JSPS-RFBR 10th Anniversary Symposium Held

For more than 40 years, JSPS has been supporting research collaboration between Russia and Japan. It started with a researcher exchange implemented with the Soviet Academy of Sciences based on an agreement between the two governments signed in 1974. Then in 2004, JSPS entered into a cooperative agreement with the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR), followed in 2005 by the implementation of bilateral joint research projects. Since then, JSPS and RFBR have supported nearly 180 joint research projects. Riding this wave of vibrant collaboration, our two organizations held a 10-year anniversary symposium at Moscow State University on 21 October 2015.

The symposium kicked off with welcoming messages from JSPS president Dr. Yuichiro Anzai, Moscow State University rector Dr. Victor Antonovich Sadovnichy, RFBR chairman Dr. Panchenko Vladislav Yakovlevich, and Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan in Russia, Mr. Takashi Kurai, followed by 18 researchers, nine Japanese and nine Russian, who reported from first-hand experience on the attainments of past bilateral projects and what it was that drove their teams to achieving highly successful results across a wide diversity of fields. Their dedicated fields include mechanical engineering, earth and space science, physics, electric and electronic engineering, complex chemistry, and basic biology. It was also very impressive to hear about how those projects were used to expand exchange among young researchers of the two countries.

Then, Dr. Alexander Sharov, chief of RFBR’s Information Analysis Department, and Dr. Keiichi Kodaira, director of JSPS’s Bonn Office, offered comments and analyses on the achievements amassed through the bilateral program over the past ten years. Lastly, Dr. Kodaira gave a talk to sum up the day’s proceedings in which he stated that what has made these Russo-Japan bilateral projects so successful is not only the excellent quality and complementarity of the joint research but even more glowingly the relationship of collegial trust enjoyed among the researchers on both sides. It will be important for researchers in both countries, including those of younger generations, to continue engaging each other in direct and energetic communication, while sustaining and strengthening their collegial relationship in carrying out joint research projects.

Between the sessions, Russian representatives of past joint research projects displayed posters, around which conversation between them and their Japanese colleagues flourished. These interludes also provided an opportunity for JSPS and RFBR to give briefings on their programs.

In the evening before the symposium, a reception was held at the Embassy of Japan in Russia, giving the Japanese participants an excellent opportunity to mingle and talk with the attending Russian researchers, faculty of Moscow University, and RFBR staff.

At it, JSPS president Dr. Anzai thanked JSPS’s counterpart agency RFBR, the participating researchers from both countries, and all who worked so hard to prepare what would be a very successful event.

Bilateral Cooperation Division

Japan Academic Northern Europe Network (JANET) Established

Last November, the JSPS Bonn Office proposed the establishment of a Japan Academic Northern Europe Network (JANET), which would bring together into a loosely connected group Japanese universities and research institutes with offices or hubs in Germany and its surrounding areas. JANET is an initiative to horizontally link and strengthen collaboration among Japanese institutions in this European region, which have heretofore operated independently of each other.

JANET has two main functions. The first is to provide a wide platform for Japanese universities and research institutes to share international scientific information between themselves and with counterparts in Germany and the wider Europe. The second is to disseminate information on research and education activities being carried out collaboratively between Germany and Japan while promoting enhanced exchange between the two countries.

Currently, there are 24 Japanese academic institutions registered as JANET members. The JSPS Bonn Office plans to launch the first round of JANET joint activities, including “JANET-Forum 2016,” to showcase innovative research initiatives being carried out by JANET-member institutions. These activities will also provide a platform for discussion between JANET members and counterpart institutions in Germany. JANET-Forum 2016 will be co-hosted by the University of Tsukuba, representing JANET, and Freie Universität Berlin as its counterpart institution.

Supported by the JSPS Bonn Office, the Forum will be held at the end of June in Berlin. For information on upcoming JANET activities, please contact the Bonn Office via the following website: www.jsps-bonn.de/