

Spain National Day Special

Resilience and optimism symbolize bilateral efforts

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AMBASSADOR OF SPAIN



On Oct. 12, we celebrate the National Day of Spain, and to our regret, we celebrate it in an unusual way, forced by the particular circumstances in which we find ourselves as a result of

the coronavirus pandemic.

Certainly, the context has changed enormously compared to October 2019. The enthronement of his imperial majesty, attended by their majesties the king and queen of Spain; the success of the Japanese G20 presidency; the prospect of a successful Olympic Games; and the pronounced growth in tourism and commercial exchanges between our two countries all pointed to a hopeful and clearly positive 2020 in our bilateral relations.

However, coronavirus has disrupted these prospects, ushering in a time of pain and suffering in the face of contagions and fatalities from the pandemic.

The virus has brought an almost total paralysis of international travel for both tourism and business and an economic crisis of global proportions and severity.

Tourism has come to a standstill. The uncertainty caused by the pandemic and its economic effects, both in international trade and in domestic consumption, has affected individuals, families and companies of all sizes, generating doubt and unemployment.

Likewise, the spikes that continue to occur in the number of infections and deaths have shown our vulnerabilities and the need to adapt our daily lives (work, education, leisure and social relationships) to new health requirements and lifestyles, despite the difficulties and challenges that this entails.

However, and despite the pain and the disruption that the coronavirus has brought about, our bilateral economic exchanges have shown remarkable resilience.

This is especially so in the field of trade, with Spanish export volumes to Japan basically unchanged from a year earlier amid an international trade slump. Such figures show that there is vast potential for improvement when the situation returns to normal.

We also hope to see the resumption of the record upward trend we had witnessed concerning bilateral tourist exchanges in 2019.

In any case, Spain and Japan share the irrevocable objective of overcoming this crisis, paving the way and preparing for a strong sustainable recovery. This must include a deepening of our bilateral relations, full use and improvement of the EU-Japan economic and strategic partnerships and cooperation in multilateral forums.

These last few months have been a period of enormous personal sacrifice for all due to the adoption of drastic measures to try to stop the epidemic and its

spread.

The embassy has continued to work actively to serve Spanish citizens residing in Japan, helping them to overcome this crisis and its negative impact that has affected all of us so hard.

During these testing times, in which we remain committed to the fight against the



Spain produces about half of the world's olive oil. The country has over 340 million olive trees and the largest man-made forest in the world. ICEX / FERNANDO MADARIAGA



Spain is the world's third-largest wine producer, offering excellent red, white and sparkling wines, among others.

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pandemic, I would like to send a message of resilience and optimism for the future.

I would like to end by wishing all the best to his imperial majesty the emperor and the people of Japan, to H.E. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and to all the Spanish citizens living in this beautiful country.

I encourage my compatriots to continue following the health precautions and recommendations made by the Japanese authorities in the belief that, with the effort and dedication of all, 2021 will be a much better year than the current one for both our countries and the world. A better year, where the Tokyo Olympics

and Paralympics held during the summer of 2021 could signal, as we all wish, a strong international recovery.

This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.

Cultural heritage a lifelong passion

NOBORU KINOSHITA
PRESIDENT, THE SPANISH SOCIETY OF JAPAN



On behalf of the Spanish Society of Japan, I would like to extend our congratulations on the National Day of the Kingdom of Spain. The amicable relationship between Spain and

Japan, beginning with the arrival in 1549 of Francis Xavier, has grown stronger as attested by many wonderful events.

Our strong ties are mainly due to the efforts of the Spanish embassy and the Instituto Cervantes Tokio.

The Instituto Cervantes was established in 1991 in Madrid by the Spanish government as a cultural institute for promoting Spanish-language education and Spanish culture, and the Instituto Cervantes Tokio was established in 2007 as an overseas branch.

In the institute's auditorium, presentations of the unique and impressive world of the music and the arts of Spanish-speaking countries are given almost every week.

In 2018, the academic forum Catedra



Francis Mojica (left) from Universidad de Alicante meets with Noboru Kinoshita
NOBORU KINOSHITA

Instituto Cervantes, in which I act as honorary advisor, was established to introduce the influential activities of Spanish science. The Catedra Instituto Cervantes started its activities with the introduction of the Spanish experts who have won international acclaim in various scientific fields. When we study the history of science, Spain has produced eminent scholars in various scientific fields. In modern medicine, the 1906 Nobel laureate in physiology or medicine was shared by Santiago Ramon y Cajal for his work on the structure of the nervous system. The 1959 Nobel laureate in physiology or

medicine was Severo Ochoa, who shared the award for his work on RNA and DNA. The present developer of clustered regularly interspaced palindromic repeats in genome editing, Francis Mojica, is also notable.

Many Spanish scholars in Japan are carrying on the medical genealogy research that began in Spain. In 2018, the first Meeting of Spanish Researchers in Japan was held in the Spanish embassy auditorium, and in 2019, the first Meeting of Spanish Researchers in the Asia-Pacific Region was held at the Instituto Cervantes Tokio.

Spain still has much to offer. Learning about the country's rich cultural heritage can be a lifelong passion, but contemporary Spain also boasts expertise in many fields, from mental health care and organ donor systems to water management and smartphone apps. It is a knowledge base that can be of use for the common global good. In our next events, the Instituto Cervantes Academic Forum wants to demonstrate the relevance of innovative Spanish ideas that can impact Japan's society and economy.

Spain has made outstanding contributions to medical science, and will continue to do so. We hope that Spain will stand at the forefront of academic fields, in both the humanities and the natural sciences.



Spanish companies are leading on the fields of renewable energy such as solar and wind energy.

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