

Day of German Unity Special

Ever closer partners in a more complex world

CLEMENS VON GOETZE
AMBASSADOR OF GERMANY



Today, we celebrate the Day of German Unity. Our country was divided for more than 40 years, from the end of World War II until 1990. During those decades of division, we Germans never

gave up striving to be united under the rule of law and in freedom, in “Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit” (“Unity and Justice and Freedom”), as enshrined in our national anthem. The East Germans courageously stood up for this and the West Germans firmly refused to compromise on any of these three elements. This stance, alongside the support of our international partners and friends, allowed us to achieve the peaceful reunification of our country on Oct. 3, 1990.

Hence, we Germans deeply believe that these three principles, i.e., the rule of law, freedom and democracy, need to govern us at home, both in our ever-strengthening integration into the European Union and in our relations with other countries. That is why we cannot and will not accept Russia's aggression against Ukraine, an unjustified and unjust war against a sovereign nation in gross violation of international law.

Therefore, we highly appreciate our partnership and friendship with those countries that share these fundamental values with us. Japan is on the very first line of these partners and friends. Our unanimous reaction to Russia's aggression is yet more proof of this.

Based on our shared values, Germany and Japan have developed strong bilateral relations in many areas.

In the framework of the Group of Seven

leading industrial nations, we coordinate very closely on international politics as well as on global issues, such as climate change, energy transition, food security and health. Germany will pass on the G7 presidency to Japan on Dec. 31. The whole year we have been working hand in hand to guarantee continuity.

Bilaterally, we have intensified our political dialogue with the visits of both Chancellor Olaf Scholz in April and Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock in July. We agreed to hold government consultations tackling a broad range of topics under the leadership of the two heads of government and with the participation of ministers. We have expanded our cooperation in the field of security policy with newly established “two-plus-two” consultations, the visit of the frigate Bayern at the end of last year, and the recent joint exercises of the German Air Force and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force in Australia and Japan.

Being highly industrialized countries, both Germany and Japan have interconnected their economies very closely over the past few decades. In bilateral trade, we are looking forward to soon exceeding the pre-pandemic trade volume of €44.6 billion

per year. The free trade agreement between the EU and Japan provides for many further opportunities. There are already about 450 German companies active in Japan and around 1,800 Japanese companies in Germany. In challenging times, both our countries strive to make our economies more resilient by working with reliable and trustful partners. Germany and Japan know we are such partners for each other.

Both our nations strongly believe that only intense scientific cooperation will allow us to find the right solutions to the pressing problems of this planet. Eight hundred projects of collaboration between German and Japanese partners in research and technology show how intensely our scientists and researchers are working together.

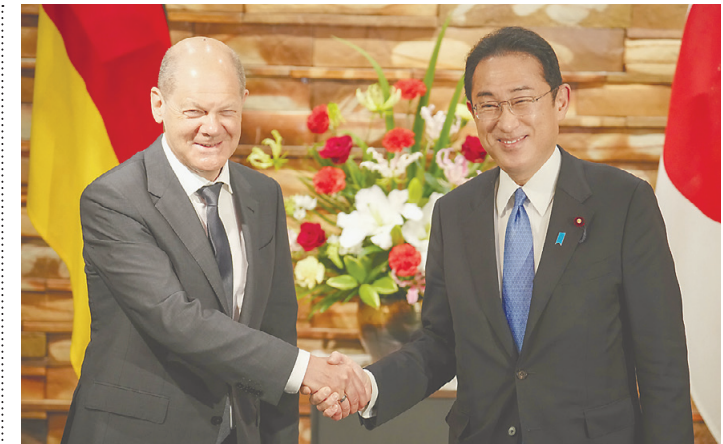
In the field of culture and tourism, our relations, which suffered from COVID-19-related restrictions, are regaining their former strength. Japanese-German and German-Japanese societies constitute a rock-solid base for bringing people from both countries together. Bilateral youth exchanges are also picking up again – the German Sports Youth and the Japan Junior Sports Association have taken new steps to intensify their dialogue. Many of Japan's friends in

Germany are looking forward to the return to visa-free travel as soon as possible to further facilitate our relations in all areas.

At a time when we see ourselves confronted with many challenges, we are grateful to have Japan as a key partner at our side.

On the Day of German Unity, I extend my best wishes to the readers of The Japan Times and thank you wholeheartedly for your interest in my country.

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



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz poses with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the Prime Minister's Office in Tokyo on April 28. DPA



G7 and other leaders pose during a summit meeting in Elmau, Germany, in June. DPA

Congratulations

to the People of Germany

on the Occasion of

the Anniversary of

the Day of German Unity

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