

Ukraine independence day

Ukraine-Japan cooperation to strengthen

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AMBASSADOR OF UKRAINE

On Aug. 24, Ukrainian people celebrate the 22nd anniversary of regaining independence. Twenty-two years ago Ukraine entered a new phase in its long and complex history, declaring the basic principles of democratic development, free market and civil liberties.



Celebrating this anniversary, we remember and pay tribute to generations of Ukrainians who sacrificed their lives for Ukraine's freedom and independence. With a sense of responsibility for the future generations, Ukraine strengthens its statehood and sovereignty while continuing its challenging path of reform.

Ukraine's strategic location at the crossroads of historical trade routes between West and East, unique natural potential, multifaceted cultural heritage, highly educated, hardworking and hospitable people contribute significantly to maintaining Ukraine's attractiveness for foreign tourists and investors.

Ukrainians cherish their European roots and strongly believe in their European future. That is why European integration continues to be our invariable foreign policy perspective. We have been persistently working on comprehensive internal transformations and modernization of the country to meet the best European standards.

The strategic foreign policy priority of Ukraine is European integration with a view to join the European Union. This fundamental vector of our government's policy determines the content of social and economic reforms still under way in Ukraine.

The main effort of the government of Ukraine now is focused on the preparatory work aimed at conclusion of the Association Agreement with the EU in the course of the Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in Vilnius in November.

This document comprises a complex program of furthering comprehensive reform in all spheres of political, economic and social life of our country, and may also be regarded as an effective tool of the improvement of the national legal system according to European standards.

An integral part of the Association Agreement is the establishment of a free trade agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, which is being negotiated now. An FTA with the EU will provide access for Ukraine to the huge common European market, which should advance not only bilateral trade with European countries, but also support economic growth in Ukraine.

We know that Japan is also negotiating an FTA with the EU. I believe this synergy should eventually boost economic growth in our countries and widen common venues of cooperation.

This year Ukraine is presiding over the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, where Japan has observer status.

As OSCE 2013 chair, Ukraine is working on addressing both the long-standing and new challenges faced by the organization's members. The chairmanship's priority includes conflict prevention, frozen conflicts, post-conflict restoration, overall regional security and stability. Additionally, Ukraine pays attention to energy safety issues, strengthening of the democratic institutions and reviving of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

Ukraine is considered a net-contributor to regional and international peace and security. Our country gave up the world's third largest nuclear arms arsenal inherited from the Soviet Union, and implements a consistent policy of strengthening nuclear non-proliferation regimes and also fighting nuclear terrorism. Ukraine became an active participant of international peace-keeping missions under the auspices of the U.N., OSCE, NATO and the EU.

Ukraine and Japan share common views on the principles and approaches to the problems of arms control and disarmament and strengthening of international peace, stability and security. Our country supports deepening of dialogue on non-proliferation of nuclear materials within the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and supports the initiative to ban nuclear testing.

Today Ukraine and Japan maintain active political dialogue and wide-scale cooperation in many domains, regarding this cooperation as a global partnership. This understanding was endorsed in the Joint Statement on the Ukrainian-Japanese Global Partnership adopted by the president of Ukraine and prime minister of Japan back in 2011 in Tokyo.

Our countries cooperate actively on the world stage sharing similar views on many international issues, including the reform of the United Nations, energy, climate change and others. This like-mindedness of approach toward important problems of today helps to foster further dialogue between our countries and lays a strong foundation for strengthening our cooperation.

It is quite symbolic that just today Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida is landing at the Boryspil International Airport, which was reconstructed with considerable technical assistance from Japan. Minister Kishida will take part in the meeting of the Ukrainian-Japanese Committee on Cooperation at the foreign ministers' level together with his counterpart, Foreign Minister of Ukraine Leonid Kozhara. The ministers will discuss a wide range of issues of mutual concern, including bilateral cooperation, regional and global affairs. Minister Kishida is going to visit the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant to exchange views with the Ukrainian authorities and experts on post-nuclear disaster cooperation.

Stronger economic ties
Trade, economic and investment cooperation between our countries stands high on our bilateral agenda.

Bilateral trade has been steadily growing. At the same time this cooperation is not in full swing yet. We set much hope on the conclusion of an Agreement on the Liberalization, Promotion and Protection of Investment between Ukraine and Japan, which is now being drafted by experts. Both sides share the view that it should give additional impetus to investment cooperation between our countries and be an important signal for the business communities of Japan and Ukraine. The government of Ukraine exerts a lot of effort to improve the business and investment climate in Ukraine. In this regard, we consider Japanese companies as prospective long-term investment partners. Keidanren, for its part, has a committee on cooperation with Ukraine that holds regular meetings with the Coordinating Council on cooperation with Japan under the Ministry of Economy and Trade of Ukraine. These meetings serve as a platform for elaborating prospective areas of cooperation.

These prospects, as we see, are wide and diverse, taking into account the resource, industrial and market potential of Ukraine and the Black Sea region, encompassing in particular the members of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development "GUAM": Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova. Japan is interested in the development of relations with this region, which is demonstrated by valuable political and economic support that the government of Japan provides to the GUAM Organization and its member states. Enjoying positive economic dynamics, the Black Sea region is becoming one of the important players on the international markets in terms of natural and energy resources, agricultural and industrial products as well as a destination for foreign direct investments. Prospects for furthering GUAM-Japan cooperation were discussed in

May in Tokyo at the meeting of the GUAM national coordinators and representatives of the government of Japan.

One must also note achievements in cultural exchange between our countries. There had been successful annual performances in Japan of well-known Ukrainian national theaters, artists and musicians. At the same time, I'm glad to inform our readers that the interest toward Japanese culture is significantly increasing in Ukraine. Japanese arts, literature, music are becoming more and more popular among Ukrainians. The works of Matsuo Basho and Yasunari Kawabata are studied in secondary schools. Japanese film festivals in Ukraine enjoy mass attendance. Japanese cuisine is becoming extremely popular in big cities.

Last year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Japan. The most remarkable event has been a demonstration of traditional tea ceremony conducted by Sen Genshitsu, the grand tea master of the Urasenke tea ceremony



Technology, history:The Sea Launch vehicle Zenit-2S (left) - Design Bureau Yuzhnoye and Production Association Yuzhmashzavod (Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine); Kiev includes traditional landmarks such as the UNESCO World Heritage site the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra monastic complex (right). EMBASSY OF UKRAINE



school. Such events that introduce Japanese and Ukrainian cultures promote better understanding between our peoples.

Chornobyl, Fukushima
Recently our cooperation has acquired a new dimension — the exchange of experience on elimination of consequences of accidents at nuclear power stations in the wake of the nuclear accident at the Fukushima No. 1 power plant in 2011.

We are very closely observing the developments in the Tohoku area after the accident at Fukushima No. 1 and attach significant importance to the cooperation with Japan in the framework of Fukushima-Chornobyl.

I would like to recall and emphasize that the common attitude to strengthen Fukushima-Chornobyl cooperation was realized in the signing of the agreement between our governments concerning cooperation to advance aftermath response to accidents at nuclear power stations, signed on April 18, 2012.

The Ukrainian side confirmed its intention to provide as much

support and expertise as possible in the future for the measures to be taken in the endeavors at Fukushima No. 1 and made a suggestion concerning the possibility of implementing a joint project based on the demand of the Japanese side.

We do believe that the activity of the Japan-Ukraine Joint Committee for the cooperation to advance aftermath response to accidents at nuclear power stations established in 2012 provides for effective exchange of experience by our experts in overcoming the aftermath of such emergencies, including elaboration of joint approaches to prevent such disasters and contribute to the safety of using the "peaceful atom" by the international community in general.

Worth noting is the fact that in the course of last year more than 15 Japanese delegations visited Ukraine to study Ukraine's expertise acquired from the accident at Chornobyl nuclear power station. At the same time, around 10 leading Ukrainian post-Chornobyl experts and scientists were invited to Japan to share their knowledge and skills.

This year's keynote event was an exchange of visits of the Ministers responsible for the nuclear emergencies. First, in May Takumi Nemoto, minister of reconstruction, visited Chornobyl to see with his own eyes the current situation on-site, learn the lessons gained by Ukrainian central and local authorities and experts on the mitigation of the Chornobyl accident's consequences and how to provide long-term care for residents near the disaster site.

Second, in June Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine Oleg Proskuryakov and Head of the State Agency of Ukraine for Exclusion Zone Volodymyr Kholosha were welcomed in Japan by the heads of relevant ministries to boost the cooperation to advance aftermath response to accidents at nuclear power stations, discuss the areas of evacuation, protection strategies, technologies of decontamination, monitoring of the environment, and so on. The Ukrainians visited Fukushima prefecture, made a close observation of the Fukushima No. 1 site and met with

the governor of the prefecture, Yuhey Sato.

Actually, I would like to note that the tragedy at Fukushima No. 1 in conjunction with the Chornobyl disaster forced the world to look at the problem of nuclear safety as one that has a planetary dimension. Regardless of the geographic distance between our states, we feel that our countries are united and we need to make this experience and cooperation useful not only for our countries, but for all of humanity.

Let me once again pay tribute to the courage and strength of the Japanese people who suffered from the tsunami and nuclear accident that devastated Japan's northeastern region two-and-a-half years ago. We are confident that the Japanese nation will overcome all the negative consequences of the disaster and Japan will become ever stronger.

To conclude, let me invite tourists from Japan to look at one of the top 10 fastest growing tourist destinations in Europe: Ukraine — a young country with old history and friendly people.

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to the People of Ukraine
on the Occasion of
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