

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, Université libre de Bruxelles &
Organization for Regional and Inter-regional Studies, Waseda University



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2026 EUROPE-ASIA FORUM

This year's Forum is to be the 26th 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

The 2026 Forum at the Institut d'études européennes (IEE) of the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) on March 9th and 10th 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.



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EVENT PROGRAM- DAY 1 09/03/2026

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

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

13:30-15:30

PUBLIC - Salle Kant

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

Coord. Magali Bugne (ULB)

14:30-16:30

CLOSED

The EU and Japan in International Criminal
Cooperation (closed workshop)

Coord. Anne Weyembergh and Chloé Brière (ULB)



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MONDAY MARCH 09, 2026 – 2 POLI.SCI PANELS + 1 WORKSHOP**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.



MONDAY MARCH 09, 2026 – 2 POLI.SCI PANELS + 1 WORKSHOP

- Thomas BRISSON (Cresspa, LaTop/IFRJ, Paris), « From modernization to ‘European/Asian values’: a comparison? »
- Juliette SCHWAK « 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 »

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.



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TUESDAY MARCH 10, 2026 – 1 CULTURE STUDIES PANEL + 1 LEGAL WORKSHOP**PUBLIC PANEL 1 - Collaborative Practices in Performance: EU-Japan Cooperation and Artistic Interaction** - Chair: Vanessa Frangville (ULB) - Kant Room

- Karel VANHAESEBROUCK (ULB)
- Magali BUGNE (ULB)
- Shintaro FUJII (Waseda)
- Emmanuelle Montegnies (KU Leuven)

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.

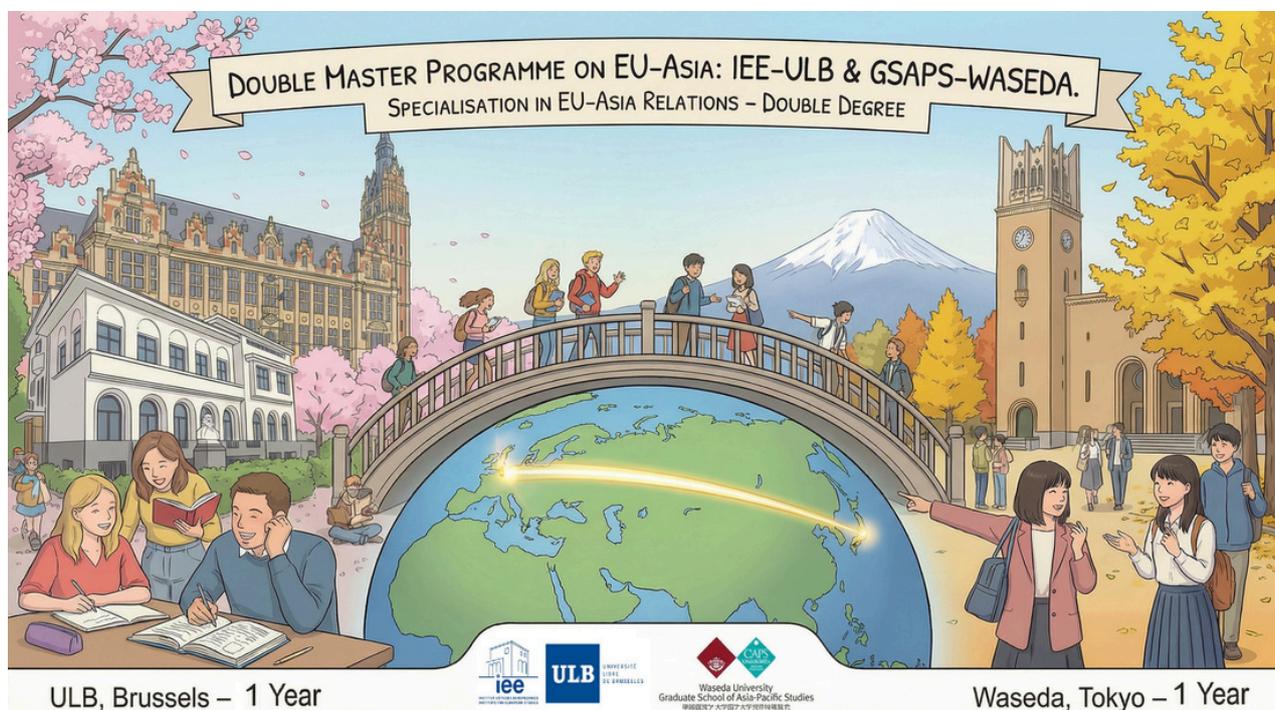
- Anne Weyembergh (ULB)
- Chloé Brière (ULB)
- Shuichi Furuya (Waseda)
- Shin Matsuzawa (Waseda)



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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
 - Questions about admission requirements or your application - asia.phisoc@ulb.be
 - Any other questions? The Student Secretariat can help you - Yousra.Chahboun@ulb.be



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