

PRESS RELEASE

26 January 2011

**Reinforced Science and Technology Cooperation Network between
Japan and Europe with CONCERT-Japan Project**

CONCERT-Japan Kick-Off Meeting was launched on 17-18 January 2011 in Istanbul, TURKEY

CONCERT-Japan "Connecting and Coordinating European Science and Technology Development with Japan" is an ERA-NET project funded under the International Cooperation (INCO) area of the Capacities Programme of EU 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technology Development (FP7). The main objective of the project is to promote an effective and coordinated science and technology cooperation between European countries and Japan with a view to further expanding and harmonizing already existing cooperation between them.

CONCERT-Japan project started on 1 January 2011 and will last for three years until 31 December 2013. The project consortium includes ministries and research funding organizations from Japan, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey. The Coordinator of the project is *The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK)*.

The concept of CONCERT-Japan emerges as a natural consequence of the need for a coordinated science and technology cooperation between two of the main knowledge developers of the world, Europe and Japan. This concerted action in the science and technology cooperation of the European states with Japan not only aims to enhance the cooperation between them, but also structure it so as to allow more effective results. The essence of such cooperation is to target the common problems and global challenges by utilizing common interests and values. The main axis of the project revolves around exchange of information, mutual learning, joint strategy building and performing joint activities at the programme level.

In the framework of the CONCERT-Japan project, consortium partners will announce a pilot joint call on topics of mutual interest. This is expected to allow not only a multilateral public-public cooperation platform to discuss about common priorities between European countries and Japan, but also multilateral research platforms involving European and Japanese researchers. This pilot joint call will enable the consortium to further elaborate on the future of the cooperation between Europe and Japan.



The kick-off meeting of CONCERT-Japan was held on 17-18 January 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey with the participation of the core project consortium that is consisted of 13 partners including organizations from European countries and Japan in addition to the observer institutions and European Commission delegation.

The Kick-off meeting of CONCERT-Japan project, specifically, aimed to start the debates over determining the prior thematic areas, the possible methodology and structure of the coordination in which the cooperation would evolve in a more beneficial and productive way. In this perspective, European Union and Japan science and technology relations were examined in detail with respect to the historical bounds, bilateral affairs and utilizable opportunities on research and technology. Intended joint actions and work packages of the project were fruitfully discussed in order to plan the future actions.

In this context, Vice President of TÜBİTAK, Prof. Ömer ANLAĞAN, emphasized the advantages of such a concerted cooperation on science and technology between European Union and Japan with respect to the evolvement of historical bounds, in his welcome speech. Dr. Barbara Rhode, the Minister-Counselor and Head of S&T Section at the Delegation of the European Union to Japan, reinforced the opening speech with her clear display on the current research and technology structure of Japan by identifying the potential opportunities both on bilateral and multilateral level. Mr. Katsuhisa Sagisaka from Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) presented the Japanese science and technology policy and informed the participants on science diplomacy of Japan. Mr Yves Maisonnny from the European Commission has highlighted the ERA-NET scheme and its added value for science and technology cooperation between Europe and Japan for managing a strong research initiative.

The CONCERT-Japan project website will be available at this link very soon: www.concertjapan.eu

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