

Romania national day

Cooperation furthers common goals

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AMBASSADOR OF ROMANIA

In my capacity as ambassador of Romania to Japan, it is a great honor to address the distinguished readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of the National Day of Romania. This felicitous occasion provides me with the pleasant opportunity to present to the Japanese public the recent developments in my country and the progress in the relationship between Romania and Japan.



On Dec. 1, we celebrate a prominent moment in the history of our country — the Great Union of 1918, when all the territories inhabited by Romanians came together in one single, sovereign and independent state. The anniversary of the National Day has a particularly special significance this year, following the official visit to Japan of the President of Romania Traian Basescu in March. The high-level dialogue conducted on that occasion provided a strong impetus to the further development of the bilateral relations on political, economic and cultural levels, to the strengthening of our close friendship and deepening of our

mutual understanding.

A full-fledged member of the European Union, Romania has resolutely continued throughout this year to pursue the objective of consolidating the progress and the reforms necessary to ensure the complete integration into the EU, including the efforts to become a member of the Schengen visa-free area. The global economic crisis is the main challenge at the moment and tough countermeasures are currently being implemented in order to restore the economic growth on sound grounds.

Bolstering ties with Japan has been one of the strategic priorities of Romania, constantly high on our foreign policy agenda for the past 20 years. We share the same democratic values and beliefs with regard to the rule of law, sustainable economic development and international prosperity. This provides fertile common ground to strengthening friendship and boosting cooperation between our two countries, on an all-encompassing range of activities.

Japan has always been a most valuable friend and reliable partner to our country, and a constant contributor to our political, economic and cultural development. On behalf of the government of Romania, I would like to convey my grati-



Amicable relations: Romanian President Traian Basescu meets Emperor Akihito in March at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. EMBASSY OF ROMANIA

tude to the government of Japan for the substantial political dialogue maintained on both bilateral and multilateral levels and for the generous assistance and technical expertise provided over the years in various fields such as infrastructure, modern technologies, environmental protection, earthquake prevention, education and other relevant areas that still require attention in order to be fully implemented in accordance with EU standards.

The bilateral dialogue between our countries was deeply enhanced this year at the highest level. In March, the President Basescu made an official visit to Japan in response to the visit to Romania in 2009 of Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino. Welcomed by Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and

Empress Michiko, President Basescu met Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, the chairman of the two Houses of the Diet and Keidanren leaders.

The focus of the visit was the signing ceremony of the Yen Loan Agreement extended by the Japanese government to Romania for an underground line in Bucharest that will connect the international airport to the center of our capital city. This complex project is scheduled to be finalized in 2014.

The Romanian president conveyed to the Japanese counterpart the strong support for the expeditious negotiation of an Economic Integration Agreement between the EU and Japan, underlining the mutual advantages to be expected, especially at the present time of economic crisis.

Beginning with the profes-

sional electric equipment producer Makita Corp., which boasts a €20 million turnover just two years after the inauguration of its largest investment in Europe, other Japanese companies like JTEKT Corp., Japan Tobacco, Itochu Corp. and YKK expect good profits out of their investments in Romania. It is our strong hope that the present financial and economic crisis will in reverse turn out into an additional reason for our countries to consolidate their economic and commercial ties in the long run. With relatively low-cost labor and steady prospects of economic growth inside the EU market, Romania has significant advantages to attract Japanese investors in such fields as automobile components production, technical equipment or agriculture.

As to the commercial cooperation between our countries, it should be mentioned that the volume of exchanges, for the first nine months of 2009, was maintained at a fairly sound level (¥34 billion), higher than last year and close to the record peak reached three years ago.

Among the economic goals Romania has constantly pursued is the aim of becoming an OECD member. We will continue to work for the achievement of this major foreign policy objective and save no efforts in obtaining the valuable support of OECD member countries, including Japan.

The warm relationship between our countries is also visible at the thriving level of cul-

tural cooperation. Mutual amity is intensely nurtured on a grassroots basis, through the activities of the Japan-Romania friendship associations covering various domains of interest, including music, visual arts, handicrafts, architecture and sculpture.

With the aim to promote the modern identity of our country, comprising national specific and European cultural dimensions, it is our guiding policy to present to the Japanese public the traditional and contemporary Romanian values, as well as our famous UNESCO World Heritage sites. To this end, we strive to underline the distinctive Romanian cultural profile on the highly competitive Japanese stage by actively developing cultural projects and engaging in joint European events, like the annual programs EU Film Days in Tokyo and Europe Comes to Your School. The latter consists of EU and country presentations made by EU diplomats in schools around Japan on the occasion of May 9, Europe Day.

In 2010, we presented to the Japanese public classical music concerts by Romanian interpreters in November, ballet presentations featuring the world-acclaimed Romanian dancer Alina Cojocaru, tatting lace and glasswork exhibitions, as well as seminars promoting famous Romanian wines and cosmetics.

Based on the previous year's provision eliminating the visa requirements for Romanian

citizens visiting Japan, the free exchange between our peoples continued to expand. I invite Japanese tourists to continue to visit Romania and see for themselves the notable changes that have transformed my country for the better in the recent years.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my strong belief that Romania and Japan have a lot of potential to develop their joint interests, and it is only by enhancing cooperation even further that we can make our common goals come true.

Congratulations
to the People of Romania
on the 92nd Anniversary of
Their National Day



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