

EURO-JAPAN DIALOGUE 2017



AUTHENTIC CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION



ALEXANDER
MCAULAY

The 12th Euro-Japan Dialogue saw the programme visit two new countries – Estonia and Lithuania. This provided an excellent opportunity for the students to expand their horizons and engage with some of the lesser known aspects of European society and culture. The staff and students at our host institutions, Tallinn University and Vilnius University, greatly facilitated, through their kindness, hospitality, hard work and enthusiasm, a unique and lasting learning experience for the YNU cohort.

One image of the Euro-Japan Dialogue programme is that it bolsters English-language learning, but that goal is subsumed under a larger one – developing competence in cross-cultural communication. English proficiency is only one part of that competence. Being aware of the language proficiencies of your interlocutor, and adjusting your language output accordingly, is a necessary skill for effective cross-cultural communication. It is one which many language teachers perhaps take for granted, as we do it automatically every day in our classrooms. It is only when we see our students taking on this challenge that we realize the difficulties they face.

This is brought home to me time and again on Euro-Japan Dialogue when we meet European students who are studying Japanese. I find my YNU students can generally present well in English, and can make a decent job of handling Q&A and discussion in English. However, they seem to struggle when the roles are reversed, and they have to maintain an academic discussion on Japanese with non-native speakers of Japanese with limited proficiency. This time, in both Tallinn and Vilnius, the YNU students were faced with this challenge. At both universities, European students from the Departments of Japanese gave presentations in Japanese. Despite being told that they should ask questions in Japanese, the YNU cohort often reverted to English. They were also asked to maintain an academic register, but faced with Europeans speaking beginner or intermediate Japanese, they would make jokes to try and lighten the tone in the belief that this made it 'easier' to talk. One learning point on Euro-Japan Dialogue 2017 was how English education in Japan needs to prepare learners to engage with the linguistic identity of others in international settings. This means dispensing with the notion of the idealized native speaker of English, and preparing for interaction that involves switching languages, negotiating meaning, and accommodating the competencies and linguistic repertoires of the person you are speaking to.

Outside of the Dialogue sessions, the visit to the Mektory complex in Tallinn, and the Embassy of Japan in the same city, were wonderful opportunities to see business, enterprise and diplomacy in action. In Lithuania, the legacy of Chiune Sugihara was touched upon with visits to a memorial park in Vilnius and to his former residence in Kaunas. This was a sobering reminder of Japan's historical engagement with Europe, and resonated to the wider concerns of Euro-Japan Dialogue.

Euro-Japan Dialogue enters its 13th year in good shape. Two new countries will be visited – Portugal and Spain. We learn lessons from every trip to Europe, and strive to improve the programme year on year. Critical reflection is an integral part of the programme: the lessons of 2017 will be taken on board and help to shape a successful sojourn to Lisbon and Barcelona.

Embassy visit

We visited the Japanese embassy in Tallinn on November 9. We met the Japanese ambassador and some staff and listened their two presentations. Those themes are the history and the economy of Estonia.

The Estonian staff explained about the history in Japanese. Most of us did not know about it very well, so the presentation was very interesting for us. She told the outline of Estonian history and the dominated history. Estonia had been dominated by other countries and was independent in 1917. One interesting thing of the presentation is the education. Karl X II, the king of Svenskastormaktstiden and dominated Estonia, developed education and build Tartu university in 1632. This university was historic and older than Harvard University. Estonia is a small country and has a long dominated history, so Estonian people need to speak some language not only Estonian language. The students we communicated with at Tallinn university were good at speaking English.



Koichi Horita



The economy of Estonia was explained by Japanese staff. He said that Estonia is IT state. Estonia works electric administration positively. The people who live in Estonia can do various procedures on the Internet.

The Japanese my number system imitate Estonian ID card system. He said that there are not only some common points but also different points. For example, Estonian ID card system is an obligation and includes companies. Privacy information is not written on ID card. There are many IT venture companies in Estonia. Skype, the famous IT company, was established in Estonia and the staff who established it play an active part by establish new companies. He also explained about stateless people and the oil shale.

We listened many interesting things and got good experience to visit embassy.

In Lithuania, we gave a presentation about "Traditional festivals in Japan".

We introduced images of various festivals in the world including Lithuania firstly, then showed an image of Japanese festival.

This was because we'd like to let listeners know how much it was different from them and to make them attract to Japanese festivals.

Next, we explained about what kind of stalls there were in Japanese festivals and introduced Aomori Nebuta Matsuri as one of the most popular festivals and Okayama Hadaka Matsuri as a example of unique festivals.

We kept in mind to use a lot of images when we made this presentation.

Most university of Vilnius students were not so familiar with Japanese festivals. So we had to mention very basic information of Japanese festivals. However it was difficult to tell listeners them in a limited time.

So we let them know about atmosphere and looks of Japanese festivals not only orally but with a lot of images so that the audience can understand how Japanese festivals are and the attractions of Japanese festivals visually.

Next, we introduce the origin of traditional festivals.

Finally, as economics students, we focused on economic issues of Japanese festivals such as declining attendance and young people's lack of interest in traditional festivals and suggested solutions to them.

After our presentation, we had a discussion with teachers and students of Vilnius.

They wanted to look at images of Japanese festivals and asked us more details about festivals than we had explained in this presentation.

We were surprised at their strong interest in Japanese festivals and

confident that using a lot of images was a very effective way to make them attract to Japanese festivals.

Through giving a presentation in University of Vilnius, I could brushed up our English skills, especially listening and speaking and of course presentation skills.

Moreover, I could promote mutual cross-cultural understanding. I would like to make use of this great experience after graduation.



Traditional Festivals in Japan



Festivals

-----SEIYA FUJII

Mektory

Seiya Fujii



We went to Mektory on a company visit. Mektory is a kind of institution of Tallinn Technological University which has many studios and labs. In cooperating with various companies and institutions, it aims to maximize theoretical studies at the university through practice and to prepare better-trained engineers with experience.

A graduate student introduced Mektory and guided us on a TTU Mektory tour. She brought us to a lot of studios and labs. They had their own themes respectively. There were eight national embassies' cultural rooms, including Japan's, and several dozen rooms related to sponsors. She taught us that TTU students could use all of the rooms in Mektory for free. Each room is all smart, unique and refined.

Especially, one of the most interesting rooms was Ventilation lab "Club Fresh Air". It was a room with the purpose of demonstrating the air exchange in a room. The mood of this room was just like a nightclub. For visualizing operation of the ventilation systems, show lighting, music and fog generator smoke is used.

Through the tour, I got the impression that we had pros and cons. I thought it was a pity that we could ask her few questions. We seemed to be passive. We couldn't sometimes catch her English partly because she spoke English so fluently and fast. I thought that we could have understood what she said and been more active if we had checked more about Mektory and made more preparations for the visit.

However, visiting TTU Mektory was a meaningful opportunity for me to learn about a successful example of international industry-academia collaboration and recognize the difference of consciousness between Japanese university students and Estonian ones.



Images of Estonia Presentation



Chihiro Kawasaki

The first presentation we delivered in Euro-Japan dialogue was a presentation entitled 'Images of Estonia'. The presenters were Seiya, Takaaki and me. This presentation has a role of ice break, but also has some economic contents.

At first, we noticed that it is very difficult to make this presentation because it is an abstract topic and we even did not know very much about Estonia. The outline is as followed. Firstly we asked our friends their images of Estonia and 'when you hear Europe, which country comes to mind?' and, then we explained the results comparing Estonia with the other European countries.

Estonia is not well known in Japan because, compared to the other European countries, Estonia has fewer relationships with Japan, for example, in the amount of trade.

However, we searched about Estonia and we found that Japan and Estonia have some similarities when we looked at it deeply. According to OECD PISA Skills Survey for 15 year's old Children in 2015, both of the countries have high score at all subjects. And also in Global Internet Technology Report 2015 of World Economic Forum, Japan and Estonia got highly ranked in IT, especially for business usage and social impacts.



Japanese people do not know very much about Estonia and that is because Estonia seems to have fewer connections to Japan compared to the other European countries. However, if we look deeply, we noticed similarities and connections. So our conclusion is that we, Japan and Estonia, have great potential to build a stronger relationship and finally I hope that this Euro-japan dialogue did a great job to build a stronger relationship.



Japanese Lesson Participation



Momoko Hatsutani



After the dialogue and the campus tour at Tallinn University, we were enabled to attend the Japanese class lecture in the university. While the students were taking a “漢字” test, we filled out the questionnaire the teacher prepared for us. The contents were very simple; the time I usually wake up and sleep, favorite food, the country I would like to go, about my family and so on. Then we made pairs of YNU students and the Tallinn University students. My partner Doris seemed quite shy at first, but was very friendly and her Japanese was really fluent. We then played a short game using the questionnaire which YNU students previously answered, without names written. The questionnaire was randomly handed out, and by letting and supporting the partner to read out what was written in Japanese, we found out who the unnamed person was. Ours was Muto-sensei.

Then it was the Tallinn University students' turns to introduce themselves in Japanese. Not only Doris, but each student spoke surprisingly fluent Japanese. It was very hard to believe that their Japanese is only two-three years of study. As Morita-san in the Japanese Embassy in Estonia previously taught us, the students said that the Estonian pronunciation is pretty near to Japanese, and that makes it easier and bring motivation to learn Japanese. But from my point of view, they do not sound similar at all.

One student whom YNU students draw particular attention to, was very interested in Japanese classics. He used such complicated vocabulary as “akebono” and “hannya” that even us, the Japanese students do not use or hear in today's Japan. He says he would really like to visit Japan some day, and maybe want to become and work as “kannushi (a Shinto priest)”.

Every student there had different backgrounds or motivations of learning Japanese. Some students' research about Japan very deeply in particular fields that us, the Japan bought up students didn't even knew what they were about. If I were to visit Estonia again, I would definitely make more previous research about the country or the culture, and possibly be able to speak at least a few words in Estonian

Kana Sugino



On November 13th, after giving and receiving several presentations, we toured around Vilnius University.

Firstly we went to the church. I couldn't believe a university had a church inside campus. The church was comparable to the ones we can see outside the campus, and had a solemn atmosphere. I thought it would be very nice to have such a wonderful place by own side, but the students said they never really been there. We heard the church is used for graduation ceremonies.

Then we went to see a common area. The wall and ceiling there is painted with warm colors expressing four seasons. The painting was not pretty or beautiful but very original and unique. And what I loved very much was the windows. They were shaped hexagon like honeycombs and frosted. And only middle one was clear and printed some pictures.



Finally we looked around library.

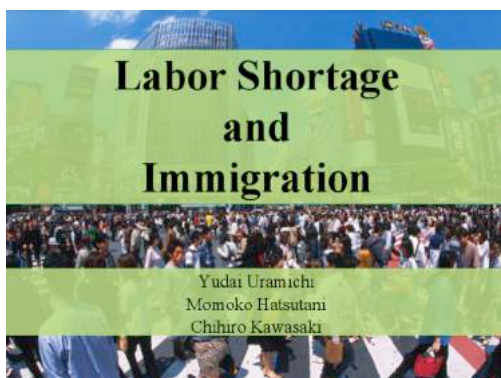
The library was very big, so they showed us a part of that. One is The P. Smuglewicz hall. This hall is named after a painter P. Smuglewicz and we could see his picture on the ceiling. There, important books and documents were displayed. The hall was so gorgeous that it was like a small version of cafeteria in Hogwarts School in Harry Potter. Next we went to The White Hall. This hall was part of the old observatory, so there were telescopes. There was also an observation tower beside the hall. Going up the dark, narrow and steep stairs, and we could enjoy the overview of the townscape from the top of the tower. Unfortunately it was cloudy but the view was still beautiful, consisting of oranges of bricks roofs and whites of buildings' wall.

We all enjoyed the campus tour and of course talking with the students in Vilnius University. The building was elaborately designed and lovely little things are scattered all around there. And through this tour we could get along with the students there very much. So it was definitely one of the best memories of Euro-Japan English Dialogue.



The most discussable presentation in Euro-Japan dialogue was 'Labor shortage and Immigration'. The presenters were Yudai, Momoko, and me. The contents of the presentation are as follows.

Firstly, Japan has now a big problem of depopulation which is causing labor shortage. To deal with this problem, we came up with three solutions; increasing birth rate, promoting productivity, and accepting more immigrants. In this presentation, we focused on the last one, accepting more immigrants.



Then we compared how other countries are accepting immigrants. For example, UK is accepting immigrants by adapting multiculturalism, France is using secularism, and also some countries are accepting immigrants as guest workers. From these 3 models, we think that Japan should use multiculturalism and guest worker model.

Now Japan has no choice but to accept immigrants. However, the condition of accepting immigrants in this country is still far behind, and it has a lot of challenges like underprivileged working environment, discrimination and hate speech, and issues about children born in Japan.

LABOR SHORTAGE AND IMMIGRATION PRESENTATION



Chihiro Kawasaki



We did this presentation both in Estonia and Lithuania, and the students were very interested in Japan's problem and asked us a lot of questions. Especially there are many questions about how they can get a job in Japan and how they will be treated by the society if they live in Japan.

After the discussion, we noticed that both countries have similar problems like labor shortage, their societies are as closed as Japan, and they are generally less welcome to accept foreigners. This is exactly the same as Japan's situation and all the students could easily share their problems and opinions.

Thanks to these similarities, we could do a wonderful discussion and we learned a lot about each nation.

MISA KAJII



History Of Yokohama

- Before
"Sakoku", the national isolation policy of the Edo Period
- 1854
Treaty of Peace and Amity between the United States and Japan
- 1856
Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United States and Japan
- 1859
Opening the Yokohama Port

At Vilnius University, Shiho and I gave a presentation on "Yokohama and YNU" and introduced them focusing on their characteristics. In Yokohama part, Shiho introduced Yokohama mentioning the geographical information, increasing population, history, Yokohama becoming the gateway to the West, the international aspect, and the economic aspect. In YNU part, I briefly described our university highlighting the international aspect and the abundance of nature. We also prepared answers for possible questions that the Vilnius student would ask.

In the beginning when we started preparing, we had several issues with our presentation. There was no consistency in Yokohama part and YNU part. The power point slides were not effective enough. We could not finish the presentation in designated time because of the lack of practice and fluency in English. But as we continued practicing, it improved little by little. And on the day of the presentation, we could successfully finish the presentation without a hitch. But as we were the very first group to do the presentation that day, we couldn't get as many questions as we expected at Q and A session. After a few moments of silence, they started to ask questions like whether international students at YNU speak Japanese or not, why do Japanese university students go to bed late and so on, but still there was a long silence. We should have tried to avoid the silence by giving more detailed answer to their questions or asking them questions.

So if I happen to have an opportunity to do an English presentation again, I will make use of this experience and try harder to perform smooth communication at Q and A session.

Working on this presentation didn't only improve my English presentation skills but also it made me notice some points to be improved. Furthermore, it was a great opportunity to know our city and the university deeper and more profound. I am very grateful that I was able to have such a valuable experience.



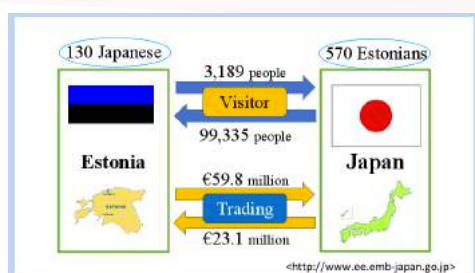
Tallinn University



Rina Ohkoshi

Estonia students and teacher presented on three topics. Firstly, images of Japan in Estonia, How Japan is introduced in school textbooks and media, next presentation was Tallinn university, finally, summer school of Tallinn university. Thorough first presentation, I understood that Estonia student hit on the word 'Genbaku', 'Hiroshima' when they hear Japan. This is because they recognize Japanese learn about World War II in school. And they said Japanese topics were not enough to learn in school. Otherwise, they know Japanese comics and animation very much such as Naruto and One Piece. Actually, the most famous thing about Japan in Estonia is Japanese food. Almost of all students know Sushi and Ramen and some students said they have tried them. In the second presentation they introduced Tallinn University. I think Tallinn University is so historical, but in fact it is set up in 2005. I was impressed that students said that Tallinn University is the best university in Estonia and there are broadcasting and media department. In the final presentation, popular summer school of Tallinn University was introduced. Not only students but also working people join that summer school and some Japanese participate. In addition, one of the attractive points is that there are both study and sightseeing contents, they said.

YNU students presented two topics. One is images of Estonia in Japan, secondly, labor shortage and immigration in Japan. The YNU students explained there are few similar point in term of economical scale, but IT and education are similar. Through second presentation, some of YNU student think that Japanese government should allow immigration to solve the problem of labor shortage.. One of the most surprising things is that Estonian student are very shy. When we asked do you have question, they didn't answer immediately.





SHIHO KITANO

On the 6th day of the Euro-Japan Dialogue, we visited Vilnius University. At the university, we did 4 presentations about Yokohama & YNU, Bento, Festivals, labor shortage and immigration. And Vilnius students did 3 presentations about the history of Vilnius University, Lithuanian popular foods, some places of Lithuania. In this report, I will tell you about the presentations of Vilnius university students.

The first presentation is about the history of Vilnius university. Students in Vilnius university told us the long history of the university. This university was built by the Society of Jesus in 1570. And it depended on the history around Lithuania. For example, when a country which occupied Lithuania changed, Vilnius University was closed, and through independent of the county, this university was opened again. Moreover, against this background, this university has a big library which has quite precious books in terms of history. Through this presentation we understood the relationship between Lithuania and this university. This was very interesting.

The second presentation is about Lithuanian popular foods, Lithuanian bread, Cepelinai, and chocolate cake which is popular. Vilnius students told us how to make these foods, and their background. They prepared two of those foods, and we could try to eat them. They were quite delicious. We not only understood the local foods but also felt their kindness very much.

The third presentation is about some places of Lithuania, Utena, Mažeikiai, Klaipėda and Vilnius. Vilnius students introduce those places. All places were quite attractive for us. And most attractive place for me was Klaipėda. In Klaipėda sea festival is held in summer. In this festival, many shops are opened around the port in Klaipėda, street shows are held, and so on. This festival looked like very fun for me. Through this presentation, we knew many attractive things in Lithuania.

All presentations told us Vilnius University and Lithuania's attractiveness. And through this, we also found that Lithuania was good country and Lithuanian people are very kind.



Bento



Takaaki Morikawa

On November 13th in the Vilnius University, we took part in the Euro-Japan dialogue and gave and received some presentations. I would like to introduce about bento presentation. Do you think Vilnius students are familiar with bento? The answer is no. Of course, they have experience to make boxed lunch, but not Japanese style bento. We explained about the history of bento, popular side dishes, type of lunch boxes, and some other miscellaneous information. We tried to tell them that bento culture emerged to play many roles as the time passed. We explained how bento started out as poor people's food and has now become a sub-culture. Vilnius students looked very interested in this theme, and enjoyed one of the topic, kara-ben, especially. We were surprised that they know the Japanese anime characters so well. They asked us many questions, so we could express how great bento culture is.



However, I have one thing that I deeply regret in the Q&A session. One student asked us, "Do mothers always make bento?" In my family, my mother usually make it, so I answered without considering, "Yes." Then she asked us, "What does their husband do?" I answered, "They have job and work hard." Now I understand what she truly wanted to ask us. They tried to discuss gender problem, but I did not notice and gave her brash answers that could lead them to misunderstand about Japanese culture. I should have told her that in the past men had big influence in politics, and women sometimes were not paid attention to, but these days the Japanese government promote women to work as much as men, so many husbands became to help their wives for house chores, making bento as well. I would like to utilize this experience the next opportunities.

Finally, I had a precious experience and learned a lot about Baltic countries culture. I greatly appreciate participating into the Euro-Japan Dialogue.

BENTO DAY

- Started 2001 at elementary school
- Children consider the recipes, ingredients, cooking, washing up...
- Helps children appreciate parents, and food
- Carried out at over 1800 schools in 2016



LUNCH BOXES



stainless steel



plastic



flask type



wooden

Social Events

Yudai Uramichi



In November 10th, Tallin University and YNU students eat dinner together after dialogue in Tallin University. The place which party held is Medieval restaurant. The foods are delicious bread, salmon, olive and etc. We could enjoy eating old Estonian food and talking the people who attend discussion.

About 20 people attend the party. It was good opportunity for Japanese students to understand the Estonian culture, image of Japan, school life and etc. I talked about Japanese culture many times with Estonian student. I was surprised that she knows a lot of Japanese comic book than me. From this experience, I noticed that there are many Estonians who like Japanese culture, so I think that Japanese culture could promote the connection between Estonia and Japan.

In addition, Japanese students was impressed by Estonian students. In my case, I was given the impression of Estonian student's skills. They can speak many languages such as English, French, Spanish and Japanese.

Moreover, I am interested in many things. That is how I could get motivation. I could know many Estonian things by this great opportunity.

After the party, we had the opportunities to deepen exchange with Tallin university students. They showed us the streets of Tallin. They bring us the top of hill in Tallin. The old town of Tallin is designated by World heritage site. I was impressed by the night view and I shall remember it in the future. Moreover, They talked a lot of Estonian things such as culture, economics, history and foods. That is how we could familiar with Estonia.

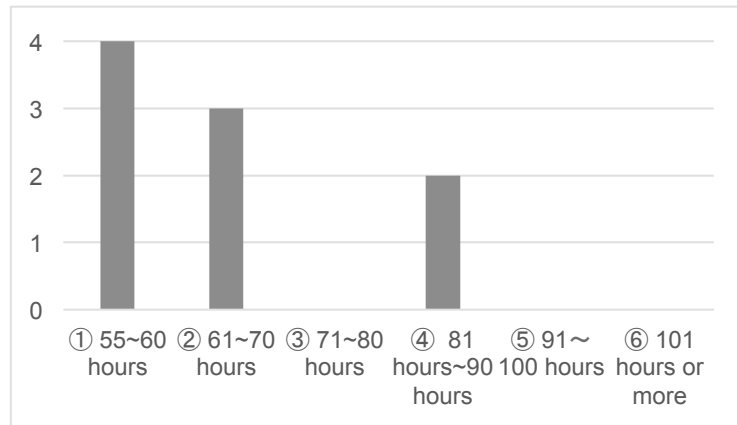
Finally, YNU students could get along with Tallin university students and exchange their contact address. I promised that I will show Tallin University students around Japan. I hope that their students keep touch with each other.



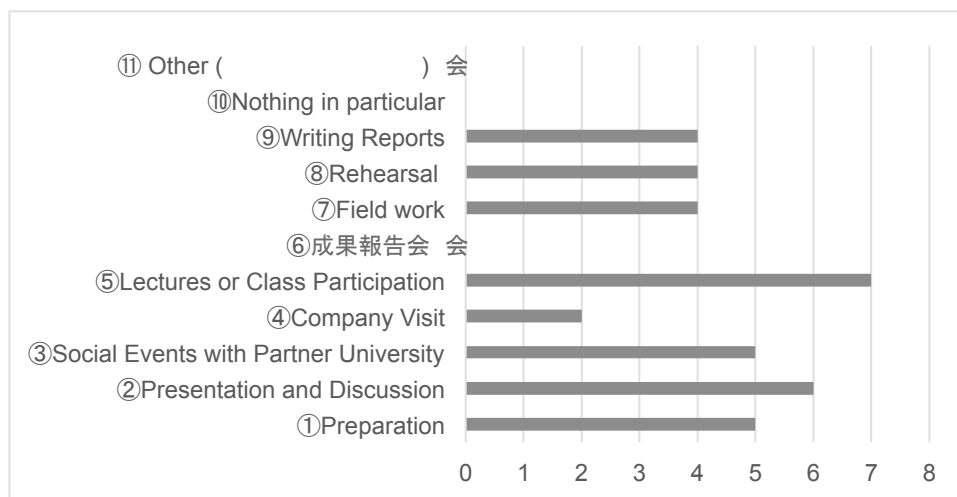
Program Evaluation: Selected Results

Presentation: How long did you spend on the EJD & GAEF presentation, including Tuesday English lessons, Friday meetings, rehearsals, individual research, group meetings, and so on.?

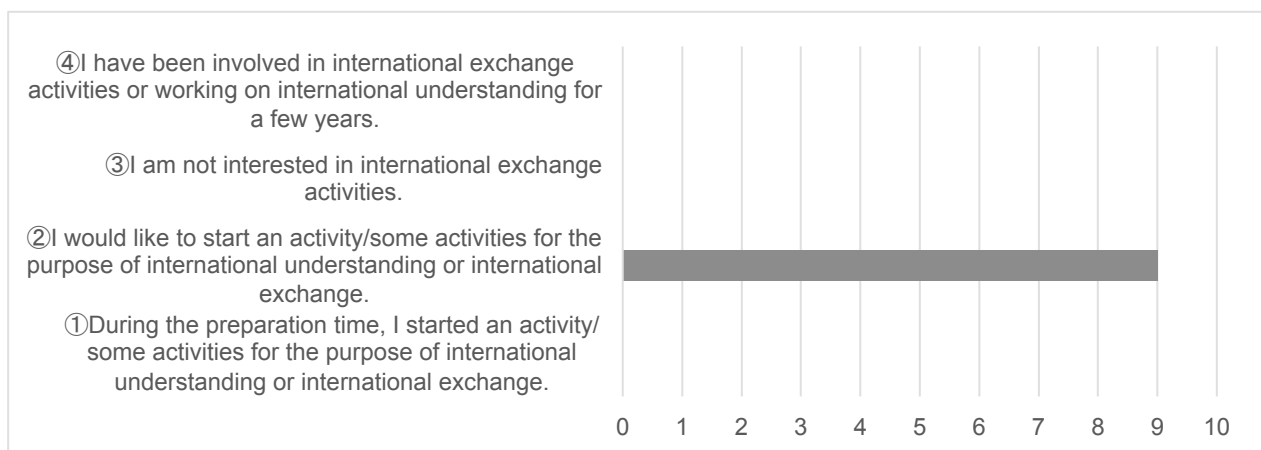
(プレゼンのために何時間ぐらい費やしましたか。ミーティング(全体、グループ)や個人のリサーチ、パワポの作成、パフォーマンス練習を含む)



EJD & GAEF Activities: Please choose useful activities. You can choose more than one.



International Understanding:





NOZOMU MUTO

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Euro-Japan Dialogue 2017 visited Estonia and Lithuania, which are distant geographically from Japan, and less-known to Japanese people than other European countries. In fact, the YNU students made a presentation titled "Images of Estonia in Japan", and reported that no Estonian's name had come to most Japanese students. TU students also reported that there were some but not many descriptions in Estonian school textbooks or mass-media articles in Estonia about Japan. These facts seem to suggest that there are little connections between the countries.

Despite this, some people significantly contributed to international understanding. One is the former sumo wrestler Kaido Hoovelson, known as "Baruto", When Toomas Hendrik Ilves, the President of Estonia, visited Japan in 2014, Baruto joined the official dinner. Another example is Chiune Sugihara, famous for his heroic self-sacrificing behavior saving thousands of Jewish people. When Andrius Kubilius, the Prime Minister of Lithuania, visited Japan in 2012, he said that the fact that Sugihara had saved Jewish people greatly affected Lithuanian understanding of Japan. These examples among a lot of effort by many people have been making the countries closer and closer.

In fact, the YNU students' presentation indicated a bright future for that connection. The number of tourists from Japan to Estonia and Lithuania is growing very rapidly. In January 2018, Shinzo Abe, the Prime Minister of Japan, visited these countries among six East European nations, and mentioned that the number of Japanese tourists to Estonia had quadrupled in these five years, and the number of Japanese visitors to Lithuania was also increasing recently.

The activities of the students in this program also contributed to exchange between these countries. At TU, the YNU students made presentations titled "Images of Estonia in Japan" and "Depopulation and labor shortage in Japan". At VU, they also made presentations about "Yokohama and YNU", "Japanese Festivals", "Bento (Japanese lunch box)", and "Depopulation and labor shortage in Japan". Each presentation brought about active and fruitful discussions between the students. For example, VU students were interested in bentos, and asked who cooked the meals in Japan. This discussion led to the issue of the gender roles in the society. The VU students in response made presentations about "History of VU", "Lithuanian traditional dishes", and "Cities in Lithuania". During their presentations, they kindly served homemade bread and cakes, which we enjoyed a lot.

In this year's program, we visited the Japanese department in both universities, and both TU and VU students understood Japanese. For example, VU students talked in clear Japanese in their presentations. This facilitated communications between students. We would like to thank Margit Juurikas, Akiko Masaki, and Alari Allik at Tallinn University, Mindaugas Ignatas and Zivile

Jomantaite at Vilnius University, and other faculty members and students for their hard work and warm hospitality.

When Chiune proposed to his wife Sachiko, she asked why he wanted to marry her. He said he would never be ashamed if he goes abroad with her. In fact, when he was wavering, she encouraged Chiune to issue the visas. The YNU students activities in this program were also those not to be ashamed. We can say that the YNU students shortened the distance between the countries slightly but certainly.



A VIEW FROM EUROPE

Mindaugas Ignotas, Lecturer, Japanese, Vilnius University

It was a chilly and dry November morning, when the lively cohort of Japanese students and teachers arrived at the metal gates of Vilnius University. After taking some pictures outside, everyone entered one of the biggest classrooms in the Faculty of Linguistics, which nonetheless turned out to be almost too small to accommodate everyone interested in the event. The faculty is housing the Centre of Oriental Studies, a small but energetic academic department, dedicated to the research of non-Western regions and cultures. Here a handful of Lithuanian students enroll in the program of the Japanese Studies each year. They were waiting for the visit with great excitement and anticipation.

The students on both sides came prepared, with presentations on a variety of cultural and societal topics. After introducing their own universities, the students proceeded to discuss geography, traditional and contemporary food culture, migration and many other topics. The Japanese students had the opportunity to taste the traditional dark bread which was baked by a Lithuanian grandmother. In turn, our guests have brought many lovely gifts that were distributed to everyone attending the event. Afterwards, the students embarked on a short tour of the historical Vilnius University campus, visiting the inner church, the library and climbing the historical astronomy tower to enjoy the bird-eye view of the surrounding Old Town. The rest of the evening was spent in an informal setting where the students could chat together to their heart's content.

Such seemingly simple, yet deeply personal face-to-face encounters can also be the most powerful and memorable in the course of one's life. This shared belief drove us forward in organising the event and, judging from the voices of our students, we were not mistaken. Perhaps this event could eventually become an annual tradition, bringing the two countries, and the two universities even closer to each other.