Green)	
I've been saving my first LinkedIn post for something special, and this feels like the perfect moment. 🥰 Out of more than 2,000 applicants, I had the honor of being selected to represent the Czech Republic as part of the MIRAI 2024 Program, joining the Environment and Green group. Spending a week in Tokyo was an enriching experience filled with learning, inspiration, and deep cultural immersion. I'll cherish the memories for years to come. 🌱 Here are some highlights from the trip: 🇯🇵 Engaging at WASEDA University We connected with Japanese students, exchanging perspectives on recycling and the societal approaches to environmental challenges. It was fascinating to see how these conversations bridged cultural differences. 🏭 NEDO and LiSE in Kawasaki City An unforgettable visit where we witnessed how Kawasaki transformed from a polluted industrial hub to a model of environmental resilience. At NEDO, we explored Japan's ambitions to establish a hydrogen society. I'm especially curious to see how they will foster widespread public acceptance of hydrogen as a sustainable energy source, particularly through their communication strategies. 🏛️ Presenting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Standing in the Ministry's halls and sharing our reflections was surreal. Meeting the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fukazawa, and discussing environmental solutions was both humbling and empowering. 🍱 Immersing in Japanese Culture From savoring authentic Japanese cuisine to visiting the Oshino & Fujisan World Heritage Centre, attending a tea ceremony, and exploring the Tokyo National Museum's stunning exhibits on Samurai history and traditional art, every moment was a celebration of Japan's rich cultural heritage. This week taught me the immense value of stepping outside my comfort zone, seizing opportunities, and learning from others' perspectives. It reinforced the power of international collaboration, especially when addressing shared global challenges like climate change and sustainability. A heartfelt thank you to the MIRAI Program team, 一般財団法人日本国際協働センター, the Embassy of Japan in the Czech Republic, my lovely team, and every participant who made this journey so memorable. ❤️ #MIRAI2024 #ShareMyMIRAI Photo provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 翻訳を表示 	November 20, 2024 (LinkedIn) Graduate Student (Czech Republic) I've been saving my first LinkedIn post for something special, and this feels like the perfect moment. Out of more than 2,000 applicants, I had the honor of being selected to represent the Czech Republic as part of the MIRAI 2024 Program, joining the Environment and Green group. Spending a week in Tokyo was an enriching experience filled with learning, inspiration, and deep cultural immersion. I'll cherish the memories for years to come. Here are some highlights from the trip: ●Engaging at WASEDA University We connected with Japanese students, exchanging perspectives on recycling and the societal approaches to environmental challenges. It was fascinating to see how these conversations bridged cultural differences. ●NEDO and LiSE in Kawasaki City An unforgettable visit where we witnessed how Kawasaki transformed from a polluted industrial hub to a model of environmental resilience. At NEDO, we explored Japan's ambitions to establish a hydrogen society. I'm especially curious to see how they will foster widespread public acceptance of hydrogen as a sustainable energy source, particularly through their communication strategies. ●Presenting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Standing in the Ministry's halls and sharing our reflections was surreal. Meeting the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fukazawa, and discussing environmental solutions was both humbling and empowering. ●Immersing in Japanese Culture From savoring authentic Japanese cuisine to visiting the Oshino & Fujisan World Heritage Centre, attending a tea ceremony, and exploring the Tokyo National Museum's stunning exhibits on Samurai history and traditional art, every moment was a celebration of Japan's rich cultural heritage. This week taught me the immense value of stepping outside my comfort zone, seizing opportunities, and learning from others' perspectives. It reinforced the power of international collaboration, especially when addressing shared global challenges like climate change and sustainability. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who made this journey so memorable.

II . 1 Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts
 3) Online Inbound (Online Visiting Japan Program)

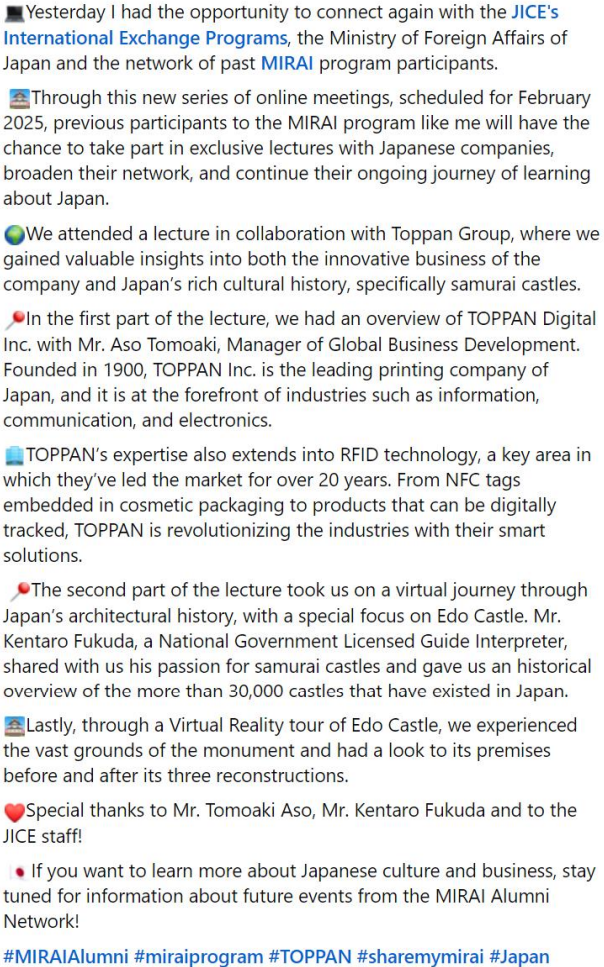
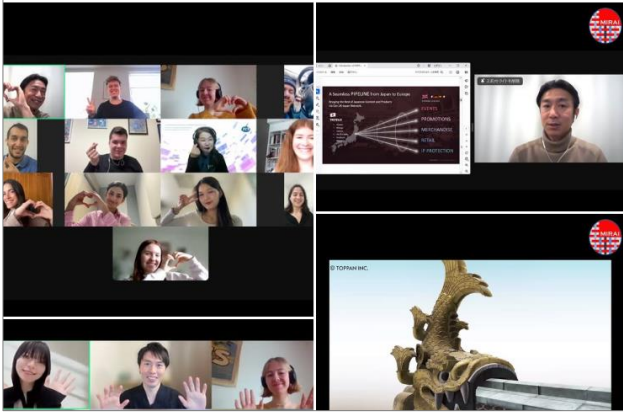
Dissemination of Social Media	Text
Group6 (Rule of Law) 	January 19, 2025 (Facebook) Working Youth (Tajikistan) Just wrapped up an incredible experience with the MIRAI Visiting Japan Program [Rule of Law]! From exploring Japan's rich culture to engaging in insightful discussions about governance and justice, this journey has been truly transformative. Visiting key institutions and connecting with inspiring individuals from around the world has deepened my understanding of the rule of law and its global significance. Grateful for the memories, knowledge, and friendships made along the way. Arigatou, Japan! 🌟🇯🇵 #MIRAI #RuleOfLaw #GlobalConnections"

3) Follow-up Program :

(1) Alumni Meeting with Japanese Organizations with Global Reach

Dissemination of Social Media	Text
Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) 	August 23, 2024 (Facebook) Graduate Student (Lithuania) Excited to have participated in the MIRAI Alumni event with Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) once again! We had the opportunity to hear from JASSO and gain valuable insights on what it takes to apply and study in Japan. It was also inspiring to hear testimonies from international students and professionals about their experiences living and studying in Japan. Such an exciting opportunity.
INPEX North Caspian Sea, Ltd 	October 18, 2024 (Facebook) Graduate Student (Kazakhstan) Another event from JICE's International Exchange Programs. Today, Mr. Ikeda Hiroshi, Director and Head of the Kazakhstan Branch at INPEX North Caspian Sea, Ltd., gave a presentation. The presentation covered the history of the Caspian and Aral Seas, as well as the current environmental problems in the region. We appreciate the company's social activities and research addressing these ecological issues. Thank you for the informative and insightful presentation, Ikeda-san
Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) 	January 11, 2025 (Facebook) Working Youth (Romania) In today's meeting, we got to learn about the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), the economic interests of Japanese businesses in Europe, and their latest investments in start-ups and renewable energy projects. As MIRAI alumni, we were keen to know what Japanese companies look for in foreign candidates. What we picked up on are adaptability, good communication...and budding Japanese language skills! This meeting gave everyone a better feel for the opportunities out there and what it takes to connect with Japanese companies.

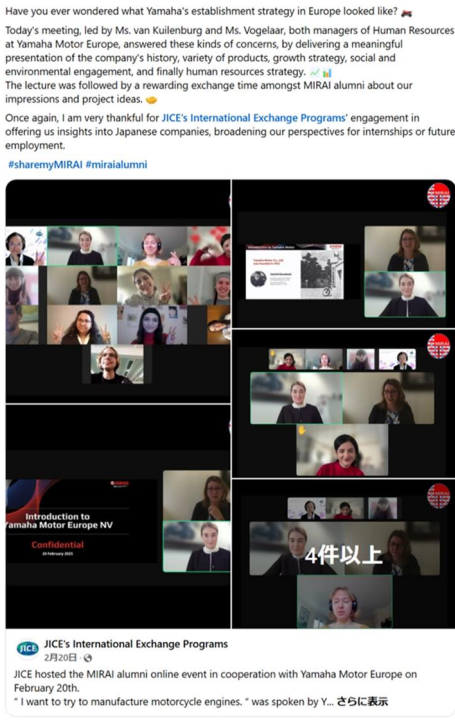
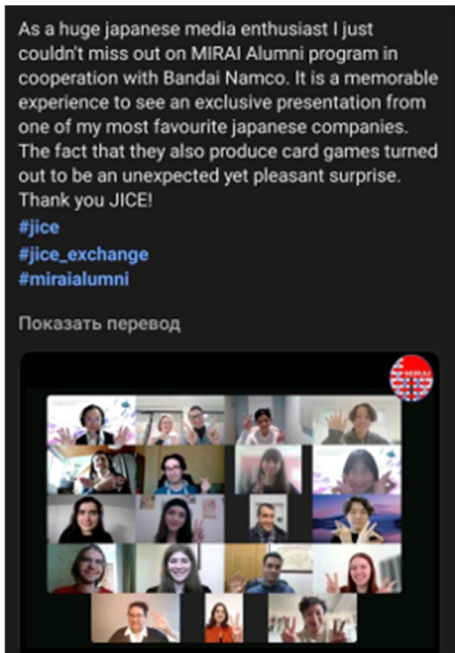
II . 1 Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts
4) Follow-up Program

TOPPAN Digital INC. & TOPPAN	
 	February 5, 2025 (Facebook) Working Youth (Italy) Yesterday I had the opportunity to connect again with JICE's International Exchange Programs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the network of past MIRAI program participants. Through this new series of online meetings, scheduled for February 2025, previous participants to the MIRAI program like me will have the chance to take part in exclusive lectures with Japanese companies, broaden their network, and continue their ongoing journey of learning about Japan. We attended a lecture in collaboration with TOPPAN Group, where we gained valuable insights into both the innovative business of the company and Japan's rich cultural history, specifically samurai castles. In the first part of the lecture, we had an overview of TOPPAN. TOPPAN INC. is the leading printing company of Japan, and it is at the forefront of industries such as information, communication, and electronics. Toppan's expertise also extended into RFID technology, a key area in which they've led the market for over 20 years. From NFC tags embedded in cosmetic packaging to products that can be digitally tracked, TOPPAN is revolutionizing the industries with their smart solutions. The second part of the lecture took us on a virtual journey through Japan's architectural history, with a special focus on Edo Castle. Mr. Kentaro Fukuda, a National Government Licensed Guide Interpreter, shared with us his passion for samurai castles and gave us an historical overview of the more than 30,000 castles that have existed in Japan. Lastly, through a Virtual Reality tour of Edo Castle, we experienced the vast grounds of the monument and had a look to its premises before and after its three reconstructions. Special thanks to Mr. Tomiaki Aso and Mr. Kentaro Fukuda! If you want to learn more about Japan culture and business, stay tuned for information about future events from the MIRAI Alumni Network. #MIRAIAlumni #miraiprogram #TOPPAN #sharemymirai #Japan

II . 1 Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts
4) Follow-up Program

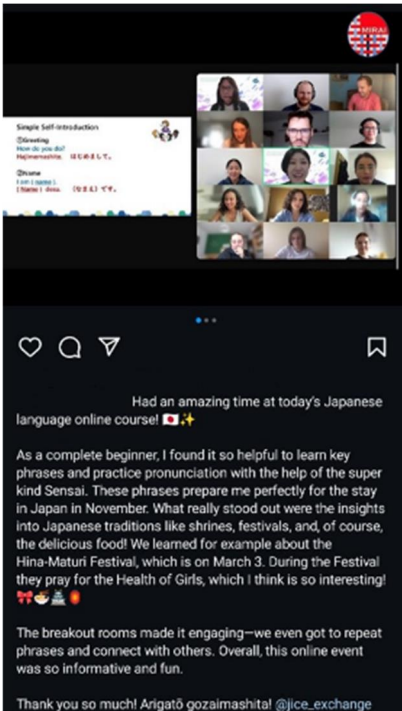
Casio CASIO 🌐 MIRAI program This week, we attended an online lecture from CASIO! CASIO is a multinational electronics company based in Japan. It produces watches, calculators, electronic dictionaries and even software for educational purposes. Mr. Uchida Yoshiyuki and Mr. Asanuma Tomoya from the EdTech department introduced us to CASIO's products and philosophy, while also giving us an overview of its presence in Europe, social initiatives and global contribution to education. I was surprised to learn that the majority of calculators used in European schools are made by CASIO! Something even more interesting; the calculators are localized and specially designed to fit the regulations and needs of each country. I also really liked learning about CASIO's social and educational projects. My favourite was the "Women Do Science" initiative in Spain, where specially designed calculator cases featuring illustrations of female scientists were released to encourage the engagement of women in the STEM fields! Thank you very much to CASIO and JICE for organizing this lecture! #MIRAI #MIRAIalumni #sharemyMIRAI #Japan #casio JICE's International Exchange Programs  MIRAI Alumni Online Program: "Reconnecting Japan" in cooperation with CASIO CASIO provides calculators to schools all around the world, localizing them. Each calculator's features are adjusted to every country's needs and educational regulations. World's first purely electronic calculator by Casio	February 13, 2025 (Facebook) Undergraduate student (Greece) CASIO 🌐 MIRAI program This week, we attended an online lecture from CASIO! CASIO is a multinational electronics company based in Japan. It produces watches, calculators, electronic dictionaries and even software for educational purposes. Mr. Uchida Yoshiyuki and Mr. Asanuma Tomoya from the EdTech department introduced us to CASIO's products and philosophy, while also giving us an overview of its presence in Europe, social initiatives and global contribution to education. I was surprised to learn that the majority of calculators used in European schools are made by CASIO! Something even more interesting; the calculators are localized and specially designed to fit the regulations and needs of each country. I also really liked learning about CASIO's social and educational projects. My favourite was the "Women Do Science" initiative in Spain, where specially designed calculator cases featuring illustrations of female scientists were released to encourage the engagement of women in the STEM fields! Thank you very much to CASIO and JICE for organizing this lecture!
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II . 1 Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts
4) Follow-up Program

YAMAHA Motor  Have you ever wondered what Yamaha's establishment strategy in Europe looked like? 🤖 Today's meeting, led by Ms. van Kuilenburg and Ms. Vogelaar, both managers of Human Resources at Yamaha Motor Europe, answered these kinds of concerns, by delivering a meaningful presentation of the company's history, variety of products, growth strategy, social and environmental engagement, and finally human resources strategy. 📊🇯🇵 The lecture was followed by a rewarding exchange time amongst MIRAI alumni about our impressions and project ideas. 🗣️ Once again, I am very thankful for JICE's International Exchange Programs' engagement in offering us insights into Japanese companies, broadening our perspectives for internships or future employment. #sharemyMIRAI #miraialumni	February 20, 2025 (Facebook) Undergraduate Student (France) Have you ever wondered what Yamaha's establishment strategy in Europe looked like? 🤖 Today's meeting, led by Ms. van Kuilenburg and Ms. Vogelaar, both managers of Human Resources at Yamaha Motor Europe, answered these kinds of concerns, by delivering a meaningful presentation of the company's history, variety of products, growth strategy, social and environmental engagement, and finally human resources strategy. 📊🇯🇵 The lecture was followed by a rewarding exchange time amongst MIRAI alumni about our impressions and project ideas. 🗣️ Once again, I am very thankful for JICE's International Exchange Programs' engagement in offering us insights into Japanese companies, broadening our perspectives for internships or future employment.
Bandai Namco  As a huge Japanese media enthusiast I just couldn't miss out on MIRAI Alumni program in cooperation with Bandai Namco. It is a memorable experience to see an exclusive presentation from one of my most favourite Japanese companies. The fact that they also produce card games turned out to be an unexpected yet pleasant surprise. Thank you JICE! #jice #jice_exchange #miraialumni Показать перевод	February 26, 2025 (LinkedIn) Undergraduate Student (Belarus) As a huge Japanese media enthusiast, I just couldn't miss out on MIRAI Alumni program in cooperation with Bandai Namco. It is a memorable experience to see an exclusive presentation from one of my most favorite Japanese companies. The fact that they also produce card games turned out to be an unexpected yet pleasant surprise.

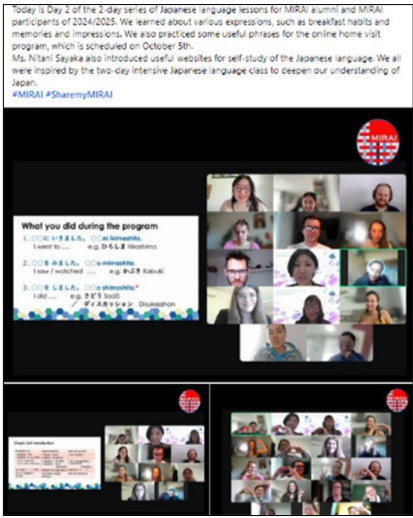
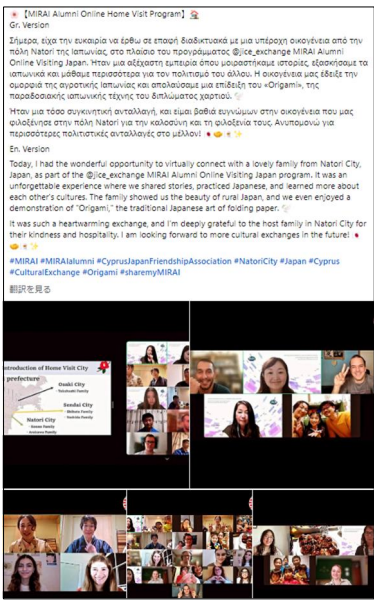
II. 1 Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts
4) Follow-up Program

(2) Follo-up Online Viiting Japan Program

Dissemination of Social Media	Text
School Exchange Today I had a pleasure to attend yet another amazing lecture hosted by JICE (Japanese International Cooperation Center) for MIRAI alumni. With MIRAI's help I fulfilled my long time dream and visited Japan in January of 2024. I am glad that JICE gives us opportunity to gain more information and learn even more about Japan, its language and culture after visiting it. Today JICE hosted program by inviting Professor Hashida Tsutomu who delivered a lecture entitled "Japanese Expressions and their hidden meanings". Professor Hashida introduced some examples of subtle expressions in the Japanese language which helped us to compare it with another languages. After lecture we held a discussion on the Japanese language with students from Nara University of Education and Nara Women's University which was really informative and made me realize the depth of Japanese and Georgian languages. #MIRAI #MIRAIAlumni #sharemyMIRAI 翻訳を表示 	September 25, 2024 (LinkedIn) Working Youth (Georgia) Today I had a pleasure to attend yet another amazing lecture for MIRAI alumni. With MIRAI's help I fulfilled my long time dream and visited Japan in January of 2024. I am glad that we were given this opportunity to gain more information and learn even more about Japan, its language and culture after visiting it. Today the program invited Professor Hashida Tsutomu who delivered a lecture titled "Japanese Expressions and their hidden meanings". Professor Hashida introduced some examples of subtle expressions in the Japanese language which helped us to compare it with other languages. After the lecture we held a discussion on the Japanese language with students from Nara University of Education and Nara Women's University which was really informative and made me realize the depth of Japanese and Georgian languages.
Japanese Language Lesson Part I 	September 26, 2024 (Instagram) Undergraduate Student (Kosovo) Had an amazing time at today's Japanese language online course! As a complete beginner, I found it so helpful to learn key phrases and practice pronunciation with the help of the super kind Sensei. These phrases prepare me perfectly for the stay in Japan in November. What really stood out were the insights into Japanese traditions like shrines, festivals, and, of course, the delicious food! We learned for example about the Hina-Maturi Festival, which is on March 3. During the Festival they pray for the Health of Girls, which I think is so interesting! The breakout rooms made it engaging. We even got to repeat phrases and connect with others. Overall, this online event was so informative and fun. Thank you so much! Arigatō gozaimashita! @jice_exchange

II . 1 Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts

4) Follow-up Program

Japanese Language Lesson Part II 	September 27, 2024 (Facebook) Undergraduate Student (Slovakia) Today is Day 2 of the 2-day series of Japanese language lessons for MIRAI alumni and MIRAI participants of 2024/2025. We learned about various expressions, such as breakfast habits and memories and impressions. We also practiced some useful phrases for the online home visit program, which is scheduled on October 5th. Ms. Nitani Sayaka also introduced useful websites for self-study of the Japanese language. We all were inspired by the two-day intensive Japanese language class to deepen our understanding of Japan.
Home Visit 	October 5, 2024 (Facebook) Working Youth (Cyprus) 【MIRAI Alumni Online Home Visit Program】 Today, I had the wonderful opportunity to virtually connect with a lovely family from Natori City, Japan, as part of the MIRAI Alumni Online Visiting Japan program. It was an unforgettable experience where we shared stories, practiced Japanese, and learned more about each other's cultures. The family showed us the beauty of rural Japan, and we even enjoyed a demonstration of "Origami," the traditional Japanese art of folding paper. It was such a heartwarming exchange, and I'm deeply grateful to the host family in Natori City for their kindness and hospitality. I am looking forward to more cultural exchanges in the future!

II . 1 Good Practices selected from Social Media Posts

4) Follow-up Program

Rakugo in English	
Today as MIRAI members, we were invited to the online program of Rakugo, comic storytelling in English, performed by the Rakugo performer Mr. TATEKAWA Shinoharu. Rakugo is a traditional Japanese storytelling entertainment that has been passed on for more than 300 years. It takes a unique style, where one performer sits on a stage, and acts out all the characters that appear in the story. Some stories are classical, some are original, but they are both quite hilarious. It was ... Zobrazit viac 	October 8, 2024 (Facebook) Undergraduate Student (Slovakia) Today as MIRAI members, we were invited to the online program of Rakugo, comic storytelling in English, performed by the Rakugo performer Mr. TATEKAWA Shinoharu. Rakugo is a traditional Japanese storytelling entertainment that has been passed on for more than 300 years. It takes a unique style, where one performer sits on a stage, and acts out all the characters that appear in the story. Some stories are classical, some are original, but they are both quite hilarious. It was amazing experience, and we all became more and more fascinated with Japan. Thank you, Mr. TATEKAWA Shinoharu. We truly hope to listen to your Rakugo in person!

(3) Japan's Experts and MIRAI Alumni on MIRAI

Dissemination of Social Media	Text
Today, I had the opportunity to participate in the MIRAI Online Program for Alumni: Opinion Exchange. MIRAI is a program that showed me the importance of sharing experience and knowledge. Only after MIRAI did I start actively promoting international programs between students, organizing events, and helping to find a suitable country, scholarship, or academic mobility. Today's session was another source of motivation for me, as other alumni presented how they are keeping in touch with Japan, what programs they are participating in, and how they are managing to balance their main studies and exploring new for us Japanese culture. Events like these remind me of the countless opportunities for personal and professional growth. I hope more students will discover and take advantage of such programs, fostering both their individual development and cross-cultural dialogue that benefits society. #sharemyMIRAI #MIRAI #MIRAIalumni 翻訳を表示 	March 10, 2025 (LinkedIn) Today, I had the opportunity to participate in the MIRAI Online Program for Alumni: Opinion Exchange. MIRAI is a program that showed me the importance of sharing experience and knowledge. Only after MIRAI did I start actively promoting international programs between students, organizing events, and helping to find a suitable country, scholarship, or academic mobility. Today's session was another source of motivation for me, as other alumni presented how they are keeping in touch with Japan, what programs they are participating in, and how they are managing to balance their main studies and exploring new for us Japanese culture. Events like these remind me of the countless opportunities for personal and professional growth. I hope more students will discover and take advantage of such programs, fostering both their individual development and cross-cultural dialogue that benefits society.

2. Good Practices selected from Media Articles

Inbound : Group1 (Peacebuilding) Publisher : Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)
Title : Visit to Japan – bridge to new perspectives and lifelong connections for 13 young people from WB
<u>URL: Visit to Japan – bridge to new perspectives and lifelong connections for 13 young people from WB – Regional Youth Cooperation Office</u>

WESTERN BALKANS – Beginning of December marked the start of the lifetime journey for 13 young people from Western Balkans region, who paid official visit to Japan within “Japan’s Friendship Ties Program” – MIRAI. This is the 5th cycle of the program that Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) implemented in cooperation with the Government of Japan with the aim to promote mutual understanding, enhance intellectual discussion and build a strong network among future leaders. From 3rd to 10th of December, 13 young people previously selected through a highly competitive process among nearly 400 applicants, had an opportunity to visit important historical sites and education institutions in Tokyo and Hiroshima, and through dialogue and discussions deepen their knowledge on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Accompanied by the Head of RYCO’s Local Branch Office in North Macedonia, Vladimir Gjorgjevski, MIRAI participants had a chance to engage in a fruitful discussion on peacebuilding with students and a professor from Sofia University, where they shared their understanding of peace, and through interactive group work, offered solutions for overcoming peace threats. “Visiting Japan gave me a profound appreciation for its culture of respect and mindfulness. I also saw how Japan’s post-war pacifism and diplomacy are not just policies but values embedded in everyday life, guiding how conflicts are approached with balance and mutual respect. This experience inspired me to reflect on the power of intentionality and collective responsibility in transforming nations,” shared Dragana Kurti, participant from Albania. During first days of visit, participants learned about Japan’s efforts towards peacebuilding through a visit to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and later, during their visit to Hiroshima, were engaged in an insightful discussion on how Japan dealt with its past, particularly the aftermath of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima.

The visit to the Peace Memorial Park left the deepest impact on Agon Rexhepi, participant from Kosovo*, who felt especially empathetic about themes of war and its devastating consequences.

“Standing in Hiroshima, witnessing the documented experiences and profound suffering of its people, was both moving and humbling. I deeply admire how Japanese society has preserved this history, reminding us that a history forgotten is bound to be repeated. It stands as a powerful testament that peace is the only way forward,” said Agon.

Mila Jovanovikj from North Macedonia shares same impressions. “To me, visiting Hiroshima was the most impactful part of the journey – it was a powerful reminder of the resilience of humanity and the importance of peace,” stated Mila and added that the entire experience taught her the value of intercultural dialogue and inspired her to apply these lessons to promote cooperation and inclusivity in her community. “This journey was more than just a cultural exchange. It was a bridge to new perspectives and lifelong connections,” Mila concluded.

As the reception at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan officially marked the end of seven-day journey to the Land of Rising Sun, this program served as a transformative experience for 13 young people from WB6. From the charming streets of Miyajima Island to busy streets of Tokyo, they deepen their understanding on the strength of reconciliation and peace.

By far, around 80 young people from Western Balkan region had an opportunity to participate in the MIRAI program, all sharing impressions of the life-changing experience that broadened their perspectives on intercultural relations, peacebuilding and networking.

“Japan never stopped moving, and that is a lesson the youth of Western Balkans can take home. The youth of our region is showcasing new waves of resilience and determination, and ties with Japan can only help us become even better champions of peace, and ambassadors of all the beauty Western Balkans possess,” is the message from 5th cycle participant from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ena Porča.

Positive impact of this program is an additional motive for RYCO to continue with its implementation in cooperation with Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and process for selecting candidates for the new batch of MIRAI program will be open next year in a form of call published on RYCO website.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Inbound : Group 2 (Diplomacy and Security Policy)
Publisher : Embassy of Japan in Portugal News Letter

Title : O Programa MIRAI 2024

URL <https://www.pt.emb-japan.go.jp/files/100770145.pdf>

TEMA ESPECIAL// O PROGRAMA MIRAI 2024

O Programa MIRAI (Mutual-understanding, Intellectual Relations and Academic Exchange Initiative) é um programa do governo japonês que convita grupos de estudantes de pós-graduação/licenciatura e jovens profissionais da Europa, da Ásia Central e do Cileucasso a visitarem o Japão para um intercâmbio intelectual com estudantes e investigadores japoneses da mesma geração. Este ano, 121 participantes visitaram o Japão durante cerca de 10 dias, no âmbito de cinco temas: Construção da paz, Ciência e tecnologia, diplomacia e segurança, economia e negócios, e ambiente e ecologia. De Portugal, a estudante doutoranda Carla Melo participou no grupo da diplomacia e segurança. Segue-se um relatório da Carla.



MY MIRAI -

UM RELATO DA MINHA EXPERIÊNCIA NO JAPÃO

Foi no passado mês de novembro, entre os dias 6 a 12, que tive a oportunidade de participar no Programa MIRAI, no Grupo 2 de Diplomacy and Security Policy e, na verdade, sinto que ainda não consegui processar tudo o que experienciei, vi e aprendi, no curto tempo que passei no Japão.

O Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE), criado em 1977, tem como objetivos o de contribuir para o desenvolvimento da sociedade global e o de aprofundar as relações bilaterais do Japão com outros países do mundo, através da realização de atividades de intercâmbio para estudantes e investigadores que trabalhem no Japão. No meu caso, foi no Programa MIRAI (Mutual Understanding, Intellectual Relations, Academic Exchange Initiative), vocacionado para estudantes e investigadores europeus que estejam a estudar o Japão, que tive o prazer de participar.



Uma curiosidade interessante é que mirai (未来) significa "futuro" e, na verdade, durante todo o tempo de preparação para a minha participação neste programa, senti realmente que estava a dar um passo para aquilo que será o meu futuro enquanto estudante do Doutoramento em Relações Internacionais, a fazer a minha investigação sobre o Nordeste Asiático. Esta oportunidade foi, para mim, uma primeira experiência de trabalho de campo, pelo que me sinto extremamente grata por ter sido selecionada.

Este ano, pelo que me foi dito pelo incrível staff do Programa MIRAI, haverá um total de 81 participantes divididos nos 5 grupos temáticos disponíveis (Peacebuilding; Diplomacy and Security Policy; Economy and Business; Science and Technology; Environment and Green, and Rule of Law). No meu grupo, o 2, éramos 15 estudantes, de diferentes áreas de estudo, de diferentes países, com diferentes idades, e com diferentes experiências e conhecimentos sobre o Japão.

No entanto, foi com esta diversidade de participantes e com a ajuda e paciência incansáveis de todo o staff, que experienciamos o Japão, tanto a um nível académico – com visitas ao Ministério de Negócios Estrangeiros (MOFA), Ministério da Defesa (MoD), ao Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), à Universidade de Keio, e a diferentes Museus – como também a um nível cultural – com visitas ao Templo Senso-ji (金閣山延暦寺), à Tokyo Tower, ao Tokyo National Museum, entre muitos outros.

Tenho imenso para escrever sobre cada um destes dias, mas acredito que é mais pertinente me focar em alguns dos pontos que considero serem os mais representativos da minha experiência. Em primeiro lugar, **hospitalidade e simpatia**. Apesar de já ter a percepção da hospitalidade da população japonesa, sinto-me imensamente grata pela simpatia e paciência com que fomos recebidos e tratados durante todo o nosso tempo no Japão. Como devem imaginar, juntar um grupo de estudantes europeus e navegar com eles por entre o complicado sistema de metro em Tóquio, garantir que ninguém se perdesse, ter a paciência de tirar fotos constantemente, é algo que exige muito de qualquer pessoa. No entanto, não só o staff do Programa MIRAI que nos acompanhou (Morimoto-san e Touma-san, 本当にありがとうございます!) como todos os professores, funcionários e alunos que nos receberam em qualquer um dos lugares que visitámos, mostraram sempre os seus maiores sorrisos, responderam a todas as nossas questões e garantiram que tínhamos a melhor experiência possível (mesmo que chegassemos sempre atrasados!).

Em segundo lugar, **amizade**. Se em Portugal, quando estava a estudar Língua e Cultura Japonesas na Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra (FLUL) com a Professora Ayano Shinzato, tive já o privilégio de conhecer amigos japoneses com quem ainda falo hoje, esta experiência no Japão trouxe-me ainda mais amizades e conexões. Não só os estudantes da Universidade de Keio nos acompanharam durante o seu dia sem aulas, como também, no meu caso em específico, me senti muito próxima e

extremamente grata a todos os estudantes, professores e funcionários que conversaram comigo, me ajudaram a perceber mais e melhor sobre o Japão e sobre a sua história diplomática.



Em terceiro lugar, **cultura**. Quer se esteja, ou não, a estudar ou a trabalhar sobre o Japão, não há como negar a sua cultura. Aqui não me refiro apenas à cultura pop que tão bem conhecemos, mas sim a toda a cultura japonesa. Em cada rua, em cada canto, somos lembrados da extensa cultura japonesa, seja através de pequenos templos, de pequenas mesas nas estações de metro onde podemos colecionar carimbos de determinada linha, seja a olhar para os diferentes manjinhos de cada distrito da cidade, decorados de uma forma especial. Nem me vou alongar sobre visitas a museus e exposições e até mesmo de uma simples visita a uma *konami* (コンパニ). Em cada esquina, em cada rua, seja de noite ou de dia, a cultura está à vista de todos e, o que sinto, é que são necessários vários dias para conseguirmos entender, com detalhe, todos estes aspetos culturais.



Por fim, **diplomacia**. No fundo, o objetivo da minha participação no Programa MIRAI é o de regressar a Portugal e contribuir para o aprofundamento das relações entre Portugal e o Japão. Apoiando a minha entrevista para participação neste programa, mencionei que não sabia se seria a melhor escolha para a minha responsabilidade, no entanto quero acreditar que ganhei as ferramentas necessárias para ajudar neste contexto. A diplomacia japonesa, por si só, é um tópico fascinante. Falar de diplomacia no Japão é sinónimo de entender a história do país, aprender um pouco da sua língua, analisar as suas políticas domésticas e externas, e esta experiência foi bastante elucidativa para mim nestas dimensões.

Agora, praticamente um mês depois de regressar a Portugal, sinto que ainda estou em Tóquio. Ainda mantenho contacto com os colegas europeus que partilharam esta experiência comigo e com os colegas, funcionários e professores japoneses que tanto me ajudaram durante esta curta estadia. Esta foi uma experiência inesquecível, tanto a nível pessoal como académico, e mal posso esperar para regressar ao Japão e sentir, de novo, a simpatia, hospitalidade, cultura e diplomacia japonesas, que me proporcionaram tão boas memórias!

Carla Melo >> Doutoranda em Relações Internacionais: Geopolítica e Geoeconomia na Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa (UAL), e Bolseira do Centro Científico e Cultural de Maastricht para a Ciência e Tecnologia (CCCM-CTC).

(Following English Translated from Portuguese by DeepL)

MY MIRAI - An Account of My Experience in Japan! It was last November, from the 6th to the 12th, that I had the opportunity to take part in the MIRAI Programme, in Group 2 Diplomacy and Security Policy and, in truth, I feel that I still haven't managed to process everything I experienced, saw and learned in the short time I spent in Japan.

I participated in the MIRAI Program (Mutual Understanding, Intellectual Relations, Academic Exchange Initiative), aimed at European students and researchers studying Japan.

An interesting fact is that MIRAI (未来) means 'future' and, in fact, during all the preparation for my participation in this program, I really felt that I was taking a step toward what will be my future as a PhD student in International Relations, doing her research on North-East Asia. This opportunity was my first fieldwork experience, so I feel extremely grateful to have been selected. This year, there will be a total of 84 participants divided into the 6 thematic groups available (Peacebuilding; Diplomacy and Security Policy; Economy and Business; Science and Technology; Environment and Green, and Rule of Law). In my group, group 2, there were 16 students from different fields of study, different countries, different ages, and with different experiences and knowledge of Japan.

However, it was with this diversity of participants and the tireless help and patience of all the staff that we experienced Japan, both on an academic level - with visits to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Keio University, and different museums - as well as on a cultural level - with visits to Senso-ji Temple, Tokyo Tower, the Tokyo National Museum, among many others. I have so much to write about each of these days, but I think it's more pertinent to focus on some of the points that I consider to be the most representative of my experience.

Firstly, hospitality and friendliness. Although I already realized how hospitable the Japanese people are, I feel immensely grateful for the friendliness and patience with which we were received and treated throughout our time in Japan. As you can imagine, getting a group of European students together and navigating Tokyo's complicated metro system with them, making sure no one gets lost, and having the patience to constantly take photos is something that takes a lot out of anyone. However, not only the MIRAI Program staff who accompanied us, but all the teachers, staff, and students who welcomed us in any of the places we visited, always showed their biggest smiles, answered all our questions, and made sure we had the best experience possible (even if we were always late!).

Secondly, friendship. In Portugal, when I was studying Japanese Language and Culture at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Coimbra (FLUL) with Professor Ayano Shinzato, I already had the privilege of meeting Japanese friends who I still talk to today, this experience in Japan brought me even more

friendships and connections. Not only did the students from Keio University accompany us during their day without classes, but in my case, I felt very close to them. I am extremely grateful to all the students, teachers, and staff who talked to me, and helped me to understand more and better about Japan and its diplomatic history.

Thirdly, culture. Whether or not you're studying or working in Japan, there's no denying its culture. Here I'm not just referring to the pop culture we know so well, but to the whole of Japanese culture. On every street, on every corner, we are reminded of Japan's extensive culture, be it through small temples, little tables in metro stations where we can collect stamps from a particular line, or looking at the different manholes in each district of the city, decorated in a special way. I'm not even going to go on about visits to museums and exhibitions or even a simple visit to a convenience store (KONBINI). On every corner, in every street, night or day, culture is there for all to see, and what I feel is that it takes several days to understand all these cultural aspects in detail.

Finally, diplomacy. Basically, the aim of my participation in the MIRAI Program is to return to Portugal and contribute to deepening relations between Portugal and Japan. When I was interviewed to take part in this program, I mentioned that I didn't know if I would be the best choice for such a responsibility, but I want to believe that I have gained the necessary tools to help in this context. Japanese diplomacy is a fascinating topic. Talking about diplomacy in Japan is synonymous with understanding the country's history, learning a little about its language, analyzing its domestic and foreign policies, and this experience has been very enlightening for me in these dimensions. Now, almost a month after returning to Portugal, I feel like I'm still in Tokyo. I still keep in touch with the European colleagues who shared this experience with me and with the Japanese colleagues, officials, and teachers who helped me so much during this short stay. This was an unforgettable experience, both personally and academically, and I can't wait to return to Japan and experience once again the Japanese friendliness, hospitality, culture, and diplomacy that gave me such great memories!

Carla Melo >> PhD student in International Relations: Geopolitics and Geoeconomics at the Autonomous University of Lisbon (UAL).
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Inbound : Group 3 (Economy and Business)
Publisher : University of TARTU, Institute of Cultural Research
Title : A Week in the Land of the Rising Sun: Rodion's Story About Japan
URL A Week in the Land of the Rising Sun: Rodion's Story About Japan Tartu Ülikool

A Week in the Land of the Rising Sun: Rodion's Story About Japan



Source: November 5th, 2020. A group of people in front of a building with a large 'MIRAI' logo. The group is standing in front of a building with a large 'MIRAI' logo. The group is standing in front of a building with a large 'MIRAI' logo.

After meeting all the participants, especially the guys from my group, we went straight from the airport to lunch – straight to the prestigious Ginza district. A traditional Japanese restaurant awaited us, where we enjoyed tempura, tofu, miso soup, mochi and, of course, rice. After a delicious lunch, the next item on the program was the orientation, where we were told what was to come in the coming days and the last details were clarified. An hour later, we were already at the conference centre, where the program's organisers officially welcomed us, we met the supervisors, received badges and began to discuss further plans. I decided to take on the role of the leader of our group, with a little more responsibility: I had to make sure that everything went smoothly and help other

Day seven
6:30 AM - Hands apart! I'm waiting for my flight back to Estonia.

Day one

The first morning in Japan was exciting. I was in a class for special children. We were greeted with smiles and handshakes in our languages and signs of our hearts. I was in a class for special children. We were greeted with smiles and handshakes in our languages and signs of our hearts.

After that, we went back to the program for the day. Along the way, we stopped at various cafes and shops. I was in a class for special children. We were greeted with smiles and handshakes in our languages and signs of our hearts.

Day three
The program continued, and the next day was the Japan Orientation. We had a lot of fun and learned a lot about Japan. I was in a class for special children. We were greeted with smiles and handshakes in our languages and signs of our hearts.

Day five
The program continued, and the next day was the Japan Orientation. We had a lot of fun and learned a lot about Japan. I was in a class for special children. We were greeted with smiles and handshakes in our languages and signs of our hearts.

Day seven
The program continued, and the next day was the Japan Orientation. We had a lot of fun and learned a lot about Japan. I was in a class for special children. We were greeted with smiles and handshakes in our languages and signs of our hearts.

Day nine
The program continued, and the next day was the Japan Orientation. We had a lot of fun and learned a lot about Japan. I was in a class for special children. We were greeted with smiles and handshakes in our languages and signs of our hearts.

Day eleven
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Day thirteen
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Day fifteen
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Day seventeen
The program continued, and the next day was the Japan Orientation. We had a lot of fun and learned a lot about Japan. I was in a class for special children. We were greeted with smiles and handshakes in our languages and signs of our hearts.

Day nineteen
The program continued, and the next day was the Japan Orientation. We had a lot of fun and learned a lot about Japan. I was in a class for special children. We were greeted with smiles and handshakes in our languages and signs of our hearts.

Day twenty-one
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Day twenty-three
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Day twenty-five
The program continued, and the next day was the Japan Orientation. We had a lot of fun and learned a lot about Japan. I was in a class for special children. We were greeted with smiles and handshakes in our languages and signs of our hearts.

Day twenty-seven
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Day twenty-nine
The program continued, and the next day was the Japan Orientation. We had a lot of fun and learned a lot about Japan. I was in a class for special children. We were greeted with smiles and handshakes in our languages and signs of our hearts.

Day thirty-one
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Day thirty-nine
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Day forty-one
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Day sixty-one
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Day eighty-one
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Day eighty-three
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Tuesday, November 5th. It's 05:00, and my journey to my dream of seeing Japan, the land of the rising sun, with my own eyes begins.

After a long 15-hour flight and 13 hours of transit, I found myself in Tokyo the next day at Haneda Airport. After a quick check of all my documents and making my way out of the security area, I spotted the sign that read "MIRAI" That's when it hit me - my exciting week-long adventure in Tokyo was officially starting!

Exactly six months ago, I applied to participate in the "MIRAI" program, which the Japanese government carries out. Its goal is to strengthen the foundations of future relations between Japan and other countries by inviting future leaders to be their countries' delegates. After several stages of selection, interviews and application, I received a letter one morning: I was chosen! Among more than 2,000 applications worldwide, I and 80 other participants were invited to represent our countries. To say that I was happy is to say nothing!

Day one

After meeting all the participants, especially the guys from my group, we went straight from the airport to lunch – straight to the prestigious Ginza district. A traditional Japanese restaurant awaited us, where we enjoyed tempura, tofu, miso soup, mochi and, of course, rice. After a delicious lunch, the next item on the program was the orientation, where we were told what was to come in the coming days and the last details were clarified. An hour later, we were already at the conference centre, where the program's organisers officially welcomed us, we met the supervisors, received badges and began to discuss further plans. I decided to take on the role of the leader of our group, with a little more responsibility: I had to make sure that everything went smoothly and help other

participants. But I was incredibly lucky – my group turned out to be very friendly and pleasant, and working and spending time with these people was an absolute pleasure!

After the orientation, we went to dinner. As for the food, we were fed great throughout the project: every 2-3 hours, in some of the most expensive and prestigious establishments, which I was pleased about. After dinner, we finally headed to the hotel to relieve the burden of fatigue and freshen up after a two-day flight. As expected, the hotel was premium class, located in an area built on an artificial island. My roommate was a participant from Finland, with whom I had a lot in common, and we quickly found a common language. The first culture shock in Japan for me, of course, was the toilet. I would never have thought I would be sitting with instructions in my hands, trying to figure out how to use them. Looking ahead, I sincerely miss these toilets - this is the peak of comfort. This is where our first day of the program ended: we were placed in rooms and given free time until 11 pm, which we, of course, took advantage of by exploring the area around the hotel. Even then, I noticed how clean the streets of Tokyo are and how safe it is to walk along them at night. I wouldn't say it's any different in Estonia, but the level of Tokyo, especially for a metropolis, is definitely impressive. We were surrounded by Konbini (mini-markets), ramen restaurants, vending machines - everything you can imagine and dream about.

Day two

The second day started at 5 am, as did all the following ones. The average amount of sleep during the entire trip was 2-3 hours, which is quite logical - I personally did not come to Japan to sleep but to enjoy every opportunity. On this day, according to the plan, we visited Hitotsubashi University, one of Japan's most prestigious business schools, and Kunitachi 1st Junior High School to spend time with students and get to know the Japanese education system better.

A two-hour bus ride - and here we are already at Hitotsubashi University, where we were warmly greeted by students and professor TAKEUCHI Kan, who spent the whole day with us. It all started with a short lecture on the Japanese economy: its historical aspects and future. Then, we had the opportunity to play a game based on the prisoner's dilemma. Here, a noticeable difference in the interpretation of the game and its results arose. I remember very well how, in my undergraduate economics program, we also played this game, but then the results were completely different. In the Japanese context, the emphasis is on teamwork, where the overall team result is the priority, not the individual result. This emphasises the need to give up selfishness for the common good, which goes against the concepts of Adam Smith and what we were taught in Estonia.

The professor noted that this approach is fundamental when solving global problems, such as achieving peace, combating climate change, or helping those in need. I was amazed that such an interpretation of economic processes takes place. I agree with this idea: I have never, and may my former professors forgive me, accepted the concept of selfishness in economics. Playing the prisoner's dilemma with this approach turned out to be exciting and very educational.

After lunch at the University cafeteria (which we don't have in Estonia...), we went to Kunitachi 1st Junior High School, which was a 15-20 minute walk from the campus. As we walked, I got a good look at a typical Tokyo residential area, and it was just beautiful! It was so cosy that I was ready to stay there forever. As soon as we approached the school, before we even had time to go through its gates, all the building windows instantly opened, and children leaned out of them, shouting at us that they loved us and shouting out all the phrases they knew in English. At that moment I realised: that this will going to be fun.

As soon as we arrived at the school, chaos ensued because "foreigners" visited it. I felt like a celebrity, walking through the corridors full of children. They swarmed us from all sides, shouting and trying to maintain at least some kind of contact. We moved from class to class, and even during lessons, we were allowed to observe the learning process itself. The most surprising thing for me was that phones are often banned in Japanese schools, which I think is a big plus - the children there are lively, enthusiastic and focused.

The most touching moment was visiting the last class - a class for special children. We were greeted with posters with inscriptions in our languages and images of our flags as soon as we entered. It was so cute that I was ready to stay with them for the whole day. We played Fruit Basket together, which allowed us to get to know each student better. It was incredible because the children could communicate with us totally in English! We had a great time playing games, answering their questions and letting them get to know us better. It was a day full of kindness and genuine emotions. After that, we went back to campus to finish the official program for the day. Along the way, we stopped at various stores on campus and the library, where I saw many interesting books. At this point, I felt that not knowing Japanese was hindering me. For example, I found a book about economics through the prism of alcohol consumption, which looks very interesting to me as an Estonian.

As soon as we finished with this, we went on to walk around the city and then to dinner. After dinner, we returned to the centre, namely to Shinjuku, where we were given free time until 11 o'clock. Shinjuku is an area where life literally boils and does not stop for a second. I just got lost among the endless lights, trying to catch every detail around me. At such moments, you begin to understand how much more there is to see in this life! People were everywhere, and here, my Estonian introversion began to make itself felt. We tried to visit everything we could, squeezing the maximum out of the remaining time. But it was quickly coming to an end, and the time came to return to the hotel on our own, using the largest metro in the world. Shinjuku Station is a challenge in itself: finding your platform among the many levels was not so easy. Thanks to Google Maps, which literally saved us in such moments. As soon as we got on the last train to the hotel, we could officially consider the day over.

Day three

The journey continues, and the next stop is the Tokyo Stock Exchange. With a cup of Argentine coffee, after checking our things at the entrance, we were already inside the exchange, where we had the opportunity to explore every corner and listen attentively to the guide's stories about the history of the exchange and the country's modern systems. It was exciting to learn that in Japan, green means a decrease in value compared to the previous closing price, and red, on the contrary, implies growth, which is different from Western markets, where everything is the other way around. Do you also know what became the basis for developing the Japanese stock market? The answer is rice!

After a quick lunch in the Ginza area, where several robots brought us food, we went to Tokyo Innovation Base - an incubator for startups, an analogue of which can be compared to StartUp Lab. There, we studied the ecosystem of Japanese startups in detail and learned about their current problems and strengths. We had several lectures and seminars, accompanied by lively discussions, where we could ask all the questions that interested us. For example, when comparing startups in Estonia and Japan, it became clear that in Estonia, projects are focused on solving global problems and finding solutions applicable to the whole world. In Japan, startups focus on local issues, rarely going beyond their country's borders. And guess what one of the most successful startups in recent times is connected with? Yes, rice again!

The day ended in the Akihabara and Shinjuku districts – places where it is easy to get lost for hours. Shops, slot machines, manga, pop culture – all this is captivating and does not let go. Here, what may be considered taboo in our country is perceived as the norm, which is incredible. I have never felt so free and liberated without fearing being judged for my hobbies.

Day four

If we hadn't touched on the topic of Japanese nature on this trip, it would hardly have been a success. So, on the fourth day, Mount Fuji itself was waiting for us. The three-hour bus ride to leave Tokyo seemed terrific to me. No matter how long you travel, the city never ends and continues. After a long road, the first stop was Oshino-Hakkai World Heritage Park in Yamanashi Prefecture. This is a place where you can truly feel what Japan is proud of. Deep ponds at least eight meters deep with colourful koi carp swimming are breathtaking sights. Mount Fuji majestically towered over

this village, giving the landscape a special magic.

After the park, we headed to the Mount Fuji World Heritage Center in Yamanashi Prefecture to learn more about the history of Fuji and the pilgrims who have strived to conquer its peak over the centuries. There, I got myself a new cap with the inscription "Fuji" - the perfect souvenir! After this trip out of town we returned to Tokyo, where dinner awaited us at a sumo restaurant. Did you know that there was a popular sumo wrestler from Estonia in Japan? Kaido Höhevelson, or Baruto Kaito - a real national treasure.

After dinner, we had some free time again and decided to spend it on the onsen. That evening, I apparently broke all possible records for breaking social norms - from the need to sit in complete silence to the correct use of tools in the onsen. But fortunately, the Japanese turned out to be incredibly friendly: they were always ready to help and explain everything, even without asking. They notice when foreigners are confused and immediately come to the rescue. After a rest, we continued to walk around the city, looking into different establishments and trying all possible sweets.

Day five

One of the days, we dedicated entirely to Japan's traditional culture. We went to the Tokyo National Museum in the morning and spent half a day exploring every corner. Although the museum was mainly dedicated to Japanese culture, its exhibition also included artefacts from other cultures, such as Egyptian mummies, which was a surprise for me. During the visit, we also had the unique opportunity to get acquainted with the art of the traditional Japanese tea ceremony. Our teacher was a master whose family had passed this skill down from generation to generation. We enjoyed matcha tea paired with a traditional wagashi dessert - a moment I remember for its sophistication and harmony.

We spent the afternoon in Asakusa: the Torii gate, Senso-ji Temple, traditional ryokans and old houses - all this creates a unique atmosphere where you feel like you are in the centre of Japanese history. I even decided to find out my fate; unfortunately, it was not the most favourable. According to tradition, the prediction had to be tied to a unique stand to "let go" of bad luck. There were some funny situations: one of the group members decided to buy himself a kimono as a souvenir, which he did successfully. But during lunch, when he asked the supervisors if they liked his new outfit, they burst out laughing - it turned out he had bought a woman's kimono.

I finished the day in Shibuya again, where I managed to see that every Sunday evening, when there are so many people on the streets, getting through the crowd becomes a real challenge. Something is happening on every corner: music, laughter, lively conversations, and establishments keep their doors open, inviting you in. To my surprise, passing by one bar, I noticed Estonian beer there - not just one kind, but several at once! How it ended up there remains to be seen.

Day six

Here comes the final day of the project, everything flew by so quickly that I didn't even realise how it was time to say goodbye. The program for this day was not too busy, but it turned out to be the most important one in the whole project. But before the cherry on the cake, we visited Nakagawa Masashichi Shoten in the morning. This unique enterprise strives to show a different Japan, combining the best from every corner of the country in one place. Here you can see amazing products and buy something as a souvenir. The company's owner gave us a lecture on how important it is to appreciate your culture and work on its preservation and development. Finally, my final purchase was whiskey from the Japanese island of Okinawa — a symbolic gift that reminded me of the uniqueness of this trip.

And so, after everything we have been through, we stand in front of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Why are we there? To present our report to the higher-ups, we will discuss what we have learned during the project and how we plan to use the experience gained. Everything was going well – report after report, questions after answers, new connections were made, and new

opportunities opened up. But the most unexpected moment came when the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs entered the conference room. None of us expected it. His sincere desire to get to know us and learn our opinions and plans for the future was truly impressive. Despite all the strictness of the Japanese hierarchy, he talked to us as equals, which stunned me. This may seem incredible to those familiar with the peculiarities of the Japanese society. Although we represented our countries as delegates, I did not even imagine my role was so important that I could talk on equal terms with someone of such a level. However, everything went wonderfully. And so the official program came to an end.

Day seven

6:30 AM - Haneda airport, I'm waiting for my flight back to Estonia.

Inbound : Group4 (Science and Technology)
Publisher : National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute"

Title : ТПоїздка в Японію: тиждень у країні надсучасних технологій та стародавніх традицій
(Trip to Japan: a week in the land of cutting-edge technology and ancient traditions)

URL: <https://kpi.ua/2025-kp9-jp>

Національний технічний університет України
 Київський політехнічний інститут імені Ігоря Сікорського

УНІВЕРСИТЕТ ВСТУП ОСВІТА НАУКА СТУДЕНТСТВО

оловна > Поїздка в Японію: тиждень у країні надсучасних технологій та стародавніх традицій

ТПоїздка в Японію: тиждень у країні надсучасних технологій та стародавніх традицій

Популярні сьогодні
 статті

- Сліпакський землетрус
- Фредерик Шопен: деякі факти з життя генія
- Дихальні апарати для здоров'я
- Система Миколи Амосова "1000 рух"
- Нобелівські лауреати з України

Архів газети "Київський політехнік"

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Останні матеріали сайту

Без знайомства з новими ідеями, технологіями та досвідом їхнього впровадження в різних країнах розвиток нині неможливий. Тому для мене дуже велике значення має участь у проєктах міжнародного діалогу і співпраці. Одна з моїх нещодавніх поїздок стала можливою завдяки короткостроковій програмі студентського обміну MIRAI (Mutual understanding, Intellectual Relations and Academic exchange Initiative), що реалізується Міністерством зовнішніх справ Японії. У її межах студенти поділяються на шість груп відповідно до їхніх інтересів і майбутніх планів. Серед них групи "Мир", "Дипломатія та політика безпеки", "Економіка та бізнес", "Наука та технології", "Навколишнє середовище" та "Верховенство права". Зважаючи на те, що я вивчаю інженерію та планую й надалі розвиватися в цьому напрямі, я брала участь у групі

Without acquaintance with new ideas, technologies, and experience of their implementation in different countries, development is now impossible. Therefore, I need to participate in projects, interethnic dialogue, and cooperation. One of my recent trips was made possible by the short-term student exchange program MIRAI (Mutual Understanding, Intellectual Relations, and Academic Exchange Initiative), implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Within it, students are divided into six groups according to their interests and future plans. Among them are the groups "Peace", "Diplomacy and Security Policy", "Economy and Business", "Science and Technology", "Environment" and "Rule of Law". Due to the fact that I am studying engineering and plan to continue to develop in this direction, I participated in the "Science and Technology" group.

The trip lasted a week, excluding the time needed to move. We spent the first three days in Tokyo, then three in Ibaraki, and back to Tokyo. The city the group goes to depends on the theme of the group. For example, the group "Peace" went to Hiroshima (or Hiroshima, as the name of this city is pronounced in Japanese). Despite the short duration of the program, due to a busy schedule, we managed to get to

know Japan closely.

MIRAI translates to "Future" in Japanese, and this program was really about the future. We discussed a lot of possible cooperation in the fields of education, science, and technology, both in a personal format and in the format of states. During the trip, they visited the leading Japanese companies Panasonic, Jaxa, and Cyberdyne. I was pleasantly surprised by the futuristic technologies they are currently working on. Panasonic is making extensive use of green energy, improving solar panels by reducing their size and increasing efficiency. They are also working on creating a single network of their gadgets, which will optimize their work. Jaxa develops space technologies, providing the ability to conduct research in space. By the way, before this visit, it was difficult for me to imagine how complex the process is to create rockets, prepare astronauts for flight, and ensure the lives of people in space. In turn, "Cyberdyne" is working to increase human capabilities through technology and is already using its robots for the rehabilitation of mobility disorders.

As a student of a technical university, the most important for me were the visits to the Shibaur Institute of Technology and the research institution RIKEN Center. At the institute, we spent the whole day communicating with students and visiting laboratories. As I study non-destructive testing, I was most impressed by the use of terahertz waves for structural diagnostics and medical research. All laboratories are unique and deal with very interesting futuristic problems: augmented reality, brain-controlled technologies, and separation of hydrogen from the air. Many of the research carried out by the university's graduate students receive funding from Japanese companies, which shows the high interest of the commercial sector in the technological development of the country. At the RIKEN Center, we visited the department dedicated to the study of the human brain. I was surprised by the number of foreign personnel working at the Center. All research, publications, and posters are written or duplicated in English, making the Center a comfortable place to work in the field of science and technology for scientists who do not speak Japanese. On its basis, the Center allows both graduate students and students to conduct research.

Inbound : Group 5 (Environment and Green)

Publisher : TU Wien (Austria's largest research and educational institution in the field of technology and natural sciences)

Title : TU Wien student Alex participated in the MIRAI-program

URL: <https://www.tuwien.at/tu-wien/aktuelles/news/news/tu-wien-student-alex-participated-in-the-mirai-program>

TU Wien / Activities / News

21. November 2024

TU Wien student Alex participated in the MIRAI-program

The fully funded MIRAI Program, sponsored by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), is a short-term stay in Japan. It primarily targets undergraduate and master's students but is also open to young professionals and PhD students.



MIRAI
Cooperation

Summary by Alex after successful participation in the program

The program's name is both an acronym - standing for Mutual understanding, Intellectual Relations, and Academic exchange Initiative - and the Japanese word for "future", aptly capturing its overarching objectives.

Participants in the program visit some of Japan's most prestigious universities, meet with leading companies, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and deepen their understanding of Japanese culture and customs. The program's goal is to foster mutual understanding and friendly relations between strong future European researchers and experts, and Japan. This objective is further strengthened by the establishment of numerous personal connections through enriching discussions. By encouraging future academic and economic exchange, the MIRAI Program aims to lay the foundation for robust international relationships.

Participant Groups and Topics

For the 2024/2025 batch, 121 young individuals will participate, of whom I was among the 44 students who already traveled to Japan (Tokyo) in November 2024. Participants are divided into six thematic groups, each visiting Japan at different times and following unique, tailored programs. This year's thematic groups are:

- Peacebuilding
- Diplomacy and Security Policy
- Economy and Business
- Science and Technology
- Environment and Green
- Rule of Law

I was part of Group 5 – Environment and Green, comprising 14 participants. Reflecting the broad scope of the theme, our academic backgrounds were equally diverse, ranging from agricultural sciences, architecture, and marketing to law, environmental engineering, and economics. Among the participants, 12 were master's students, while one each was an advanced bachelor's student and a PhD candidate.

Pre-departure Preparations

Before the trip, we attended two virtual sessions via Zoom. These sessions covered details about the program and travel logistics, as well as essential information on Japanese customs, culture, and language. The Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE), the organization responsible for program implementation both online and on-site, handled all flight-, hotel-, and other arrangements. This allowed

Visit to Waseda University

At Waseda University, Professor NODU Takahashi delivered an insightful lecture on the environmental awareness of the Japanese population. Following the lecture, we engaged in discussions with local students, exchanging viewpoints and learning firsthand about shared challenges and areas where Europe and Japan can learn from one another. Topics ranged from overarching themes like environmental consciousness to specific practical insights.

One fascinating anecdote for me, as an avid home cook, was learning about a Japanese method of thickening leftover cooking oil with powder for disposal in household waste - contrast this with the more complex disposal practices in Europe.

Lecture by the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO)

NEDO presented its mission to transition Japan from reliance on fossil fuels to a hydrogen-based society. While the Japanese government has set ambitious goals for 2050, broader public support and recognition of these efforts remain limited. However, NEDO remains steady in their overall vision and believes in a positive future development.

Kawasaki City Environment Research Institute (USE)

At USE, we learned how Kawasaki City, once dominated by heavy industry, transformed into one of Japan's cities with the best air quality. In the 1960s, the city suffered severe air pollution, leading to high rates of asthma, many deaths annually, and significant public protests. Hearing about the journey from that period to today, where such improvements were achieved despite the ongoing strong density of industry, was both inspiring and hopeful. This case demonstrated that local interventions can drive substantial change and highlighted the potential for similar approaches in other communities worldwide.

Cultural Excursions

Among the many cultural experiences, to me, a visit to the World Heritage Otsu-Hakus Park and the Yamashiro Prefectural Fujisan World Heritage Center stood out. Although the iconic peak of Mount Fuji was, for the first time in 130 years, not snow-capped due to the effects of human-made climate change, its majestic presence over the vibrant autumn landscape was breathtaking.

Visits to Government Ministries

On the final day, we visited two ministries. At the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), we learned about regulatory interventions aimed at decarbonizing Japan's most polluting industries. The session concluded with a lively discussion with officials, comparing European and Japanese approaches. Later, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

(MOFA), we presented our personal insights during the closing session, attended by Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. FUKUDA Yoshi. Meeting such a high-ranking official and engaging in direct dialogue was a true honor for all of us.

Post-Program Responsibilities/Action Plan for Dissemination

Upon returning, we are tasked with sharing our experiences and promoting the program to interested peers at our universities (for students like myself) or workplaces (for employed participants). I hope this report provides a helpful overview. For further details, I have compiled an FAQ, which can be accessed below.

Should you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out to the JASCE team, who will forward your inquiries to me. I will both respond directly to you and incorporate your questions into the FAQ.

どうもありがとう。

Alexander Schweitzer

[Download FAQ \(PDF\)](#)

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participants to focus entirely on the program's content and maximize their learning.

Program Highlights in Japan

During the intensive program, held from November 6 to November 11 under perfect autumn weather, our group focused on various aspects of sustainability in Japan. We explored the current state and future ambitions of sustainability initiatives from both research and business perspectives. Additionally, we immersed ourselves in Japanese culture, both through the official program and during informal evening activities. Below are some standout highlights from Group 5's official program:

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Alexander Schweitzer

Inbound : Group 6 (Rule of Law) Publisher : The Ministry of Education of TURKMENISTAN

Title : A student of Turkmen State University participated in a short-term study program held in Japan

URL : <https://www.education.gov.tm/news-details/2419>

January 23, 2025, 22:48 296

A student of Turkmen State University participated in a short-term study program held in Japan



Between January 13 and 21, H. Myratgeldiyeva, a fourth-year student specializing in law at Magtymguly Turkmen State University, participated in a short-term study program under Japan's MIRAI educational initiative titled "Mutual Understanding, Intellectual Exchanges, and Academic Interaction." The program focused on the theme of "Rule of Law."

During the program, general lectures were conducted on topics such as "Japan's Foreign Policy Towards Central Asia and the Caucasus", "The Rule of Law in the International Community", "An Overview of Japan's Administrative Judicial System", "Law and Justice System and Legal Education in Japan", and "Achieving the Uniqueness of Law Through Legal Cooperation".

The purpose of this program was to introduce participants to Japan's legal and educational systems, culture, arts, historical sites, and national identity. To achieve this, general lectures were conducted with the participation of highly qualified specialists in these fields.

The short-term program also included the participation of law students, graduate students, and legal professionals from countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.

Magtymguly Turkmen State University

Also read: [Turkmenportal](#)

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Magtymguly Turkmen State University