

Spain national day

Key agreements fuel good relations

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I have the pleasure to greet all the readers of The Japan Times once again on the happy occasion of Spain's National Day.

This year, our celebrations follow the events we held a few days ago regarding the official visit to Japan of the Spanish President Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. Within the framework of that visit the Spanish president held a meeting with Prime Minister Naoto Kan, which led to the signature of important agreements between the two countries in the field of technology



and cooperation on science and social security. A Memorandum of Understanding has also been signed between the Spanish government and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, which intends to promote joint projects in the field of environmental infrastructure. Furthermore, the Spanish president held a breakfast with prominent figures of the Nippon Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) in order to provide and exchange information regarding mutual interest in investment and commerce.

After this encounter, Spain and Japan contemplate their relationship as a friendly, prosperous one and firmly believe that contacts within the so-called civil society will enrich the already existing

bonds. Soon, in February 2011, the 13th edition of the Japan-Spain Forum will be held in Pamplona, Spain. It is a consolidated initiative that enables us to share points of view on the state of affairs in issues of mutual interest.

I think that a reference to the current political situation in Japan is inevitable. Since last year, we have been witnessing no doubt a very interesting period of changes under a new administration that has set very ambitious goals. The government of Spain has been closely following the events and has big expectations in the performance of the government headed by Prime Minister Kan. For the time being, the expressed intentions to contribute further to the solution of global chal-

lenges have been very much welcome.

As an EU country that has had the privilege and the responsibility to preside over the presidency of the union during the first half of 2010, Spain is willing, counting on its good relations with Japan, to keep on supporting and coordinating policies in very relevant issues of the international agenda and keeping the various instruments of dialogue and bilateral cooperation moving forward.

My last words in this message are for all the Spanish residents in Japan, who contribute so much with their work to the knowledge and good image of Spain. I thank you all very sincerely and wish you a very pleasant National Day.