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# North Macedonia National Day Special

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## Friendship highlights path to EU integration

**GORAN CEKOV**

AMBASSADOR OF NORTH MACEDONIA



Thirty-one years ago, the citizens of North Macedonia voted in a referendum to become an independent and democratic state that would be part of the modern civilizational paths in Europe and inte-

grated into Euro-Atlantic structures, thus enabling development and prosperity for all its people, regardless of their ethnic, religious or cultural distinctiveness.

Today, after overcoming numerous challenges, we can say that two years ago we became a member of NATO, and from this July, North Macedonia started membership negotiations with the EU, which means that our path is open for the fulfillment of our second strategic goal – complete integration

in the European political arena.

Resolving the obstacles was not easy, but with the help of our genuine partners we managed to cope with the difficulties and engage in the final stage of laying out our clear Euro-Atlantic course.

One of those partners is Japan, which as a proven supporter has done and is still doing a lot for the consolidation and development of our young democracy.

This was especially seen in the milestone visit of Foreign Minister Bujar Osmani to Japan in May, when many meetings and activities of essential importance to strengthening our relations were held. Osmani had the honor of being received by Crown Prince Akishino and Crown Princess Kiko and later met with his counterpart Yoshimasa Hayashi, confirming our excellent relations and great potential for strengthening ties in such areas as economics, investment and trade. Osmani also met with the leaders of both chambers of the Diet – Akiko Santo and Hiroyuki Hosoda – to affirm the importance

of parliamentary diplomacy.

The Japan National Press Club was an excellent organizer of Osmani's media briefing. Journalists showed great interest not only in his views and comments on Japanese-Macedonian relations, but also on the security situation in Europe, because he arrived in Tokyo after visiting Kyiv.

Additionally, the Japan External Trade Organization was a superb host of the business seminar "Investment Potentials in North Macedonia," where Osmani gave a comprehensive analysis to a large number of Japanese companies about the opportunities that foreign investors have in the Macedonian economy and especially in the free-trade industrial zones.

The Rising Sun and the Midday Sun are getting closer than ever before.

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