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# HOW TO THRIVE IN THE POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

Ahead of this year's summit held in Japan of the Group of Seven most industrialized economies, the Italian government headed by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has been preparing to take over the group's rotating presidency with a firm commitment to further raise living standards around the world, which has emerged from a debilitating pandemic.

On the sidelines, Japan and Italy have renewed efforts to bolster cooperation in various fields of mutual interest, like defense, trade and culture, as the two countries return to robust economic growth, a trend that will continue, according to Yu Miyake, director general of Japan External Trade Organization in Milan and secretary general of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Italy.

Italian Ambassador to Japan Gianluigi Benedetti recently spoke about how the two countries will strengthen their industrial and scientific partnerships.

"My message for all our Japanese friends and companies that are interested in Italy is: Let's go beyond the three Fs (food, fashion and furniture). Our excellent manufacturing capabilities are also the result of very good engineering and a lot of technology. This is a common element of our two countries," Benedetti said.

Japanese Ambassador to Italy Satoshi Suzuki has given full support to strengthen this bilateral partnership.

"Cooperation between Italy and Japan is crucial not only bilaterally, but also for the resolution of various challenges facing the international community. I sincerely hope that we continue to deepen the already solid bond between Italy and Japan built over 150 years," Suzuki said.

To complement the embassy's efforts, Consul General of Japan in Milan Yuji Amamiya set up a Japanese Business Support Desk to facilitate the activities of Japanese companies in the eight regions of northern Italy, including Milan.

"Ever since Osaka and Milan signed a twin city agreement in 1981, they have deepened

their relations in a wide range of fields, including culture, art and economics. We like to support activities that further develop economic and cultural exchanges as a means to bring the two countries even closer together," he said.

Earlier this year, the Italian Ministry of Defense committed to increase its participation in the Global Combat Air Program (GCAP), an air defense initiative led by Italy, the United Kingdom and Japan to develop a sixth-generation stealth fighter jet.

On the Italian side, the main contractor will be Leonardo S.p.A., with Avio Aero working on the engines and MBDA working on missile development.

"We have a 30-plus-year relationship with Japanese companies. We think there is a good cultural and technical fit. Our involvement in GCAP is a big recognition of our capabilities and the value we can bring to the program. Through new breakthroughs in technology, we will also support the design and development of the power and propulsion system of this sixth-generation fighter. We will make available our knowledge, expertise, experience, as well as the passion and commitment of our people," said Avio Aero Vice President for Strategy, Marketing and Sales Pierfederico Scarpa.

Since its acquisition by Sumitomo Heavy Industries in 2018, the Lafert Group has benefited from an interaction of two different cultures.

"You have the opportunity to play an important part of a global group. It is a harmonious blend that is driven by mutual respect," said Sumitomo Heavy Industries Senior Vice President Shaun Dean.

In other sectors, there is widespread enthusiasm over the redoubled commitment to strengthen business ties with Japan, among them CBC Procos, a wholly owned subsidiary of Japanese producer of active pharmaceutical ingredients.

"We have never stopped investing. We've continued to grow both in terms of capacity, compliance and cutting-edge equipment. Some of the most important projects

came to life in these last three years such as the Quality and R&D Labs, but the future is our real focus," said Procos CEO Enrico Zodio.

For the family-run Flamma Group, working with Japanese companies has resulted in an increased knowledge of how the global industry operates and how to improve their own development and production processes, said CEO and President GianPaolo Negrisoli.

Meanwhile, Toyota Motor Italia CEO Luigi Kswary Luca shared a similar experience as the country head of the world's largest automotive company.

"We have partners in Italy who are the most innovative and highest performing entrepreneurs in the Italian market. They have been following the Toyota standards, the Toyota philosophy, and the Toyota way of doing business. The key to our success is the link Italian entrepreneurs have with Japan and who have endorsed the Japanese way of doing things," Luca said.

KWE Italia Managing Director Joe Aoun expressed his thoughts on the blend of cultures, saying: "We've been around for 25 years and we've been growing exponentially. It's easy to say that the Italian mentality is so different from the Japanese. But guess what? It's working because you take the best out of both cultures and you blend them together and you offer a product, a service, or a type of conversation that actually fits both mentalities."

On the other hand, University of Genoa Vice President for International Affairs Fulvio Mastrogiovanni believes that expanding the exposure of students to different cultures, such as Japan's, will broaden their minds and sharpen their understanding of the world.

"Providing the opportunity to go to Japan is a tremendous experience for our students. That is a great opportunity for someone who is eager to learn different things. They come out of the experience better," he said.

As for Komatsu Italia Manufacturing Managing Director David Bazzi, he foresees increased possibilities of further growth, given the solid integration achieved between the Japanese high engineering standards and the Italian creativity. ■

# KOMATSU ITALIA MANUFACTURING: HELPING BUILD ITALY ONE AREA AT A TIME

In 1963, a determined and intuitive Italian entrepreneur, Giovanni Bettanin, founded Fabbrica Attrezzature Industriali S.p.A., which translated into English means "the Industrial Equipment Factory."

Over the past 60 years, F.A.I.'s plant, which was later integrated into the Komatsu Group, has proved exemplary in organizational terms, thanks to the combination of Italian brilliance and creativity with Japanese methodology and the continuous pursuit of the highest quality and reliability, concepts that form the Komatsu Way, a philosophy focused on SLQDC (safety, law, quality, delivery and cost).

Founded by Meitaro Takeuchi in 1921, Komatsu initially acquired 10% of F.A.I. in 1989, stipulating it would manufacture miniature excavators destined for the European market in Este, Italy. Within a few years, the factory's production volume grew threefold.

In 1996, Komatsu made a bold move to purchase F.A.I. in its entirety and focused production only on utility machines: mini-excavators, midi-excavators, backhoe loaders, and skid steer loaders. The plant's output continued growing and reached 12,642 machines in 2007.

The factory changed its name to the current Komatsu Italia Manufacturing in 2013 to highlight its ambition to also build larger machines. Having stayed faithful to the Komatsu Way, KIM has received its ISO 45001, 9001



Komatsu Italia Manufacturing Managing Director David Bazzi

and 14001 certifications.

By employing cutting-edge technology and remaining sensitive to the issue of climate change, KIM designed and built the first fully electric 2-ton mini-excavators, which will be introduced in Europe in 2024.

KIM's factory has become a major center of production for the entire Komatsu Group and the main distributor of its machines in several countries in Europe and the rest of the world.

Looking to the future, KIM constantly explores new markets and remains committed to meeting their very specific requirements in an effort to increase market share. As seen in their wide range of models, KIM is a remarkable example of integration between two different cultures. ■

→ [www.komatsu.eu/en](http://www.komatsu.eu/en)

# TOYOTA MOTOR ITALIA: DRIVEN BY SUCCESS, GUIDED BY PASSION

The world's largest carmaker came late in the game. Founded in 1937, Toyota was more than 30 years behind Ford (1903) and Fiat (1899). But by building reliable, affordable and sturdy vehicles, the Japanese company gradually overtook its competition around the world.

In Italy, 2022 was a year full of success and satisfaction. Toyota closed 2022 recording its best market share ever of 7%, securing third position overall and ranking second in the private market, with a 9% share right behind Fiat, the main Italian automotive company.

"Aside from these market results, we also achieved record results in after-sales turnover and overall services, which means financing and insurance. So, we are very happy. Also, from a brand image point of view, we are still the best regarded brand in the market," said Toyota Motor Italia CEO Luigi Kswary Luca.

In the European context, Luca pointed out the importance of Italy as the most relevant market for the sale of three models produced in Europe such as the Yaris subcompact car, Yaris Cross subcompact crossover SUV, and the Aygo X city car.

With the COVID-19 pandemic and strict lockdowns becoming a distant memory, Toyota got back on its feet quickly thanks to the strength of its brand, its leadership in electrification with a wide range of full hybrid electric vehicles, its reputation, and the strength of its dealer network.

"We've had successful communication campaigns. We've also paved the way for hybrid cars, spreading and democratizing full hybrid electric technology in the market," said Luca, whose main objective is to make Toyota the most loved brand in Italy. ■

→ [www.toyota.it](http://www.toyota.it)



Toyota Motor Italia CEO Luigi Kswary Luca

# JAPAN'S AMBASSADOR REAFFIRMS IMPORTANCE OF ITALIAN PARTNERSHIP

H.E. Ambassador Satoshi Suzuki of Japan arrived in Rome in November, following overseas assignments in South Korea, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, Austria, and India. The veteran diplomat got his bachelor's degree in foreign studies from University of Tokyo and his master's degree from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland.

Suzuki spoke to GMI POST about the importance of Japan's relationship with Italy and how the two countries can increase collaboration in different fields and industries.

## On the relationship between Japan and Italy:

"The Japan-EU economic partnership agreement, which came into force in February 2019, has

created a huge economic zone that comprises more than 600 million people and accounts for around 30% of the world's GDP. It has contributed to the economic growth of both countries by stimulating trade and investment, creating jobs and strengthening the competitiveness of companies."

## On Japanese companies investing in Italy:

"As COVID infections decrease, new business opportunities are expected to be created, including investment and personnel exchange, in addition to wider bilateral trade.

"Like Japan, Italy is a renowned *monozukuri* (manufacturing) country that possesses superior technology and high quality, making it an attractive investment destination for Japanese companies. I believe that there

will be opportunities for companies from both countries, particularly in the IT/digital, green, and health care industries, to work together by leveraging their strengths and expanding investment in the future. In addition, at the IJBG (Italy-Japan Business Group) meeting held in Venice last December, ICE (Italian Trade Agency) and JETRO agreed to cooperate in supporting the start-up companies from their countries."

## His message to the readers of The Japan Times:

"Italy is an important strategic partner for Japan because we share the same fundamental values. Cooperation between Italy and Japan is crucial not only bilaterally, but also for the resolution of various challenges facing the international community,



Ambassador Satoshi Suzuki of Japan

including the response to Russia's aggression of Ukraine. I sincerely hope that we continue to further deepen the already solid bond between Italy and Japan over 150 years through all possible occasions. ■

# FLAMMA GROUP: AIMING HIGHER, GOING BIGGER

Starting as the Fabbrica Lombarda Ammino Acidi, the Flamma Group was founded by Dr. Marco Maria Negrisoli and his chemist wife, Edmea Kullmann, in 1950 initially to produce amino acids.

Today, 73 years later, that small operation has grown dramatically into a multimillion dollar company that makes small molecule active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), new chemical entities and late-stage intermediates for the life science industry, and acts as a contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO) for many drug companies.

Based in Chignolo d'Isola in the Lombardy region, the Flamma Group also has other sites in Italy, China and the United States. Despite its global expansion, the company remains family-owned and run by second-generation President and CEO GianPaolo Negrisoli. Third-generation family member Gian Marco is actively involved in corporate activities and is general manager of Flamma USA.

"Towards the beginning of this century, just after having built a new site in Italy, we decided to have our own manufacturing site in China. The combination of Italy and China sites for early stage pharmaceutical development of small molecules helped to lead the rapid growth of the Flamma Group over the last 15 years," said Negrisoli.



Flamma Group President and CEO GianPaolo Negrisoli

Negrisoli recalled there were only 12 employees when he joined the company, which now employs around 800 people.

Meanwhile, Executive Director and Global Business Head Fabrice Cornille, Ph.D. believes the research and development capabilities of the Flamma Group are among the key differentiators for becoming a preferred partner of the top 20 pharmaceutical companies, including those based in Japan.

"In working with a Japanese company, you need to reach a higher level of understanding of your job," Cornille said. ■

→ [www.flammagroup.com](http://www.flammagroup.com)



# PROCOS: BIGGER, BETTER, STRONGER

The global pharmaceutical field undergoes fast changes because of the breadth of research that takes place around the world. The new knowledge has yielded groundbreaking treatment and impressive innovations on both a macro and micro scale.

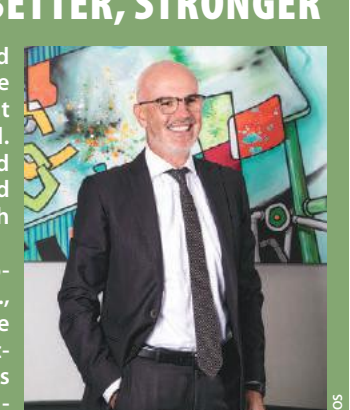
Procos, a wholly owned subsidiary of Japan-based CBC Co., is leading the industry in the field of custom synthesis and active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) manufacturing. To maintain its position in a highly competitive market, Procos is constantly investing in its people, technology and a new multipurpose facility to develop small molecules and high-potency API (HPAPI) products for the global market.

"We have never stopped investing. We've continued to grow in terms of capacity, compliance and cutting-edge equipment. Some of our most important projects came to life in the last three years such as the Quality and R&D Labs, but the future is our real focus" explained Procos CEO Enrico Zodio.

Procos continues adapting to a rapidly changing industry, pushing its limits further and developing new products. In the second half of the year, the new HPAPI lines will be officially activated, but Procos' growth goes on.

"We are up and running to increase production capacity, building up a state-of-the-art multipurpose unit named R11. It will be a challenge, but the completion of this facility in 2025 will lead us to the next stage. We will achieve that thanks to our parent company, CBC, which has always been very supportive," Zodio said. ■

→ [www.procos.it](http://www.procos.it)



Procos CEO Enrico Zodio



# UNIGE: ENCOURAGING CRITICAL THINKING IN AN INTERNATIONAL SETTING

Its pride and honor may be deeply rooted in its long history, but the University of Genoa in the northern region of Liguria, has gained global recognition for its excellence in education, innovation and research.

Founded in 1481, UniGe offers undergraduate programs in different disciplines such as engineering, medicine, law, economics and humanities, as well as post-graduate degrees in physics, mathematics, computer science, chemistry and environmental science, among others.

Receiving an average of 800 applications every year until recently, UniGe handled around 15,000 applications in 2022 and has seen a steady increase in the number of applications from foreign students.

"Approximately 10% of our (over 32,000) students are international and this year, they numbered more than 3,000," said Vice President for International Affairs and Deputy Chancellor Fulvio Mastrogiovanni.

As UniGe gets more applications from Asia, particularly from Japan, it has developed double degrees in tandem with Japanese universities, including an MSc in robotics engineering, and formed partnerships with local cultural institutions to enhance



University of Genoa Vice President for International Affairs and Deputy Chancellor Fulvio Mastrogiovanni

the experience of its Japanese students.

"The number of Japanese students has increased because of two factors: the presence of The Edoardo Chiossone Museum of Oriental Art, which is one of the most important museums of Japanese culture in Italy; and Genoa's rebranding as an international city, which attracts students who want to understand and study Italian culture," he said.

"The goal of the university as a cultural institution is to teach future generations about universal principles and skills. As an educator, my ultimate goal is to push people to always question and think critically," he added. ■

→ <https://unige.it/en>

# KWE ITALY: BRINGING WORLDS TOGETHER WITH SPECIAL FLAIR AND EXCELLENT SERVICE

Kintetsu World Express-Italy is a subsidiary of the Japanese air and sea freight forwarding company that has been providing more than just forwarding services for 25 years now. The company also services its customers through customs brokerage, warehouse management and fiscal representation services.

Managing Director Joseph "Joe" Aoun, who took over management of KWE-Italy last September, believes Italy can be the gateway to many parts of Europe.

Regional Head for Central and South Italy Alessandro Orlando, who has worked for KWE-Italy for 20 years, explained: "Kintetsu Italy was established in 1998 in Milan. We put a lot of effort into enhancing our skills and competence to provide our customers with a sort of one-stop shop for their business in Europe. We specialize in transport logistics, fiscal representation, standing as exporters or importers of record, customs guidance, and tax regulation."

→ [www.kwe.com/local/italy/en/others](http://www.kwe.com/local/italy/en/others)

# SHI MOTORS AHEAD IN ITALY

Sumitomo Heavy Industries has played a significant role in the economic development of Japan for more than a century. SHI's standing is seen in its participation in an array of projects, products and services around the world. In Europe, SHI has focused its investments on its Power Transmission and Controls Division.

SHI has expanded its business since 2018 by acquiring Italy-based Lafert Group, the region's leading designer and manufacturer of industrial electric motors. Through its core products, Lafert provides customizable solutions for a range of applications, including industrial machinery, material handling, fans and pumps and renewable energy.

"When companies undertake acquisitions, they usually change branding immediately. We recognized how strong the Lafert's branding was. We didn't want to change its DNA. We sent a message that SHI was very proud that we had acquired an Italian company," said SHI Senior Vice President Shaun Dean.

SHI did not undertake any major changes to Lafert's corporate structure or work culture in order to minimize any disruptions and maintain efficiency in production. It has so far invested about €90 million.

→ [www.lafert.com/en](http://www.lafert.com/en)



Sumitomo Heavy Industries Senior Vice President Shaun Dean

"We respect and trust each other. And we are investing in that trust. We are here also to show the next generation of Japanese executives what it's like to work in a global platform. We nurture this precious jewel in order to create a harmonious blend of culture and innovation," Dean said.

The acquisition of Lafert is a milestone in SHI's expansion strategy in the electric motors and industrial machines electrification space. Lafert will be the global Competence Centre for research and development of all motors made by Sumitomo Drive Technologies.

In Italy, SHI also operates through SM-Cyclo Italy, a subsidiary of Sumitomo Drive Technologies, which has its European HQ in Munich. ■

**Università di Genova**