

Belgium King's Day Special

Team targets challenges fit for a king

ROXANE DE BILDERLING
AMBASSADOR OF BELGIUM



This year's Belgian King's Day in Japan comes at a period that is filled with a great deal of excitement and anticipation for the Belgian economic mission that will come in December. Her

Royal Highness Princess Astrid, sister of H.M. King Philippe, will lead a delegation of no less than 575 members, all eager to start new cooperation with Japan or deepen the links they may have already started in this country. Over one week, this mission will visit Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Kyoto.

The delegation is a good reflection of our bilateral relations. There are companies from a wide range of sectors, business federations, universities, cultural actors and, of course, Belgium's government and three regions.

This mission could not come at a better time. With Japan reopening its borders, the time has come to find common solutions to address fundamental challenges.

In all of this, Belgium and Japan are partners of choice. We have the ambition to

raise the bar even higher by focusing on where we can do more together. An entire day will be dedicated to decarbonizing our economy and looking at investments and developments in hydrogen and offshore wind energy, as well as artificial intelligence. Joint research and innovation in life sciences and chemistry will also be high on the agenda, as this is an increasingly important sector in our relations. There will be talks on how to digitalize public services with a high level of reliability and security, how to innovate in automobiles to succeed in smart mobility, and academic cooperation for new perspectives on funding the internationalization of higher education following the pandemic.

There will also be cultural events, such as a beautiful exhibition on the sculptures of renowned Belgian artist Jean-Michel Folon and the Belgian Beer Weekend in Shinjuku. Opening the festival, Belgian jazz pianist Jef Neve and trumpet player Teus Nobel will give a special performance dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of famous harmonica player Toots Thielemans. Last but not least, video gaming will be featured at the collaborative Game Jam, where Belgian-Japanese teams will compete to create the best video game.

It is easily understandable this mission will represent a fantastic opportunity to

highlight the various sectors that make Belgium-Japan relations so rich and diverse, and we are extremely pleased to welcome such an important delegation. Beyond this important visit, we will continue to work on our dynamic exchanges even further and build forever stronger, warmer and cordial Belgian-Japan friendship links.

Eager to build on a century of ties

KIMIKAZU SUGAWARA
PRESIDENT, THE JAPAN-BELGIUM SOCIETY



On the occasion of King's Day, it is with great pleasure that I express my sincere congratulations.

We have passed through a long tunnel and entered the period of coexistence with the novel coronavirus. I am very pleased to see that people around the world have started to travel overseas again. A large-scale economic mission led by Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid is scheduled to visit Japan



A Belgian soccer fan attends a public viewing during the 2018 World Cup. AKEMI TANAKA



The Brussels Flower Carpet, a biennial event at the UNESCO World Heritage Site Grand-Place in Brussels
EMBASSY OF BELGIUM

in December, and we are looking forward to the visit with great honor.

Last year marked the 100th anniversary of Emperor Showa's visit to Belgium when he was then crown prince. The Japanese imperial family's exchanges with the Belgian royal family have been passed down for 100 years over the three generations of the Showa, Heisei and Reiwa eras. I believe this mutual relationship will continue to develop further.

The Japan-Belgium Society has inherited the legacy of friendship and goodwill. Our 62 corporate and 210 individual members have been true drivers of diplomacy. I sincerely wish for Japan and Belgium to further develop our close relationship and deepen exchanges in many fields, as we continue to contribute to it.

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

Congratulations on the Belgian King's Day

JBS

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Congratulations on the Belgian King's Day

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