
Luxembourg national day

Long-standing tradition keeps relationship close

Paul Steinmetz
AMBASSADOR OF LUXEMBOURG

On this National Day, which also marks the 25th anniversary of the opening of our embassy in Tokyo, I would like to extend my warm greetings to the readers of The Japan Times and to all our friends in Japan.



By law, the Luxembourg National Day is the official celebration of the Grand Duke's birthday, whatever the actual birthday of the reigning monarch. On the evening of the previous day, a torchlight parade winds through the capital and

fireworks light up the midnight summer sky. On that occasion, Luxembourg's multicultural society takes to the streets and parties until the early morning. The 23rd itself is reserved for more serious official ceremonies, such as a Te Deum mass and a military parade.

Whereas it is common knowledge that Luxembourg is a small country, few know that it is at the same time one of Europe's most open and mixed societies. The capital Luxembourg today is made up of over 50 percent foreigners. Alongside the native Luxembourgish language, French, German and increasingly English are used in daily life. Italian and Portuguese add a Mediterranean touch to an otherwise sober northern atmosphere. Lux-

embourg also hosts some 500 Japanese residents, who form the core of a dynamic banking and business community.

Ties between the Imperial family of Japan and the Luxembourg Grand Ducal family are close and long-standing. Diplomatic relations go back to the presentation of credentials by Minister Mineichiro Adachi in 1927. Other contacts predate by some time diplomatic activities. Starting with the visit to Luxembourg in 1886 by Roichi Hida, as part of a study mission led by then Minister of Agriculture Tateki Tani and, some 15 years later, the descriptions of Japan by Luxembourg steel engineer Eugene Ruppert, the relationship was enhanced over the years by a continuous flow of

visitors bent on learning from each other.

In times of need we have chosen to stand together and will continue to do so. In this spirit of mutual solidarity Luxembourg pledged its full support to Japan during the difficult months following the March 11 disaster. Early visits by Crown Prince Guillaume and by Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn underlined this spirit.

In line with this long-standing tradition, the Luxembourg Embassy in Japan is proud to continue promoting the exchange of businessmen and parliamentarians, government experts, artists and students, scholars and scientists that have so deeply enriched the relationship between our two countries.