Japan-Germany Colloquium Held in Münster to Commemorate Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations

Each year, the JSPS Bonn Office holds a Japan-Germany Colloquium. This year’s, held on 16-19 February, marks the seventh in the series. Venued at the University of Münster, it addressed the theme “Regulation Beyond the Law? New Approaches to Social Regulation under Conditions of Complexity, Uncertainty and Risk.” The colloquium’s coordinator on the German side was Prof. Dr. Thomas Hoeren, Institute for Information, Telecommunication and Media Law, University of Münster, and on the Japanese side was Prof. Toshiyuki Kono, Faculty of Law, Kyushu University. They were joined in the event by eleven German and six Japanese researchers.

On the evening of the 16th, an informal reception was held to give the participants a chance to get to know each other. The colloquium on the 17th and 18th brought them together in an intensive discussion driven by cutting-edge research presentations.

Rapid advances in science and technology and societal changes over recent years have engendered a myriad of problems related to social regulation as based on existing legal frameworks. In addressing the uncertainties and risks accompanying such complex issues, the participants delivered reports from a wide range of academic viewpoints including law, social science and philosophy as well as various theoretical perspectives. Also approaching the theme from the standpoint of actual problems on the ground, the discussion segued to social regulation from culture, lifestyle, information/intellectual property, and economic vantage points.

This year’s colloquium was held as a designated event to commemorate the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Germany. On the evening of the 17th, a formal reception, attended by Mr. Markus Lewe, Mayor of Münster, and Mr. Kiyoshi Koinuma, Consul General of Japan in Düsseldorf, was held in the Friedenssaal (Peace Hall), where the Peace of Westphalia ending the Thirty Years’ War was signed in 1648.

— JSPS Bonn Office

Returnees Gathering with JSPS Alumni Club in Finland

On 4 March, a gathering was held of Finnish students who have returned from educational stays in Japan supported by Japanese government scholarships. Hosted at the residence of the Ambassador of Japan in Helsinki, the event was sponsored by the JSPS Alumni Club in Finland and the Embassy of Japan.

At the gathering, Ms. Anni Kynsilehto, who was the first Finn to earn a bachelor’s degree under the Japanese government scholarship, spoke in fluent Japanese about her experiences living in Japan, where she attended one year of Japanese language school and underwent four years of undergraduate study at the University of Tokyo. As many of those attending the event had been to Japan and could speak Japanese, an amiable atmosphere filled the room, punctuated by occasional spurts of laughter.

Then, a lecture was delivered by Prof. Atsuhiko Shinmyo, vice president, Nara Institute of Science and Technology, who spoke on recent trends in plant biology from the perspective of environmental issues. As his presentation was delivered in a friendly manner that was even easy for those without a specialized knowledge of the subject to understand, it evoked a great number of questions from the attendees.

After the meeting, a buffet dinner was held in the reception hall of the Ambassador’s residence, giving the returning students and JSPS alumni an opportunity to converse and strengthen ties.

Held for the first time by the alumni club, this gathering was carried out very successfully as it gave Finns with interest in Japan a chance to interact and network, while introducing JSPS’s program to the returning college students who may become future JSPS fellows.

— JSPS Stockholm Office

Swedish Alumni Club Holds Seminar on Japanese Culture

On 8 March, the JSPS Alumni Club in Sweden teamed up with the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities to hold a seminar on Japan’s traditional culture and modern sub-culture. Attended by some 100 mostly women, the seminar testified to the high level of interest in Japanese culture in Sweden.

The proceedings started with remarks from Prof. Hiroshi Sano, director, JSPS Stockholm Office, who introduced JSPS’s programs and the Swedish alumni club’s activities. His remarks offered members of Sweden’s public a good opportunity to learn about JSPS, with the young researchers who are studying Japanese culture listening particularly intently.

The seminar’s program featured a lecture on Japan’s traditional