

Jean Monnet Newsletter No. 3 (May 2020)

Newsletter 3 – May 2020

Welcome to the third edition of this newsletter!

“Alles neu macht der Mai”. This traditional German saying means “May makes everything new”. This year, due to Covid-19, there is not that much new in May though. April and May have been very quiet months for people around the world, with the majority of shops, restaurants, schools and business remaining closed. Many people in Western Europe and the US have been on lockdown, often not allowed to leave their house with the exception of to pursue vital work and to do necessary purchases like groceries and medication. Compared to that, the regulations in Japan have been rather lax.

Nevertheless, most students at most Japanese universities, including Kwansei Gakuin, have not been on campus this academic year as the university was off limits for over a month in April and May. Classes have been taking place online, which is a completely new learning experience for both students and professors. On the one hand, it shows us that the internet has great potential to bring people together and that face-to-face meetings (often involving long commutes) are not always absolutely necessary. It helps us realise that much of our work nowadays can be done from different locations, including home. We live in an age where the internet is dominating our life and work, and this crisis is a good chance to better understand (and try out) the many possibilities connecting online offers. At the same time, the crisis also shows us that very often virtual meetings cannot replace real human interactions among people. Students often learn better in a classroom where they can discuss, ask questions, and interact with their classmates and instructors. I wish that we can learn from this crisis, especially in regard to what really matters to us - and what is just a ‘habit’ we thought was important but is not. Most importantly, I hope you are all keeping a positive attitude in these turbulent times.

For the time being, it is unclear when ‘normal’ life will resume and when classes and events on campus can start again.

For now, all planned events, including most activities for the EU-Japan Friendship Week 2020, are cancelled or postponed. This is very unfortunate, but we see this as our duty to protect people’s health.

While we still have plenty of time to read, let me give you a selection of 3 publications on population ageing and rural demographic change (not only) in the EU. I hope you can enjoy broadening your horizon regarding our JMM topic.

Reading recommendations:

European Commission (2014), Population Ageing in Europe; facts, implications and policies, https://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy_reviews/kina26426enc.pdf

N. Yoshino et al. (2019), Aging Population and its Impacts on Fiscal Sustainability, <https://t20japan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/t20-japan-tf10-11-aging-population-impacts-fiscal-sustainability.pdf>

Committee of the Regions (2016), The impact of demographic change on European regions, https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/The%20impact%20of%20demographic%20change%20on%20European%20regions/Impact_demographic_change_european_regions.pdf

Best regards,

Anna

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