On 7th October, the Bonn Office held JSPS Abend 2013 in Bonn. This event is held every year to introduce JSPS’s activities and expand the office’s circle of German counterpart agencies, universities, and researchers.

The event started with JSPS executive director Dr. Makoto Asashima extending warm words of thanks to the attendees for the support they give JSPS’s programs and the office’s initiatives. He was followed by messages of encouragement from Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler, president, German Rectors’ Conference, Dr. Dorothea Rüland, secretary general, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Dr. Enno Auferheide, secretary general, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, and Mr. Takayuki Miyashita, minister of the Japanese Embassy. Adding a special touch of elegance to the event, two young German musicians played pieces from Beethoven. Then, Prof. Dr. Heinrich Menkhaus, chair, German JSPS Club proposed a hardy toast.

Toward the meeting’s end, Dr. Asashima delivered a special lecture, titled “Control of Organogenesis and Regeneration in Vertebrate Development,” delving into a wide array of topics from the history of experimental morphology to iPS cell breakthroughs.

With a friendly atmosphere prevailing throughout, the event ended on a note of appreciation by Bonn Office director Prof. Dr. Keiichi Kodaira.

On 19 September, the JSPS Strasbourg Office held a program introductory meeting at the Aix Marseille Université in Aix-en-Provence. Vice president Prof. Sylvie Daviet welcomed our group and explained the university’s international strategy.

Before the meeting, the office staff visited the university’s Faculty of Law, which is one of France’s most prestigious law schools, and meet with members of the university’s research centers and CNRS. Dr. Sandrine Maljean-Dubois, director of CERIC (Centre d’Études et de Recherches Internationales et Communautaires) described the Center’s programs. Dr. Philippe Mossé, who coordinated our visit, introduced us to LEST (Laboratoire d’Économie et de Sociologie du Travail), where its director Prof. Ariel Mendez and former head of CNRS International Affairs Dr. Daniel Pardo explained the history of research cooperation with Japan in their institutes, including Dr. Philippe Mossé’s socio-economic joint research with Prof. Tetsu Harayama of Toyo University. Close collaborations are ongoing with Japan at both CERIC and the LEST.

At the ensuing JSPS introductory meeting, we introduced JSPS’s various fellowship and bilateral exchange programs. Listening intently to messages from former JSPS fellow Dr. Isabelle Sasaki, currently president of the JSPS French Alumni Association, Dr. Mossé, and Dr. Christine Condominas, head of the university’s Japanese Department, the participants engaged them in probing Q&A discussions.

From 14-20 October, the University of Strasbourg (UDS) held “Japan Week” in cooperation with several related organizations including JSPS’s Strasbourg Office. On the 14th, the Office and la Maison Universitaire France-Japon (MUFJ) jointly held the Week’s first event—a conference centered around Prof. Sawako Takeuchi, president of Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris. Following opening speeches by Prof. Alain Beretz, president of UDS, Mr. Susumu Hasegawa, Consul General of Japan in Strasbourg, and Mr. Audré Klein, president of CEEJA, Prof. Tekeuchi delivered a lecture on “Innovation of Japan: Universal Aspects and Specific Aspects.” The audience of more than 70 people listened intently to her presentation and enjoyed the pieces of beautiful Japanese traditional art she use along with contrasting images of modern innovation to illustrate her points. On the 16th, the Office and UDS jointly held a seminar featuring Prof. Kosaku Yoshino from Sophia University, who spoke on the topic “Nationalism and Patriotism in Contemporary Japan: A Sociological Enquiry.” His lecture evoked an enthusiastic discussion with the audience. This weeklong event highlighted various aspects of Japanese life and culture, including exhibits of Japanese art, a tea ceremony, Japanese kimono dressing, and even Japanese films shown in a downtown Strasbourg theater.