

St. Patrick's Day Special

A call for deeper connection and solidarity

PAUL KAVANAGH
AMBASSADOR OF IRELAND



I extend warm greetings to readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of St. Patrick's Day 2022. Ireland's national day falls on March 17 each year. It is observed by approximately 70 million people of Irish heritage in our global diaspora and by our friends and partners worldwide, including not least here in Japan.

I would like to say a sincere thank you to the government of Japan alongside members of the Diet — together with corporate, cultural, research, academic, media and other actors in Japanese society — for all that you do to foster closer Ireland-Japan ties. We in Ireland deeply appreciate your commitment and support.

These were the sentiments voiced by Ireland's Minister of State for Planning and Local Government Peter Burke, TD, during an intensive program in Japan recently.

This year we mark the centenary of Ireland becoming an independent state in 1922.

Simultaneously we observe the 50th anniversary of our signing in 1972 of the Treaty of Accession to what has grown to become the European Union.

In recent polls, some 86% of Irish respondents say that our EU membership is a positive thing. This is hardly a surprise, since EU membership has transformed Ireland's economy into an innovative, science- and technology-based global digital hub within the EU single market of about 450 million people. It has transformed our country for the better sociologically and in our laws, jurisprudence and other areas.



Ireland's Minister of State for Planning and Local Government Peter Burke IRISH EMBASSY

Ireland for its part has endeavored to contribute in diverse ways to the European project, including — in consequence of our economic progress — for several years now as a net contributor to the EU budget.

Also this year, Ireland is an elected member of the United Nations Security Council and we are preparing to hold the chair of the Council of Europe.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.

It is at the same time regrettable that so much of the world remains under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, even as numerous countries are advancing toward a post-pandemic state.

Like other peoples, the Irish have placed their faith in science as the force that will ultimately defeat the pandemic. We have also found, both at home and overseas, that resilience, solidarity and a sense of community are great assets in addressing the challenges of a demanding period in history. Without these, partial victories are tenuous.

Above all, in this month of March 2022, we share a remarkable, global revulsion at the illegal invasion of Ukraine. Alongside the great majority in the international community, we stand in solidarity with the brave people of that country. We uphold the rule of law as a cardinal principle of the global order as reflected in the Charter of the United Nations.

In the 100th year of our own statehood, we strongly reaffirm the legal imperative for all states to respect the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states. We equally affirm

the legal requirement of states in war to respect and uphold international law, in particular international humanitarian law, as reflected in the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

In this drastic international situation, we in Ireland are not so much moved this year to "celebrate" our national day as we are to advocate for a sense of solidarity toward those who continue to battle with COVID-19 and other debilitating phenomena, and especially toward the people of Ukraine whose towns and cities, still inhabited, are daily and systematically being reduced to rubble.

As part of the far-reaching, united European Union response to the invasion, Ireland extends solidarity and support to the people of Ukraine. We are anticipating that Ireland may receive up to 100,000 refugees from Ukraine in the coming weeks. As part of the EU-wide approach, they will enter Ireland visa-free. Upon entry, they and their families may obtain employment and access to our health, education and social support systems.

The central message of our St. Patrick's



Artist's impression of the lobby area at the future Ireland House, due to open in 2024.

Day 2022 is that Ireland is connecting anew with our communities and friends, both at home and around the world. Connection and community can help us all to overcome the gravest danger. In some cases, solidarity and support are, in a word, imperative.

Meanwhile, Ireland and Japan continue to expand our exchanges in all leading domains. We expect that 2022 will be a big year in this connection. And for St. Patrick's Day 2023, we hope that readers will join us in person, in better international circum-

stances, once again to celebrate that which binds us together.

Readers are invited to join a virtual St. Patrick's Day reception that will be streamed on the website ireland.ie/japan from 6 p.m. (JST) on March 17.

Follow the embassy on social media: @IrishEmbJapan @IrishEmbJapanEN and Facebook/Instagram: @IrelandinJapan



**Happy
St. Patrick's
Day
from Iwate Town!**
**Wishing you a lot of happiness
and joy on this and every day.**



In December 2019, Iwate Town was registered as the host town for Ireland's Women's Hockey Team for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

10-44, Itsukaichi, Iwate-Town, Iwate 028-4395
TEL: (0195)62-2111 <https://town.iwate.iwate.jp>



**MASUDA CITY
SHIMANE, JAPAN**



**Happy
St. Patrick's Day
from Team Ireland
in Japan!**



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Embassy of Ireland | Japan
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**HAPPY
ST. PATRICK'S DAY**

Dublin, Ireland
emerald@eci.ie
www.eci.ie

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