

9-10 MARCH 2026

IEE-ULB, 39 AV. F. ROOSEVELT, BRUXELLES

2026

# EUROPE-ASIA FORUM



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# 2026 EUROPE-ASIA FORUM

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## 9 & 10 of March 2026

Organised by Institut d'études européennes (IEE), Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)  
& The Waseda Brussels Office (WBO)



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# 2026 EUROPE-ASIA FORUM

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This year's Forum is to be the 26<sup>th</sup> iteration of a long-standing academic traditions bringing Japanese and European researchers together to discuss a range of issues of shared interest.

This platform linking scholars and researchers from two continents has proven itself a fruitful and productive environment with several joint publications seeing the light of day over the past two-and-a-half decades. However, much like the EU-Japan partnership itself – which in 2026 will reach the 7 year mark of the conclusion of the Japan-Europe Economic Partnership Agreement, the Forum must renew its agenda and explore new frontiers of shared interest while reacting to a rapidly changing international and national environments, both in Europe and across East Asia.

In seeking to renew its purpose, the Forum can look back on a rich history of scientific collaboration and joint production. Some off the more recent publications associated with the forum include **National Identity and Millennials in Northeast Asia: Power and Contestations in the Digital Age (Routledge, 2024)**; **The Sustainable Development Goals Diffusion and Contestation in Asia and Europe (Routledge, 2023)**; **Europe and Japan Cooperation in the Fight against Cross-border Crime: Challenges and Perspectives (Routledge, 2022)**; **Value Politics in Japan and Europe (Routledge, 2021)**; or **Origins and Consequences of European Crises: Global Views on Brexit (Peter Lang, 2020)**. As reflected in this non-exhaustive list of publications, the forum is a truly interdisciplinary effort onnecting disciplines from across the Socials Sciences and Humanities.



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# 2026 EUROPE-ASIA FORUM

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The 2026 Forum at the Institut d'études européennes (IEE) of the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) on March 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> will continue this tradition as it will host three public panels and two closed workshops. The three Monday sessions are set-up with an eye on relaunching the forum's scientific agenda with a focus on dynamics of interaction between culture, (geo)politics, and market in Europe and Asia. The Tuesday sessions will involve two ongoing collaborative research projects between Waseda University and the ULB: one on **Transcultural Theatre Studies** aimed at challenging national narratives in theatre history, and another on **The EU and Japan in International Criminal Cooperation working towards a joint publication** comparing Japanese and European approaches to international criminal law.



## EVENT PROGRAM- DAY 1 09/03/2026

*Venue: Institute for European Studies-ULB  
Avenue Franklin D. Roosevelt 39  
1050, Brussels*

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|--------------------|---|
| <b>09:30-10:00</b> | Welcome   |
| <b>10:00-12:00</b> | PUBLIC PANEL - Salle Kant<br>Modernity, market, democracy: bones of contention<br>or common ground?<br>Coord. François Foret (ULB)  |
| <b>12:00-13:00</b> | Lunch Break   |
| <b>13:00-15:00</b> | PUBLIC PANEL - Salle Kant<br>How to Accommodate Wars, Cultural Competition<br>and "Constitutive Others": Same Ingredients,<br>Different Recipes?<br>Coord. François Foret (ULB) |
| <b>15:00-15:30</b> | Break   |
| <b>15:30-17:30</b> | CLOSED-DOOR SESSION - on invitation only<br>Closed meeting on the future of the Europe-Asia<br>Forum  |



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## EVENT PROGRAM- DAY 2 10/03/2026

*Venue: Institute for European Studies-ULB  
Avenue Franklin D. Roosevelt 39  
1050, Brussels*

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**13:30-15:30**

PUBLIC PANEL - Salle Kant

Collaborative Practices in Performance: EU-Japan  
Cooperation and Artistic Interaction

**Coord. Magali Bugne (ULB)**

**14:30-16:30**

CLOSED-DOOR SESSION - on invitation only

The EU and Japan in International Criminal  
Cooperation

**Coord. Anne Weyembergh and Chloé Brière (ULB)**



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## MONDAY MARCH 09, 2026

### How to go 'up,' and 'down': A comparison of European and Asian narratives

Europe and Asia have long been compared in terms of their respective modernization processes and subsequent changes in values. However, in the last two decades, another dimension has been added to this comparison. New geopolitical, ecological, technological, and demographic challenges have reignited the debate on the similarities and differences in how both regions address security and identity threats, feelings of decline and/or decadence, and global competition.

#### **PUBLIC PANEL 1 - How to Accommodate Wars, Cultural Competition and "Constitutive Others": Same Ingredients, Different Recipes?** - Chair: François Foret (ULB) - Kant Room

War has returned to Europe and become entrenched in Asia. Controversies surrounding migration, as well as the weaponization of memory, culture, and values, have contributed to the (re)emergence of antagonisms, competitions, and scapegoats in both regions. Some case studies are discussed in relation to ongoing debates in Europe and Asia: the memory of conflicts; the perception of Russia as a 'constitutive other'; and strategies of cultural diplomacy and 'soft power'.

- **Alexander BUKH** (Waseda) - The evolving role of Russia in Japan's identity
- **Syuzanna VASILYAN** (ULB) - Japan's Foreign Policy towards EU's/Russia's "Neighborhood": A Revisionist or Status Quo Power?
- **Madiha Z. SADIQ** (EUI) - The political instrumentalizations and divergent interpretations of - memory in Japan in comparison with Europe
- **Natsuko D'APRILE** (ULB) - Comparing French and Japanese diplomatic strategies: The use of the national language for soft power purposes.

#### **PUBLIC PANEL 2 - Modernity, market, democracy: bones of contention or common ground?** - Chair: François Foret (ULB) - Kant Room

Societal trends and political developments have reshaped the debate on democratic and market governance. Prominent case studies include the reframing of the notion of modernity, and disputes over the extent to which economic, cultural, and political liberalism should be combined, or not.

- **Thomas BRISSON** (Cresspa, LaTop/IFRJ, Paris) - From modernization to 'European/Asian values': a comparison?
- **Juliette SCHWAK** (ULB) - The economic and political roots of social hyper-competitiveness in Korea: what lessons for Europe? »
- **Sébastien ROJON** (ULB) - Comparing citizens' preferences for how government should run



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**MONDAY MARCH 09, 2026****CLOSED WORKSHOP - Closed meeting on the future of the Europe-Asia Forum -**  
Kant Room (attendance upon invitation only)

For over 25 years, the EU-Japan Forum has been organized at the ULB in partnership with Waseda University. Originally developed as a policy event, it has evolved into an academic conference, involving scholars from Europe and Japan, and active in different disciplines (law, political sciences, literature, etc.). The Forum provides a successful platform to support joint research projects and disseminate scientific findings to academia, civil society, and the public sphere, while it also contributes to the training of doctoral and master students.

Nonetheless, after 25 years, the necessity of a reset has now emerged. Global affairs have undergone a radical transformation, with international relations now dominated by hard power, economic and technological competition, and war, rendering the focus on comparative regionalisms and a rules-based liberal order outdated. Additionally, comparing a regional intergovernmental organization (the European Union) with a single country (Japan) appears to be a perspective that is too narrow and imbalanced considering ongoing changes.

Beyond the geopolitical considerations pushing to reinvent the scope and format of the forum, there is a new institutional momentum within the ULB to reflect on it. A new generation of scholars embedded in various ULB departments brings new areas of expertise and geographic and thematic interests. The ambition is to mobilize these untapped resources to reshape the Forum in line with the current challenges.



**TUESDAY MARCH 10, 2026**

## **Collaborative Practices in Performance: EU-Japan Cooperation and Artistic Interaction**

This panel explores collaborative practices in performance and music within the context of EU-Japan artistic and intellectual exchanges. Bringing together perspectives from theatre studies, performance research, Japanese studies, and intercultural creation, the speakers examine how collaborative dynamics shape not only artistic practices but also processes of aesthetic experimentation and the circulation of artistic knowledge across cultural contexts.

### **PUBLIC PANEL 1 - Collaborative Practices in Performance: EU-Japan Cooperation and Artistic Interaction** - Chair: Vanessa Frangville (ULB) - Kant Room

- **Karel VANHAESEBROUCK** (ULB) - Entangled histories: on actors and spectators.
- **Magali BUGNE** (ULB) - From Archetype to Subjectivity: Rewriting the Feminine in Contemporary Noh-based Performance in the Work of Théâtre de l'Éventail  
 Founded in 2006 and based in Orléans, France, Théâtre de l'Éventail has developed a distinctive body of work grounded in sustained engagement with Japanese Noh theatre, shaped through long-term artistic and scholarly collaborations. Within its publicly funded project Nô-Man's Land, the company explores contemporary performance practices by integrating Noh-derived forms such as mai-bayashi (dance and music) and utai (chanting). This presentation will draw on contemporary reinterpretations of Matsukaze developed by Théâtre de l'Éventail to interrogate the representation of women in the classical Noh repertoire and examine how collaborative intercultural creation engages in processes of rewriting these feminine figures. We argue that this shift reveals how intercultural and collaborative performance practices generate not only formal innovation but also conceptual redefinitions of character, gender, and theatrical experience, moving feminine figures from archetypal configurations toward forms of subjectivity that resonate with contemporary and transnational audiences.
- **Shintaro FUJII** (Waseda) - Stakes of International Collaboration in the Performing Arts: Between Institutions and Artists – The Case of Japanese–French Relations  
 International collaboration in the performing arts appears to operate between two distinct logics: an institutional logic and an artistic one. The institutional logic is structured around artistic infrastructures (theatres, residency programs, etc.), anniversary projects, annual budgets, and public subsidies. The artistic logic, by contrast, tends to be more personal, spontaneous, and fluid. Drawing on examples of Japanese–French collaborative projects in the performing arts, I will examine how these two logics interact and articulate with one another.
- **Emmanuelle Montegnies** (KU Leuven) - Transdisciplinary and Transnational (musical) discourses in 1920s Japan: A case study of Takashima Heizaburō's, Tanabe Hisao's, and Noguchi's Ujō's views and influences on children's music and songs  
 This presentation brings a discourse analysis of the ideas on children's music (jidō ongaku 児童音楽) and children's songs (dōyō 童謡) of three prominent Japanese intellectuals of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century: the teacher Takashima Heizaburō 高島平三郎 (1865-1946), the ethnomusicologist Tanabe Hisao 田辺尚雄 (1883-1984), and the poet Noguchi Ujō 野口雨情 (1882-1945). Focusing specifically on interdiscursivity and influences, it will offer a multidisciplinary look on which ideas from western thinkers,



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**TUESDAY MARCH 10, 2026**

philosophers, scientists, and poets influenced members of the Japanese intellectual elite class in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This period is known for the Japanese rapid modernisation process that was kickstarted by the Meiji government in the aftermath of the Unequal Treaties (1854). Constantly challenged by both conservative and liberal voices, the Meiji government's educational approach, including musical education, was critiqued for being too distant from Japanese traditions and/or labelled not yet modern enough. Domestic debates were further fuelled by a new educational wave, often attributed to the Swiss pedagogue Ellen Key's *The Century of the Child* (1909). This educational movement defended the interests of children as individual human beings. Takashima Heizaburō, Tanabe Hisao, and Noguchi Ujō emerge as ideal lenses into the psyche of the intellectual sphere in 1920s Japan. By pooling from the abovementioned range of ideas and discourses on children, music, and education, I will reconstruct the meaning and motivation behind their promotion of children's music and children's songs with a particular attention to the formative process of their thoughts. It will display a deeply rooted nostalgia and search for "Japaneseness" amid rapid change, as well as an active involvement in new knowledge and research.

**CLOSED WORKSHOP- The EU and Japan in International Criminal Cooperation** - Co-Chairs: Pr. Anne Weyembergh & Chloé Brière - Kant Room (attendance upon invitation only)

Cooperation between Japan and the EU in the field of security and criminal matters has long been underexplored by academic research. A first successful research project focused on the Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement concluded between the two partners. Waseda and ULB scholars are now preparing a second book seeking to compare the Japanese and European approaches to international criminal justice, covering not only core international crimes, but also the fight against serious and organized crime. As this second book approaches completion, this closed workshop, in presence of the two other co-editors, Prof. Shuichi Furuya and Prof. Shin Matsuzawa (University of Waseda), will be the occasion to discuss its preliminary research findings and discuss the next steps.

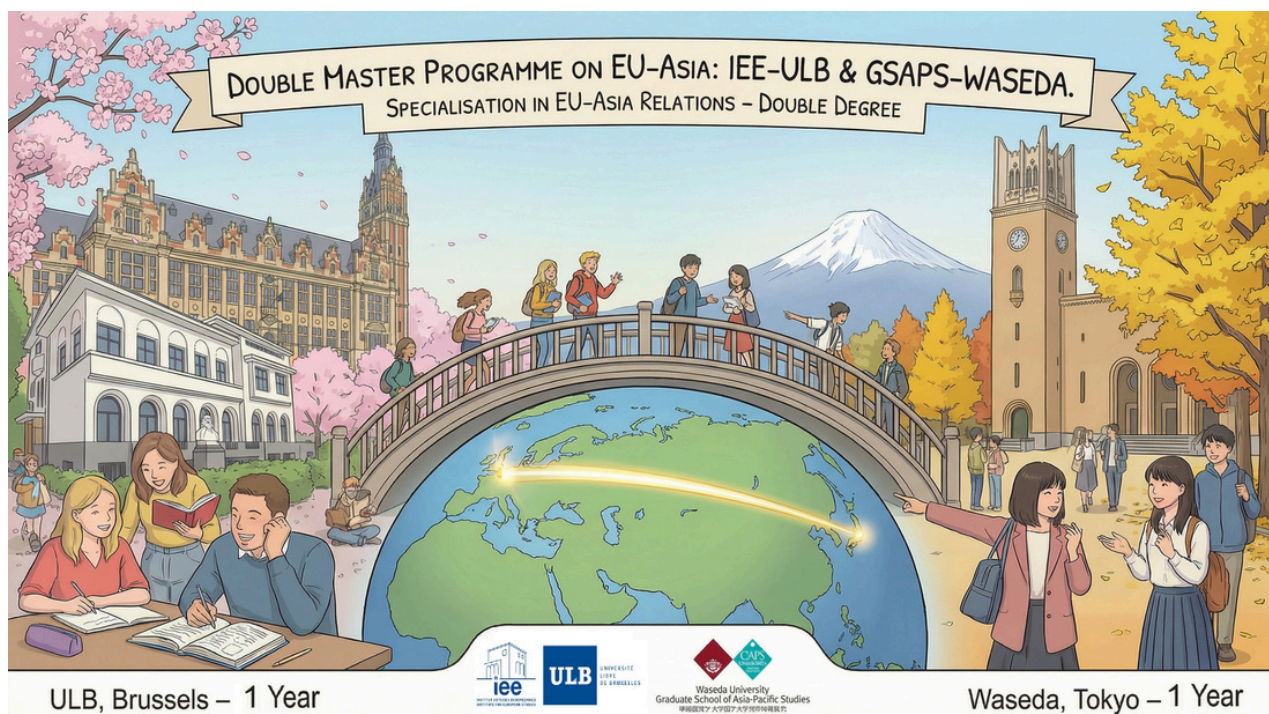
- Anne Weyembergh (ULB)
- Chloé Brière (ULB)
- Shuichi Furuya (Waseda)
- Shin Matsuzawa (Waseda)



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# EU-ASIA DOUBLE MASTER



The **EU-Asia Double Master** offers a specialisation in relations between the European Union (EU) and Asia. It allows students to obtain a **double degree** from the **ULB (Brussels, BE)** and **Waseda University (Tokyo, JP)** spending the first year of the Master's programme in one country, and the second year in the other country. Students thus acquire a solid knowledge of the historical, political, legal, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of European integration and regional cooperation in Asia.

## Further Information

- Webpage
  - <https://iee.ulb.be/en/masters/master-in-european-studies-eu-asia-track>
- Course List (at the ULB)
  - <https://www.ulb.be/en/programme/2024-ma-eteu#programme>
- Contacts @ ULB
  - Academic coordinator - Professor Julien Jeandesboz: [Julien.Jeandesboz@ulb.be](mailto:Julien.Jeandesboz@ulb.be)
  - Questions about admission requirements or your application - [asia.phisoc@ulb.be](mailto:asia.phisoc@ulb.be)
  - Any other questions? The Student Secretariat can help you - [Yousra.Chahboun@ulb.be](mailto:Yousra.Chahboun@ulb.be)



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