

# Poland independence day

## Poland and Japan mark 90 years of diplomatic ties

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It is my profound privilege and great pleasure to address the readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Poland. I would like to extend respectfully greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, the government and the Japanese nation. The occasion also provides me with a special opportunity to extend my best wishes to Polish citizens residing in Japan.



2009, a year of momentous anniversaries — 20 years since the “Autumn of Nations,” as the 1989 democratic changes in Central Europe, which began in Poland, were called; 10 years since Poland joined NATO; and five years since Poland joined the European Union — is coming to a close.

Poland certainly does not stand on the sidelines of historical events. It has benefited from them and shaped them as well. If it had not been for the Solidarity movement, the 1989 Round-table Talks, the first partially free parliamentary election in the Soviet bloc and the first noncommunist government in the Soviet sphere of influence, history would have taken a different course.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the establishment of those relations. On this occasion, concerts, symposiums and exhibitions are being held in both countries, and March 23 congratulatory letters from the prime minis-

ters and foreign ministers of both countries were exchanged in Warsaw and Japan. In February, the National Philharmonic in Warsaw was the venue of a concert of traditional Japanese music by the Yo-Soro ensemble. It inaugurated a cycle of events in Poland while in May in Japan, a special concert by Sinfonia Varsovia, which included works by Polish and Japanese composers, commemorated the anniversary.

Today relations between Poland and Japan have been developing with the support of numerous exchanges of citizens based on the spirit of good will and friendship.

As partners sharing common values, both countries cooperate closely in various fields such as politics, economy and culture, and at the same time deepen cooperation on global issues such as the environment, climate change and development cooperation. We are glad that Japan's place is becoming increasingly prominent in Polish foreign policy.

As ambassador of Poland, I

welcome the growing intensity of political contacts between our countries in recent years. Let me recall that last December Lech Kaczynski, president of the Republic of Poland, visited Japan and Polish minister of foreign affairs, Radoslaw Sikorski, paid a visit to Japan earlier in October.

2009 has been particularly

fruitful in the events strength-

ening economic relations between Poland and Japan.

In March, the Polish minister of agriculture and rural development, Marek Sawicki, visited Japan with a group of Polish food industry companies to promote cooperation between Poland and Japan in the field of agriculture. At the same time, former president of the Republic of Poland, Lech Walesa, visited Tokyo, and had a chance to promote international solidarity and democracy. Representatives of the Polish capital market, with the minister of Treasury, Aleksander Grad, as head of the delegation and president of the Warsaw Stock Exchange, Ludwik Sobolewski, promoted Polish privatization projects and business opportunities provided by the Polish capital market among Japanese companies in April.

In spring 2009, representatives of the Polish Ministry of Economy, accompanied by a group of 30 representatives of the energy industry, initiated dialogue between Polish and Japanese business and administration in the field of coal and nuclear energy.

It is highly possible this dialogue will result in the conclusion of some cooperation accords soon. In the meantime, Japanese companies investigated investment opportunities in Poland

during a business mission organized by the International Friendship Exchange Council (FEC) at the beginning of October. The next business mission to Poland, coal energy oriented, has been scheduled by METI and JCOAL for December.

Also, a joint declaration on emissions trading signed by Poland and Japan in October 2008 paved the way for cooperation between both countries in the scope of flexible mechanisms established under the Kyoto Protocol. The adoption of domestic rules on emissions trading by the Polish Parliament in summer 2009 opened new prospects for further cooperation with Japan in this field.

In October, during his visit to Japan, the Polish minister of environment, Maciej Nowicki, discussed opportunities provided by the Polish capital market among Japanese companies in April.

The 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and Japan was an excellent occasion to look at bilateral economic, cultural and tourism relations from a new, regional perspective.

This October, the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Japan in cooperation with local partners organized the “Regional Forum: Poland-Japan 2009.” This pioneer project was a first step on the way to the establishment of cooperation between Polish and Japanese regions. As a follow-up to this event, Japanese regions are expected to visit Poland next year.

On top of that, at the beginning of October, Polish and Japanese aviation authorities agreed to allow Polish Airlines to operate three

weekly flights to Narita International Airport after landing and departure slots are increased within the next few years. The establishment of direct flight connections between Poland and Japan will open a new era in bilateral relations between our countries.

Poland and Japan continue to have a very vital cultural exchange, as the interest and admiration in both countries of each other's culture stays unceasingly high. Despite the enormous cultural and geographical distance, Polish people opened their hearts to the beauty of Japanese culture and began appreciating Japanese aesthetic sensitivity more than a century ago.

So far, four major Polish universities have established full-fledged Japanese-language departments. Also Japanese people show a continuous interest in Polish culture and their interest in the Polish language grows as the Japanese nation.

**Congratulations**  
to the People of the Republic of Poland  
on the Occasion of the 91st Anniversary  
of Their Independence Day

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