
Kosovo National Day Special

Ties growing after 15 years of independence

SABRI KICMARI

AMBASSADOR OF KOSOVO



Today, the Republic of Kosovo celebrates its 15th anniversary of independence. Over these 15 years, our republic has established a democratic system and strong diplomatic relations with vari-

ous countries. A wide array of factors has allowed the Republic of Kosovo to become the country that it is today. We are proud of the dedication shown by the people of Kosovo, our liberation and our rebuilding of the country. However, we are most grateful for the many friends who have contributed to Kosovo's independence and its quick reconstruction.

In a meaningful way, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to Japan and its

people, through which government programs (especially from the Japan International Cooperation Agency) have supported this rebuilding process. Japan is one of our strongest friends in Asia, recognizing Kosovo only a month after it declared independence. Japan and Kosovo established diplomatic relations on Feb. 25, 2009, with the Embassy of Kosovo opening in Tokyo on July 16, 2010. Japan opened its own embassy in Pristina, on Jan. 1, 2020. Our friendship was further confirmed during Prime Minister Albin Kurti's visit in September of last year, participating in the state funeral of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a good friend of Kosovo. In the meetings between Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and House of Representatives speaker Hiroyuki Hosoda, the friendship and cooperation between our two countries was discussed, with the aim of strengthening this relationship further.

Kosovo is a part of Europe not just geographically, but politically, historically and culturally as well. Kosovo joined the sanc-

tions of the international community against Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. We are empathetic toward the suffering experienced by the people of Ukraine and believe in victory for Ukraine.

Last year, Kosovo applied for membership in the European Union and the Council of Europe. Kosovo's institutions are working hard to become members at an optimal time in these two European organizations. Being the youngest society in Europe in terms of demographics, our country has a vast amount of potential. Kosovo's young population is proficient in the use of modern technology and possesses outstanding language skills. This has allowed our country to become a center for information technology businesses, cooperating with companies in the German, British and U.S. markets.

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