



Project SAKURA

A forum for global social and economic dialogue within the Axa Group

Comité Européen de Groupe AXA

**Meeting with the Management and employees representatives of Axa Japan
15 April 2013**

Agenda of the Meeting

10:00 - 10:15 **Welcome** by Toshinobu Iwasaki, Head of Human Resources at AXA Japan, and Hiroaki Iriguchi, General Secretary of the Office Workers Union Japan

10:15 - 10:45 **Introduction of the participants:** Delegation of AXA Japan and guest delegation of the AXA European Works Council

10:45 - 11:00 **Presentation of the purpose of the meeting:** Hiroaki Iriguchi, OWUJ General Secretary, and Olivier Pelras, EWC Secretary

11:00 - 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 - 12:30 **Description of labour relations at the AXA Group in Japan:** Toshinobu Iwasaki (Head of Human Resources at AXA Japan), Yasuhiro Sano (in charge of labour relations) and Hiroaki Iriguchi

Q & A

12:30 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 15:00 **Description of labour relations within the Group in Europe**

- Overview of the insurance market in Europe and Japan, by Fortunato Ierardo
- Overview of how trade unions are organised in Europe, by Maurice Zylberberg
- The challenge of social dialogue in Europe and connecting with national employee representation bodies, by Daniel Vaultot

Q & A

15:00 - 15:30 Break

15:30 - 16:30 **How to develop transnational relations in the AXA Group**

- Relations with countries outside of Europe: the Himalaya project, by Fortunato Ierardo
- Means of communication for the EWC, including Internet, by Hedi Ben Sedrine
- Moving the European Works Council of the AXA Group toward a Global Works Council, by Muguet Pateyron and Olivier Pelras

Q & A

16:30 - 17:15 Visit of the AXA Japan premises

17:15 - 18:00 Group photo and Conclusion



AXA Office Workers UNION



Yuichiro HOASHI
CHAIRMAN



Takashi YANAI
Vice CHAIRMAN



Hiroaki IRIGUSHI
General Secretary



Yuko SHIIZU
Treasurer



Masatada ABE
Member of the Works Council



Shigeyuki TOYAMA
Member of the Works Council



Sachie TAKEDA
Member of the Works Council



Akiko HASEGAWA
Member of the Works Council

Human Resources Department



Toshinobu IWASAKI
Head of Human Resources



Yasuhiro SANO
Manager in charge of
Labour Relations



Shinya ICHIHARA
General Secretary



Kinichi YAMAZAKI
President

AXA Sales Reps Workers UNION

EUROPEAN DELEGATION



Olivier PELRAS
AXA EWC Secretary



Muguette PATEYRON
AXA EWC Deputy Secretary
FRANCE



Fortunato IERARDO
Member of Secretariat ITALY
In charge of Extra European
Relation for AXA EWC



Hedi BEN SEDRINE
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Daniel KAYAT
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Brigitte ZOUARI
Member of AXA EWC
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Maurice Zylberberg
Uni Europa Finance Expert



Daniel VAULOT
Technical Support AXA EWC



Patricia NUNEZ
Administration and
Communication Assistant
for AXA EWC



Sylvain Marques
Member of AXA EWC
Axa Assistance FRANCE



Brigitte SHINADA
Axa Assistance
Manager of the Japanese
Call Center in Paris

Minutes of the meeting

Purpose of the Meeting

The meeting in Paris on 4 July 2012 between a Japanese delegation from JFATU and a small delegation from the Bureau of the EWC triggered the SAKURA Project.

The JFATU (Japan Foreign Affiliated Trade Union) is a federation of trade unions representing companies operating in Japan whose head office is abroad. The AXA Office Workers Union, a member of JFATU, was represented by Hiroaki Iriguchi (General Secretary) and Yuko Shiizu (Treasurer).

Following this meeting, we considered it important to stay in touch and deepen our mutual understanding of our respective labour relations in Japan and Europe. This is what motivated this second meeting, which this time took place on the premises of AXA Japan.

We also examined the possibilities for extending social dialogue such as we know it within the European Works Council of the AXA Group, with the ultimate aim of setting up a global forum.

Description of labour relations in the AXA Group Japan



Generally speaking, the Japanese insurance market is large, representing almost half the size of the whole European market.¹

Japan is an important market for the AXA Group. The company began in 1934 as Nippon Dantail Life and grew with the addition of Equitable and Winterthur. In life insurance, AXA Japan represents 11% of the Group's inflows (n.5 market for the Group after France, USA, Germany and Switzerland). For P&C, Direct Japan represents 17% of AGD sales (n.6 in the market).²

In total, the AXA Japan workforce exceeds 8000 people, the fourth largest of the Group, behind France, the UK and Germany.

The AXA Office Workers Union is only present in AXA Life Japan, with 1700 members among the administrative staff. Commercial staff are represented by the AXA Sales Reps Workers Union.

The company works council consists of 8 members who meet once a month. Members are elected for 4 years.



¹ Cf. [A comparison of the insurance industry in Japan and EU 2002/2011 \(Fortunato Ierardo\)](#)

² Cf. [Employee Relations in AXA Life Japan – Toshinobu Iwasaki, AXA Life Japan, April 15 2013](#)

Description of labour relations in the Group in Europe

The European trade union movement is built around a dual affiliation structure: cross-sectoral with the ETUC and sectoral with UNI Europa.



Bank and insurance employees are represented in UNI Europa Finance, which covers 88 national trade unions in 33 countries. This necessarily represents a wide-ranging diversity of practice, which is also expressed by very different unionisation rates across the different countries.³

Within the AXA Group, trade unions vary significantly from one country to another. The EWC consists of delegations from the 15 countries where AXA is present in Europe. It is consulted on transnational issues. A part of its mission is to establish links between local entities and foster social dialogue in Europe.⁴



Developing transnational relations in the AXA Group

The European Works Council of AXA has taken a number of initiatives that extend beyond its scope of competence, which is the European Union.



The Bureau of the EWC has appointed a person in charge of relations with countries outside of the EU and meetings have been organised with colleagues working for AXA in Turkey, Morocco, India and Mexico. The Himalaya project aims to develop a network of correspondents between the EWC and representatives from the countries outside of Europe where AXA is established.⁵

The website www.cegaxa.com is an important vector of communication between AXA's European entities but also beyond. Its audience is growing with each passing year. A more modern version, with easier access, is currently being developed.⁶



³ Cf. The organisation of the European trade union movement (Maurice Zylberberg)

⁴ Cf. AXA EWC: The social dialogue challenge in Europe, and the link with national employee representation authorities (Daniel Vaultot)

⁵ Cf. A bridge between Europe and the rest of the world: AXA Group EWC, April 2013 (Fortunato Ierardo)

⁶ Cf. Communication AXA EWC April 2013 Tokyo (Hedi Ben Sedrine)

The European Works Council of the AXA Group: growing into a global forum

Born 16 years ago, the European Works Council of the AXA Group has built up a wealth of experience in social dialogue with the top management of the AXA Group, working closely with the representatives from the 15 countries where the Group is established in Europe.

However, today the AXA Group is developing a strategy that is global and not merely European, and this quite naturally requires making known and sharing our work more widely.⁷



This second meeting successfully reflected the intentions of the SAKURA project. However, it would be a pity to stop there. Consequently, the Secretary of the EWC has extended an invitation to a delegation from the AXA Office Workers Union Japan to join the EWC plenary session in November 2013 along with the European delegations, in the presence of the Chairman of the AXA Group. This will be a real “first” for the organisation and, why not, a foretaste of the long expected “global forum”.



Social and economic topics discussed during the meeting

The meeting gave an opportunity for numerous exchanges. The European delegation was interested by the answers given to a number of its questions on subjects such as:

Stress:

Japan has the world's second highest suicide rate after Russia

Equal professional opportunities:

Efforts are being undertaken to reduce the gap between men and women but there is still a long way to go.

Workers and work hours:

The official workweek in Japan is 40 hours. At AXA Japan it is 35 hours; however, the commitment to customer service in Japan is such that this is rarely respected.

The reality of trade unionism in Japan:

Workers are automatically registered with a trade union when they are hired, which means that the union membership rate is very high. Bodies such as the company works council play a significant role in the economy of a company and in its labour relations.

The European Works Council responded with similar information about the life of trade unions in Europe, with a special focus on France. The Japanese delegates were very interested in the answers to their questions about Lean Management, teleworking and the impact of the Copernic project. These topics will be examined in greater depth in the course of other meetings, as well as by email and, in the future, through video conferences.

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⁷ Cf. Conclusion of the session in Tokyo, 2013 - Olivier Pelras