

Norway National Day

Oceanic partnerships serve to strengthen bilateral links

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AMBASSADOR OF NORWAY



Today, Norwegians all over the world are in a particularly festive mood. Our celebration on May 17 is one of the world's oldest continuous traditions marking a country's national day. We celebrate our constitution and independence not with military parades, but with parading children, in what is a happy and unique celebration of freedom and peace.

Norway's Constitution of May 17, 1814, embodies the principles of separation of powers, the safeguarding of civil rights and the sovereignty of the people. These are all cornerstones of modern democracies. Looking around the world today, we know that such values should not be taken for granted. Together we must continue to promote these values globally.

On the very day of our celebration, it is appropriate to highlight some key aspects of the close partnership between Norway and Japan.

Political partners

Norway and Japan share fundamental political aims and values; we are strong supporters of human rights, democracy

and free trade.

The bilateral ties between Norway and Japan are strong and have been strengthened over the last year through a series of bilateral visits at many levels. The Norwegian ministers of foreign affairs; justice and public security; and trade and industry have all conducted highly successful visits to Japan. More political visits are being planned. Topics such as trade, maritime collaboration, science and technology and gender equality were some of the issues touched upon during their meetings. Foreign Minister Borge Brende also visited Hiroshima and the Peace Memorial Park where he paid his respect to the victims of the 1945 atomic bombing.

Business partners

The ocean binds Norway and Japan together and we have common interests in the sustainable management of the resources and in strong international frameworks and regimes. We are happy that Japanese people like salmon as topping on their sushi, as well as Norwegian mackerel. High-quality seafood is Norway's most important export to Japan.

Both Norway and Japan also have strong maritime traditions, and the maritime and shipping sector forms another backbone of the business relations between our two countries. The maritime business in both countries sees the need for developing and investing in maritime technology that stimulates green growth for the maritime

industry such as the use of environmentally friendly technology and green fuels.

In addition, we see new business relations developing. Financial technology and health technology and medicine are becoming important areas of cooperation. There is also a growing interest in Japan for Norwegian furniture, design, fashion and music. The potential is great to build even stronger business-to-business relations in these fields.

Partners in science, education

Another backbone in our bilateral relations is the collaboration within science, research and higher education. As a result of close collaboration over many years, Norwegian and Japanese research and academic institutions have developed solid partnerships. Increased research collaboration, including mobility between Norwegian higher education and research institutions and partners abroad, is a high priority for Norway.

We want our future workforce to be prepared for the globalized labor market and we want our researchers to contribute in finding solutions to present and future challenges. Japan, with its strength in innovation, science and technology, is an important partner in finding sustainable solutions to the multitude of global challenges we are facing. I strongly believe that more collaboration in this field will benefit both our countries.

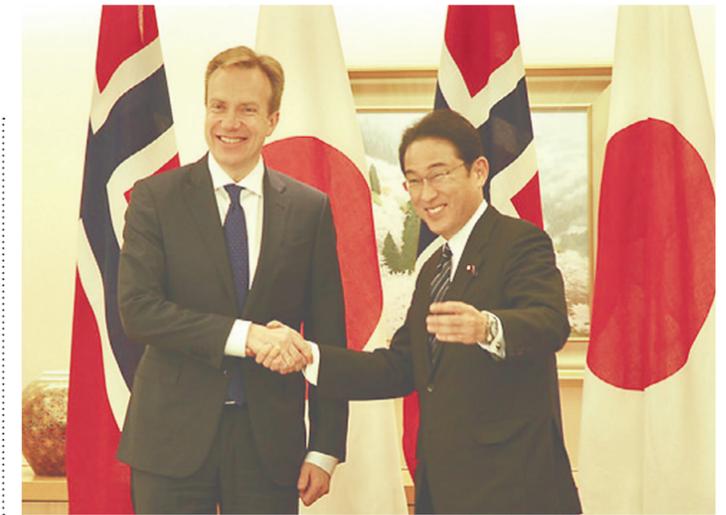
Partners for equality

Many Japanese approach the Norwegian embassy to learn more about our experience with gender equality. As talent is distributed equally among men and women, opportunities must be equal too.

This is about making use of all of our talent and human resources, regardless of age, background or gender. This is good for economic development and welfare. However, gender equality is not only instrumental in an economic sense. It is also a basic human rights issue. All people, men and women, have the right to be treated equally, irrespective of gender.

The big question is then: How to achieve this? As in business and politics in general, we need to share best practices, challenges and possible solutions. Only in this way, can we continue to move forward.

Together with other European colleagues, I took pride in participating in the Tokyo Rainbow Pride Parade last week. LGBTI rights are human rights that transcend borders. The embassy is happy to support the LGBTI community and together we are moving toward more openness and tolerance — in accordance with the Norwegian Constitution that we celebrate today!



Foreign Ministers Borge Brende and Fumio Kishida meet in Tokyo in October. NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



Left: European ambassadors and others take part in the Tokyo Rainbow Pride 2017 parade. Right: The Oslo Opera House NORWEGIAN EMBASSY TOKYO / CHRISTOPHER HAGELUND - VISITNORWAY.COM



Congratulations

on

the Norwegian Constitution Day



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