

Kickoff Symposium of the EU-Japan Network for Digital Foundations to Advance Global Digital Innovation

Tokyo, May 22–23, 2025 — The inaugural symposium of the **EU-Japan Digital Foundations Network** convened in Tokyo, bringing together leading figures in digital science and technology from Japan and Europe, particularly France and the Benelux countries. This new platform, jointly initiated by **University of Tsukuba** and **Université Grenoble Alpes**, aims to address foundational and technological challenges while enhancing talent attraction in key economic sectors such as **semiconductors, quantum technology, artificial intelligence (AI)**, and their practical applications.

In alignment with the EU-Japan digital partnership, the network aspires to strengthen the strategic partnership between the European Union and Japan by:

- **Fostering cooperation** among academia, industry, and government stakeholders,
- **Boosting competitiveness, economic security**, and driving **innovation** in digital foundation technologies.

Institutional Support

This symposium was backed by:

- **Delegation of the European Union to Japan**
- **Embassy of France to Japan**
- **Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan**
- **Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)**

Opening and Keynote Speakers

The symposium was opened with visionary remarks by:

- **Kyosuke Nagata**, President, University of Tsukuba
- **Yassine Lakhnech**, President, Université Grenoble Alpes

Followed by inspiring keynote speeches from:

- **H.E. Jean-Eric Paquet**, Ambassador of the EU to Japan
- **H.E. Philippe Setton**, Ambassador of France to Japan
- **Kuniaki Sato**, Counselor for International Affairs, MEXT
- **Atsushi Arakawa**, Director, Office of ASPIRE, Department of International Affairs, JST

Strategic Outcomes

The symposium featured expert panels and strategic dialogues, laying the groundwork for long-term collaboration. As a major outcome, **three task forces** were launched to develop white papers and identify opportunities for joint R&D and talent development initiatives in:

- **Computation (Microelectronics, Quantum, spintronics)**
- **AI and Applications**
- **Sustainable and Green Digital Technologies**

Looking Ahead

The next symposium will be hosted in Brussels, Europe, in 2026, where the network will present its first concrete achievements, and propose topics for its collaborative projects.

Quotes :

H.E. Philippe Setton, Ambassador of France to Japan declared “The quality of the presentations and the richness of the debates I observed during the Kickoff Symposium for this EU-Japan Digital Foundations Network bear witness to the relevance and innovative nature of this network, which is fully embedded in the spirit of the EU-Japan Digital Partnership. It will serve as the crucible for joint, excellence-driven training and research projects and reinforce our resilience in the face of future digital challenges.”

President Nagata of Tsukuba University said “Thanks to the active engagement of the approximately seventy participants, the symposium was a great success. It helped deepen mutual trust among universities, research institutions, funding agencies and government agencies in Europe and Japan, and has created a robust foundation for a future collaboration designed to navigate together unpredictable times.”

President Lakhnech of Université Grenoble Alpes said “Fostering collaboration in digital foundations between the major actors of both Europe and Japan is critical for our technological and economic sovereignty. This successful symposium, held with the support of European and Japanese institutional bodies, produced concrete outcomes to be pursued by the leading organizations brought together at this event.”

*Participants of the first symposium :

[Japan]

Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (RIKEN), National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST), National Institute for Materials Science (NIMS), The High Energy Accelerator Research Organization (KEK), Tohoku University, The University of Tokyo (UTokyo), Institute of Science Tokyo, University of Tsukuba (UT)

[France]

Côte d’Azur University (UCA), University of Bordeaux (UBx), Paris Cité University, University of Strasbourg, Université Grenoble Alpes, Université Paris-Saclay, University of Lorraine, University of Montpellier, French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), French national research institute for digital science and technology (INRIA), French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA)

[Belgium]

Hasselt University, Interuniversity Microelectronics Centre (IMEC), University of Liège (ULiège)

[The Netherlands]

Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)

About University of Tsukuba

University of Tsukuba was established in 1872 as a Normal School, marking it as Japan's first national institution of higher education. In 1973, it was relocated from Tokyo to Tsukuba Science City and re-emerged as a new concept university. Since its rebirth, University of Tsukuba has blossomed into one of Japan's premier research-intensive universities. Its impressive roster of achievements includes: three Nobel laureates, over 50 Olympic and Paralympic medalists, and successful entrepreneurs among its faculty and graduates. In 2022, the university further solidified its standing by becoming one of Japan's ten designated national university corporations.

<https://www.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/about/outline-tsukuba/>

About Université Grenoble Alpes (UGA)

Ranked as the leading European university for innovation based on the number of patents filed, and among the top 150 universities worldwide in the Shanghai ranking, UGA is deeply rooted in its region, multidisciplinary, and open to the international community. It is one of the nine French universities awarded the "Initiative of Excellence" (IDEX) label.

Since 2020, UGA has incorporated three component institutions: Grenoble INP-UGA, Sciences Po Grenoble-UGA, and ENSAG-UGA, along with three academic faculties: the Faculty of Science-UGA, the University Institute of Technology-UGA, and the Faculty of Humanities, Health, Sport and Societies-UGA.

With 57,000 students – including 10,000 international students and 3,000 doctoral candidates – and more than 7,700 staff members, UGA operates across several campuses, primarily in Grenoble and Valence. National research bodies such as the CEA, CNRS, INRAE, Inria, and Inserm are closely associated with UGA, working together to develop a shared strategy for research and international outreach. Partnerships with the IRD and Grenoble Alpes University Hospital (CHU Grenoble Alpes) are also actively encouraged.

<https://www.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/>