

Czech Republic national day

Economic relations grow with bilateral direct investment in technology

Jaromir Novotny
AMBASSADOR OF CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic celebrates its National Day on Oct. 28. I would like, first and foremost, to avail myself of this opportunity, on behalf of the president, government and people of the Czech Republic, to convey my most sincere greetings and wishes of good health and prosperity to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and to all members of the Imperial Family. It is my great honor to extend my greetings to the government of Japan, and to address the Japanese people and friends of the Czech Republic on this very auspicious occasion.



Current Czech-Japanese relations are marked by dynamism in political and cultural cooperation, and it is therefore our wish that they will further develop and be enhanced with the aim of reaching their full potential in economic and scientific cooperation as well.

As we celebrate the 92nd anniversary of the founding of then Czechoslovakia in October 1918, we further have to commemorate the 17th anniversary of the newly born Czech Republic. The Czech Republic builds on all the positive achievements of the former Czechoslovakia on the international scene. An important aspect in this respect was the smooth and peaceful split, "velvet divorce," of the former federation.

With the size and population of a midsize European country, its open economy, exports and services that account for a con-

siderable part of its GDP, and as country with limited natural resources, the Czech Republic is to a large extent dependent on international cooperation.

NATO membership, OECD and European Union accession together constitute the accomplishment of key foreign policy priorities since the establishment of the independent Czech state. These features play a decisive role in strengthening and consolidating its international position and security. For the Czech Republic, these major organizations constitute new ways and means of promoting the country's interests abroad.

In the international arena, Japan and the Czech Republic fully support a worldwide determination to defy and eradicate international terrorism, and thus guarantee peace and stability, democracy, justice and human rights around the world. Not surprisingly, that is why the challenges of today's world have brought our two countries even closer to help and cooperate side by side in different areas.

Czech industrial production has a long history, and many products have become well-known and reputed in Japan and worldwide. One of the republic's traditional industries is glass-making. Czech beers are some of the best-known in the world. The most famous beers are from the biggest Czech brewers, including Prazdroj (Pilsner Urquell), Pivovary Staropramen, Budvar (the original Budweisser-Budvar), Radegast, Bernard. There are

also many other smaller, often family-run breweries in the Czech Republic.

Only four car manufacturers in the world can boast more than 100 years of tradition. One of these is Skoda. It was founded in 1895 and in 1905 produced its first car. In 1991, Skoda Auto became the fourth brand of the Volkswagen Group. It presently employs about 20,000 people and produces around half a million cars per year.

In 2004, the Czech Republic made its first direct investment in Japan. Moravia IT, a successful software localization company with branches in many countries around the world, entered the Japanese market with great help from JETRO's Business Support Center program. Since then, other Czech high-tech companies have moved into Japan. Science and technology seems likely to be one of the most important and strategic aspects of mutual cooperation in the future. This growing interest on both sides is reflected in the new tradition of Czech-Japan Science and Technology Days. The next one will be held in Prague.

Economic relations between the Czech Republic and Japan have never been better in their recent history. From a starting point close to zero 13 years ago, we can find now more than 256 Japanese manufacturing, trading and research and development companies successfully operating in the Czech Republic today. Japan is the second-larg-

est investor in the Czech Republic, mainly in the automobile and electronics industries. The flagship of these projects is the TPCA (Toyota-Peugeot-Citroen) joint venture auto plant. Besides Toyota Motor Corp., there are many other famous, high-tech Japanese companies like Matsushita (Panasonic), Toray, Denso, etc., in the Czech Republic.

I am very proud that the Czech Republic can be considered a hub for Japanese industrial high-tech investment projects in Central Europe.

As an expression of the great appreciation of Japan's leading role in the field of high technology, and in memory of the famous Czech writer Karel Capek, who in 1920 conceived the word "robot," the Czech Republic in 2004 dedicated the Karel Capek Robot Cup crystal trophy to the winners of the Robocon contest organized by NHK.

The Czech Republic is delighted with the interest that the Japanese public shows toward its culture. Therefore, the deci-

sion was made to establish a Czech Centre in Tokyo four years ago in October 2006. This specialized government institution (the only one in Asia) is fully committed to the task of promoting Czech culture in Japan and I firmly believe that by promoting cultural cooperation between the Czech Republic and Japan it also contributes to deepening the friendly relations between our nations.

Let me conclude by expressing my deep appreciation for the efforts and supportive role of all Japanese partners and friends in promoting the further enhancement of the beneficial and mutually advantageous ties between our two countries. I wish further success and long-lasting prosperity to both our nations.

My last words in this message are for all the Czech residents in Japan, who contribute so much with their work to the knowledge and good image of the Czech Republic. I thank you all very sincerely and wish you a very pleasant National Day.

Fostering cultural exchange

Petr Holy
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE EMBASSY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC,
DIRECTOR OF THE CZECH CENTRE TOKYO

The Czech Centre Tokyo was opened in 2006 — the only one in Asia — at the Embassy of the Czech Republic on Nisseki-dori Street in the Hiroo area. Czech Centres are subsidiary bodies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, and their main aim is to actively promote abroad the Czech Republic and its rich culture, art, design, films, trade and tourism. The mission of the Czech Centre Tokyo is to increase awareness of the Czech Republic in Japan and to initiate a forum for cooperation and the exchange of ideas between the two countries. The Czech Centre Tokyo organizes exhibitions, cultural events, free Czech movie screenings to enhance cultural dialogue.

The center houses the Czech Tourism section, an exhibition hall and a library with books on Czech art, architecture, photography, design, history, etc., to provide resources for obtaining relevant information about the Czech Republic to students, scholars, business people, tourists and the general public. Currently, the center is running an exhibition of well-known Czech illustrator Stanislav Holy until Nov. 5. Then it will be hosting a Czech typography magazine TYPO exhibition (TYPO was awarded the Red Dot Award 2010 recently) until the end of 2010. The center is also organizing movie screenings known as the Czech the Cinema project and Czech language courses. We welcome anyone whose interests are focused on Czech phenomena.

The Czech Centre Tokyo is located at Nisseki-dori, Hiroo 2-16-14, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-0012. Tel: (03) 3400-8129; Fax: (03) 3400-8186; Czech Tourism section tel. (03) 3797-7383; www.czechcentres.cz/tokyo



Golden city: Situated on the Vltava River in central Bohemia, Prague is the political, cultural and economic center of the Czech Republic. EMBASSY OF CZECH REPUBLIC

**Congratulations
to the People of the Czech Republic
on Their National Day**

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on
Czech National Day**



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