

Italy national day

Japan remains a fundamental partner

The following is a brief interview with Italian Ambassador Domenico Giorgi on the occasion of the Republic Day of Italy, celebrated every June 2. He has been the ambassador in Tokyo since December.

What are your first impressions of Japan since you arrived?

Indeed, my expectations on a well-organized and advanced country were fully confirmed. Japan, as it is well known, is a fascinating country of economic and business skills, high tech, rich culture and venerated traditions. In other words, Japan is a successful example of a country being a crucial partner in the globalization process, while keeping a distinct, clear cultural identity.

However, if I may give a personal view, I have been struck by two aspects: the continuous search for aesthetic values and the passion for and high competence in Italian culture and traditions.

Please give us a brief overview of bilateral relations between Italy and Japan.

The bilateral relations are very friendly and dynamic. Indeed, Italy and Japan share values of democracy, human rights and justice, and our people feel naturally close to each other, as shown by outstanding Japanese interest in Italian lifestyle and culture, and Italian curiosity for Japan.

Furthermore, our societies also share some common challenges, such as economic growth, the necessity of meeting the needs of an aging population, the exposure to natural disasters, the need for a supply of energy resources that is respect-



**Ambassador of Italy
Domenico Giorgi**

ful of the environment. I believe that if we cooperate more in providing solutions for these challenges, we could further develop our relationship in the future.

What are some possibilities for strengthening the economic and political partnership?

The partnership between Italy and Japan is extremely positive and satisfactory. Nevertheless, I believe that further strengthening our economies and political partnership could be possible and desirable.

Trade is good and well balanced, not only in traditional commercial sectors, such as design, fashion, food and mechanical products, but also in fields like pharmaceuticals and chemicals, energy, high-technology and aerospace. Scientific and technological cooperation is a very central sector we are developing at the moment, and our companies and research institutions are our spearhead for boosting collaboration.

Political relations could also be enhanced, since Italy and Japan share many values and agree on many key issues at the international level. Furthermore, the growing importance of East Asia in the global strategic balance is increasingly leading Italy to strengthen the cooperation with like-minded countries in the region, and Japan is a fundamental partner for us.

What are your thoughts on the ongoing talks between Japan and the European Union about a free trade agreement?

Italy engages in the ongoing negotiations on an FTA between the EU and Japan in an open and constructive manner because this ambitious agreement — accounting for some 30 percent of global economic output and 40 percent of world trade — could be a crucial means to promote growth and further expand our bilateral exchanges. Italy is paying great attention to the liberalization process envisaged by Japan — including other regional free trade negotiations such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership — as our economy is heavily dependant on exports, and international trade plays a very central role in our gross domestic product. Thus, Italy is interested in this agreement, which could provide general benefits and is expected to boost economies.

What are Italy's expectations for "Abenomics"?

In Europe, including Italy, there is a wide interest in how Japan has embarked on the path of reforms in monetary and extra budget spending policies. Italy is paying attention, in particular,

to the ambitious strategy recently announced by the Japanese government to reinvigorate the economy through comprehensive structural reforms.

What kinds of Italian cultural events are planned in Japan this year?

This year, the Italy in Japan 2013 event will offer a very rich program.

Japanese museums, theatres and prestigious institutions will host Italian masterpieces never before exhibited in Asia. Whereas the important exhibition in Tokyo on Raphael just closed on June 2, at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum there is an interesting exhibition on Leonardo da Vinci, showing some remarkable artistic pieces coming from the Biblioteca and Pinacoteca Ambrosiana of Milan, including Leonardo's "Portrait of a Musician." Furthermore, the Michelangelo Buonarroti exhibition at the Fukui Fine Arts Museum and then at the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo will show for the first time in Japan the relief sculpture "Madonna of the Stairs," and an exhibition on Palazzo Pitti from Florence at the Seiji Togo Memorial Sampo Japan Museum of Art in Tokyo will present more than 70 pieces of 19th and 20th century Italian art.

As far as opera and ballet are concerned, after the great success of the Fenice tour last April, Japanese opera fans will enjoy the representations of "Falstaff" and "Rigoletto" (along with some ballets) by the Teatro La Scala of Milan this coming September, and the Teatro Regio of Turin will delight the public with some operas by Verdi, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of



the composer's birth, to be held at the end of November. (More information is available on the website <http://italyinjapan.com>.)

What are the promotional initiatives planned for the future?

Since Italy has a strong industrial vocation, a solid manufacturing base and a marked inclination to exports, there will be a number of promotional initiatives to be held in the coming months, exhibitions such as Moda Italy, Shoes from Italy, Foodex, the Italian Wine Week. An important event will be the Italy-Japan Business Group, the most prominent industrial cooperation forum, scheduled for October.

Furthermore, Italian exports to Japan are increasing in high-tech sectors, such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals and precision mechanics. Thus, particular attention will be paid to presenting these collaborations in applied research, in the fields of

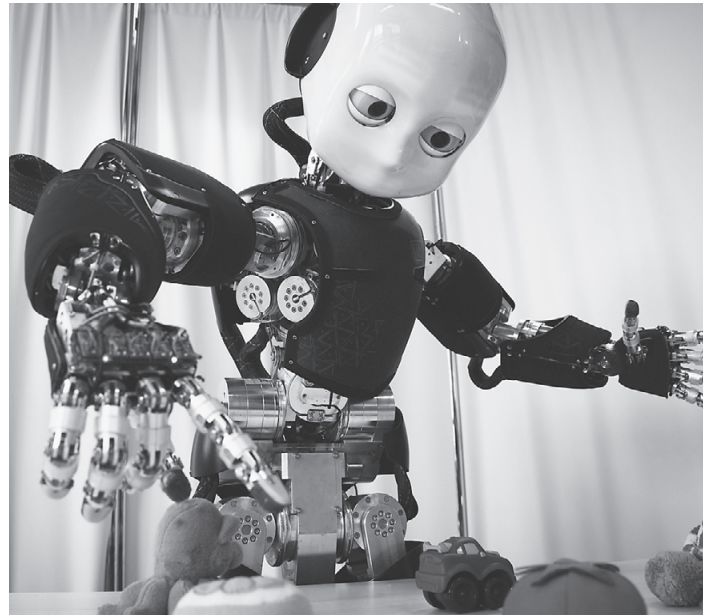
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2013

ITALIA IN
GIAPPONE



Fine arts: The relief sculpture "Madonna of the Stairs" (right) will be presented in Japan for the first time during the exhibition "Michelangelo Buonarroti: The Making of a Genius and the 500th Anniversary of the Sistine Chapel." To celebrate the 400th anniversary of the mission of Hasekura Tsunenaga to Rome in 1615, his portrait has come to Japan and will be shown at the Embassy of Italy on the occasion of the National Day reception before moving to Sendai City Museum in October. EMBASSY OF ITALY



Technology: The iCub is a humanoid robot developed at the Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia (IIT) as part of a European Union project, subsequently adopted by more than 20 laboratories worldwide. It has 53 motors that move the head, arms, hands, waist and legs. It can see and hear. EMBASSY OF ITALY

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on the Anniversary
of the Proclamation
of the Republic of Italy!**

And a warm welcome
to His Excellency Domenico Giorgi,
the Ambassador of Italy

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