

Belarus National Day

Celebrating 25 years of close friendship and cooperation

RUSLAN ESIN
AMBASSADOR OF BELARUS



The Belarusian people and our friends celebrate the Independence Day of the Republic of Belarus on July 3. Our state is making a significant contribution to strengthening international security

and stability. Belarusian international initiatives on settlement of regional conflicts contribute much to the resolution of problems of international society.

Belarus today is an island of security and stability in the region. The country is aimed at a socially oriented model of a market economy, based on improving people's welfare, while preserving Belarusian nature, culture and traditions.

"Made in Belarus" is high-quality, organic, environmentally friendly and fashionable. Belarusian brands and Belarus' "export.by" portal are well known in the world markets. Electric buses, apparel, footwear and food from Belarus are in leading positions, and the country is also involved in software development projects with Rakuten, Inc.

Belarus is known as an exporter of potash fertilizers and petroleum products, while medicine, space research and the tourism industry are actively developing, as are bio and nanotechnologies. The success of the 2014 International Ice Hockey Federation World Championships in Minsk resulted in the opportunity to host the 2021 champion-

ships in cooperation with Latvia.

Our country conducts a multivector foreign policy and actively develops cooperation with foreign partners in different parts of the world. We maintain diplomatic relations with 177 states around the globe and new prospects for the further cooperation are arising from the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union and the intention of Belarus to join the World Trade Organization.

Today, Belarus is expanding strategic cooperation with Russia and China, while our relations with traditional partners — Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan — are reaching new levels. Cooperation with the countries of Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Southeast Asia is widening, and the same can be said regarding the Minsk-Brussels and Minsk-Washington dialogues. Intensive contacts with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region are also becoming promising areas of interaction.

The Republic of Belarus and Japan celebrate in 2017 the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. It is symbolic that it coincided with the Year of Science in Belarus.

The leaders of Belarus and Japan exchanged congratulatory letters and the President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko noted in his message the positive dynamics of the development of Belarusian-Japanese cooperation and expressed confidence that relations between the two countries will soon move to a new stage.

As the ambassador to Japan, I reaffirmed willingness of the Belarusian side to strengthen ties in political and economic fields during the official ceremony of presenting credentials to His Majesty Emperor Akihito on June 9.

The grounds of cooperation were established in the 19th century when Belarusians first came into contact with the inhabitants of the Japanese islands. The name of our compatriot Joseph Goshkevich is inscribed in gold to the history of diplomacy and kept in the memories of the Japanese people.

Cooperation between our countries was developing in the 1970s and '80s when the first days of Belarusian Culture in Japan were held. Establishing sister-city relations between Minsk and Sendai in 1973 provided to be a significant impetus to bilateral contacts. The tragedy of Chernobyl and the Fukushima nuclear accident further consolidated our nations and underscored our solidarity. The National Children's Centre Zubrenok will treat 122 children from the affected regions of Japan in 2017.

The landmark event in our recent history was the visit to Japan by our president, who is also chairman of the national Olympic committee, for the 1998 Olympic Games.

Effective mechanisms of political consultations and interactions in the international arena were established in a short period of time. Belarusian and Japanese parliamentarians regularly meet in Minsk and Tokyo. Cooperation with the Chugoku, Kansai and Tohoku regions is being promoted through the offices of Belarusian honorary consuls.

The volume of economic interaction has grown over the past years. The best result

was achieved in 2014, with \$244 million in trade turnover. In the first quarter of 2017, commodity trade reached \$42.5 million.

Today Belarusian lasers, radiation monitoring devices and dosimeters, optical instruments, linen products, synthetic fabrics and more are known in the Japanese market. Japanese Marubeni Corp., N.B.R. Co., Tokyo Instruments, Inc. and other companies play significant roles in this process.

Economic cooperation is facilitated by the privileges granted to foreign investors for the implementation of projects in Belarus. There are also plans for the development of the Japan-Belarus Innovation Industrial Park in the Mogilev region.

Japanese customers will have an opportunity in the near future to try high-quality Belarusian dairy products that are famous both at home and abroad. The first shipments of Belarusian furniture and other wooden goods have already begun.

More than 700 Japanese tourists visited



President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko shakes hands with Japanese Ambassador to Belarus Toyohisa Kozuki.

EMBASSY OF BELARUS

Belarus in 2017, bringing back Belarusian handmade souvenirs made of wood, ceramics, straw and flax.

Belarusian enterprises have been using Japanese industrial equipment for a long time such as Yamazaki Mazak machines being widely used at Amkodor JCS. A promising direction of cooperation is to use Japanese technologies for TV and home

appliance production. More than 300,000 vehicles produced by leading Japanese corporations are in operation in our country.

The most important stages of bilateral relations are reflected in pictures of the photo exhibition, "Belarus-Japan: 25 years of friendship and cooperation," available at the website of the Belarusian diplomatic mission in Japan: <http://japan.mfa.gov.by/ja/>.



National folklore festival "Kupalie" is held in Alexandria in the Mogilev region. EMBASSY OF BELARUS

Congratulations
to the People of the Republic of Belarus
on the Occasion of Their Independence Day

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