



ETP

EXECUTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME

EMPOWERING BUSINESS THROUGH UNDERSTANDING

About Broadening your Horizon and your Business in Asia:

Interview with a Scholarship Holder of the
EU Executive Training Programme

Since 35 years, European managers participate in the year-long EU-funded Executive Training Programme (ETP) to learn about Japanese or Korean language, culture and business practices. Graduates return to their companies with valuable language skills and insider knowledge of the markets, ready to establish and develop business in Asia.

A new ETP cycle is about to start in November 2014 and applications are still open until 15th May. Find out more about ETP in an Interview with a current participant in Tokyo.

Manfred Beck, a current ETP participant from Germany, shares his experiences in an interview and provides up-to-date insights into the programme, its benefits and challenges. The ETP consists of a 3-week cultural inception module at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, a 30-week business and language training course at Waseda University (Tokyo) or Yonsei University (Seoul) and a 3-month internship. All university fees and an additional scholarship of 2.200 € in Japan or 2.000€ in Korea are covered by the European Commission.

Read the interview with Manfred and get a better understanding of how the ETP can boost your career – or get in touch with your local contacts (Cornelia Zielke and Felix Kuther: hamburgoffice@euetsp.eu), watch our latest [Info-Webinar on Youtube](#) or simply [apply online](#). The application deadline is the 15th of May 2014 – Apply Now!

Manfred Beck (32) is employed at Trumpf, one of the world's leading manufacturing companies with headquarters in Ditzingen near Stuttgart, Germany. He is married and living in Tokyo since the ETP training course at Waseda University started last January. Although Manfred has already been to Japan for business several times, he only got to really know the country since he moved there.

[Find the complete interview here.](#)

How can your company, Trumpf, benefit from ETP?

The ETP will enable me to successfully leverage my **newly gained language skills and cultural competence** in discussions and negotiations with our Japanese subsidiary and partner firms. I would like to further **drive our cooperation** and collaborate successfully with our Japanese colleagues in **upcoming international projects**.

What parts of ETP are especially useful to you?

I must really highlight the **language courses**, which are very well organized at Waseda University. Right now we are only three students in my class and we have one designated teacher. Living in Tokyo and being constantly confronted with the language additionally contributes to a steep learning curve. But also the **business courses** are very useful. Students are from various backgrounds, e.g. age, work experience, European culture and industry. So many different perspectives often lead to interesting discussions. Another highlight of ETP are the **multi-cultural sessions** that we are attending together with Japanese students.

What kind of companies should consider taking part in ETP?

Basically, any company with a current interest in the Japanese market. Most employers of ETP participants in my cycle are not active in Japan yet and are not sure how or where to begin.



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How important is the monthly bursary of the EU for you?

No doubt: Without the scholarship, I probably would not have participated in ETP. My employer supports me with a reduced salary in the context of a sabbatical. In combination with the EU's financial support I can cover my expenses quite well. Right now we can even benefit from a favourable exchange course.

How did you experience cultural differences?

Since I had been to Japan before, I already largely knew what to expect. Still, it is completely different to actually live in Tokyo. As long as you are open-minded to new cultures yourself, you will handle the cultural differences just fine. Every now and then, you may find yourself in a situation where you realize that you attract attention with your (European) behaviour. For instance, in Japan it is not usual to talk on the subway – other Europeans and I must have appeared quite rude at times. Also worth knowing: the Japanese do not say no. Recently, we asked a very polite clerk at a car rental to help us with entering the destination into the Japanese navigation system. Although this obviously did not work out so well, he would not let on about it at all. Luckily, the wrong address was at least close to our actual destination, so we eventually made it – thanks to our smartphones – to the right place.

How would you describe your personal development?

Well, the majority of the programme still lies ahead of me. However, I will never regret to have made this kind of international experience. To make yourself a home in a completely new environment and build a network from scratch can be challenging – and at the same time essential in Japan. Without connections you can easily get lost in Japan. Even joining the gym, renting a flat or opening a bank account may require contacts in the right places. **Anyway, you may be thrown in at the deep end, but this also allows you to broaden your horizon immensely.**