



EU-JAPAN CENTRE FOR INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION

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Seminar Report

Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy in the EU and Japan

Tokyo, 15 February 2016

The EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) co-organized a seminar on Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy (RE/CE) on February 15, 2016 in Tokyo (programme annexed). The Seminar enjoyed a large number of attendants (more than 180 people) of government, business and academic background, reflecting a strong interest in the subject.

The seminar consisted of three sessions. The first session was the introduction of RE/CE in the European Union. Ms Fulvia Raffaelli of European Commission's DG GROW gave an overview on the current situation of RE/CE in EU, centering around the new EU Action Plan. According to Ms Raffaelli, the objective of the Circular Economy model is to preserve the value of products, materials and resources in the economy for as long as possible, and to minimize the generation of waste. Therefore, the concept is not restricted to waste management or recycling, and is much wider. Ms Raffaelli points out that the circular economy is closely related to raw materials policy and that is why synergies are being sought between the Circular Economy Package (CEP) and the Raw Materials Initiative. As for international cooperation, Ms Raffaelli clarified that the EU would be looking forward to cooperate on the circular economy and wider resource efficiency agenda with various partners. She also said that they especially would like to work together with the Japanese government and with METI on both a bilateral and multilateral basis.

Mr. Michael-John Bennett of DG GROW explained basics of the EU Ecodesign and Energy Labelling schemes, clarifying a guiding criteria for implementation. As for products' selection, those with significant volume of sales and trade, significant environmental impact and potential for improving the environment without entailing excessive costs can be considered as subjects. As for criteria, no negative impact on functionality, health and safety, affordability and industry's competitiveness are prerequisites.

Ms Rie Arai of the Mitsubishi Research Institute made a report on the European industry organizations' position and opinion concerning the CEP, which was the result of a field

survey executed in Europe. According to Ms Arai, the study found that manufacturers and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) tend to call for voluntary approaches, whereas recycling and waste process companies tend to call for ensuring effectiveness of policies and further incentives. As for the position and opinion on the CEP, she mentioned that there is a basic agreement on its concept with some questions on its effectiveness.

In the second session, the situation on RE/CE in Japan was explained. First, Mr. Hideyuki Umeda of the METI explained the current situation, centering around judicial frameworks. He also made a comparative analysis between the EU and Japan. As for recycling efforts, for example, he thinks that Japan is more advanced in controlling the generation of by-products and making efforts for reuse but it is behind EU for not setting reduction targets for recycling and landfill of household waste and not yet developed traceability systems. It is a challenge for both Japan and the EU to develop an information sharing method for best practices.

Second, Mr. Daijiro Ueyama of the Toshiba Corporation explained the achievement of the Home Appliance Recycling Act and eco-friendly activities of Japanese home appliance companies. He showed that the recycling rates for major electronic home appliances were high in Japan.

The third session was a panel discussion featuring the prospects for circular economy policy implementation and EU-Japan cooperation. Prof. Eiji Hosoda of Keio University was the moderator. According to Prof. Hosoda, the policy formulating process in the EU is transparent and easy to understand thanks to such procedures as stakeholders consultation. Mr. Umeda pointed out that in Japan, voluntary efforts were encouraged until now and because of that, RE/CE activities of the private sector showed promising advancements. However, partly because these are voluntary activities, it was not very easy for the third party to know what was actually going on, which remains as a challenge for improving transparency. Prof. Hosono and Mr. Umeda agreed that one of the advantages of EU CEP was that it was considered as a tool for economic growth, not as a burdensome regulation. According to Ms Raffaelli, there is a certain similarity between the Japanese and the European approach to RE/CE and it is very important to continue dialogue in order to have better regulations.

Prepared by Toshiro Fukura, Manager, Policy Analysis and Seminars

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13:30-13:40 Opening Remarks: Mr. Hiroki Mitsumata, Deputy Director General for Technology and Environment, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)

<Session 1: Introduction to Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy from the EU Perspective >

- 13:40-14:10 **“Closing the loop – An EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy”**
Speaker: Ms Fulvia Raffaelli, Acting Head of Unit – Clean Technologies and Products, DG GROW, European Commission
- 14:10-14:30 **“Overview of EU Ecodesign and Energy Labelling Schemes”**
Speaker: Mr. Michael-John Bennett, Policy Officer – Clean Technologies and Products, DG GROW, European Commission
- 14:30-14:50 **“Report on Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy in the European Union”**
Speaker: Ms Rie Arai, Researcher, Environment & Energy Research Division, Mitsubishi Research Institute
- 14:50-15:00 Q&A
- 15:00-15:20 Break

<Session 2: Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy in Japan >

- 15:20-15:50 **“Current Activities and Future Direction Related to Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy in Japan”**
Speaker: Mr. Hideyuki Umeda, Deputy Director, Recycling Promotion Division, Industrial Science and Technology Policy and Environment Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)
- 15:50-16:10 **“Corporate Activities on Increasing Resource Efficiency in Japan”**
Speaker: Mr. Daijiro Ueyama, Senior Manager, Home Appliance Recycling Promotion Office, Customer Satisfaction Division, Toshiba Corporation
- 16:10-16:20 Q&A
- 15:00-15:20 Break

<Session 3: Prospects for Circular Economy Policy Implementation and EU-Japan Cooperation>

- 16:20-17:20 Panel Discussion and Q&A
- Moderator: Prof. Eiji Hosoda, Faculty of Economics, Keio University
- Panellists: ■ Ms Fulvia Raffaelli, Acting Head of Unit – Clean Technologies and Products, DG GROW, European Commission
- Mr. Michael-John Bennett, Policy Officer – Clean Technologies and Products, DG GROW, European Commission
- Mr. Hideyuki Umeda, Deputy Director, Recycling Promotion Division, Industrial Science and Technology Policy and Environment Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)
- Mr. Daijiro Ueyama, Senior Manager, Home Appliance Recycling Promotion Office, Customer Satisfaction Division, Toshiba Corporation
- 17:20-17:30 Closing Remarks: Mr. Silviu Jora, General Manager, EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation