

# Slovakia constitution day

## Twenty-year voyage with a trusted partner

Drahomír Štos  
AMBASSADOR OF SLOVAKIA



In 2013, Slovakia and Japan commemorate 20 years of diplomatic relations featuring an extensive range of events spanning from high-ranking political exchanges to inspiring cultural events. Relations creating firm bonds based on the shared values of democracy and solidarity and facilitating joint responses to current opportunities and challenges.

On Sept. 1, Slovakia commemorates its Constitution Day as a manifestation of the strong willingness of the Slovak people to bind their statehood with democratic principles and the rule of law. On that day in 1992, the constitution designed for the emerging sovereign country was adopted by the Slovak National Council. This step paved the way for Slovakia to be acknowledged as an independent member of international community on Jan. 1, 1993, with Japan having shown solidarity from the very beginning of Slovak statehood.

We are proud and glad to be able to celebrate this auspicious 20th anniversary of independence as an advanced, democratic country fully integrated into the European and Trans-Atlantic structures. Strong and close partnerships with Japan and other like-minded countries around the globe are the inseparable feature of our independence.

If you look at the story of Slovakia, it is almost unbelievable that it is "only" 20 years since we gained independence. After laying the foundations of the new state, the first decade of the new millennium witnessed an incredible story, implementing major structural reforms affecting every sector of our society.

The Japanese government and people, among other friendly countries, made it all easier by



**National landmark: Bratislava Castle stands on a rocky hill above the Danube River in the middle of the capital of Slovakia.** SLOVAKTOURIST BOARD

providing development assistance and support, as well as through numerous friendly and kind-hearted people-to-people ties. I feel greatly honored to extend upon today's occasion, and on behalf of President Ivan Gašparovic, the government and people of Slovakia, warm greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as to the government and friendly people of Japan. We remain truly grateful for the friendship and assistance we have received when we emerged as an independent nation aspiring to reform its society and economy.

Bilateral relations between Slovakia and Japan are firmly rooted in common values, and based on mutual friendship and respect. Our two countries support development strategies in which aspects of sustainability and social responsibility remain essential. Various recent exchanges proved our commitment to ever stronger and advancing partnership. In 2012, Slovak President Gašparovic visited Japan. The historic first visit of a Slovak head of state posed an opportunity to strengthen our relations through the opening of a new chapter in our cooperation. Science and technology, research and development, university-level ties and social security arrangements together with traditional investment and trade cooperation were

highlighted as our areas of focus in the years to come. In June 2013, to mark the 20th anniversary of our diplomatic relations, Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino paid a visit to Slovakia where they were warmly welcomed by our people. The visit stands as a clear demonstration of our friendly and comprehensive ties.

At more than €100 million, Japan was Slovakia's third-largest export market in Asia in 2012. The favorable and transparent investment environment attracted up to 20 Japanese companies to place their production units in Slovakia. Brand names such as Panasonic Corp. are manufacturing here for European markets. Yazaki Corp. as a major supplier for the European automotive industry, and Fuso Industries as supplier for the air conditioning technologies producers are maintaining their operations despite the difficult times both in Europe and Japan. In general, all Japanese investors are regarded highly for their constructive cooperation with local and central authorities, as well as being socially responsible partners. The overall high satisfaction with manufacturing operations allows us to make advances in research and development cooperation. This move is supported by the Slovak government and widely seen as a road to the prospective future of the Slovakia-Japan economic re-

lationship. Cooperation between the Slovak software company ESET and Cannon IT Solutions on the Japanese market is a remarkable step in this direction. Slovakia is becoming more and more known to Japanese travelers. The combination of a rich cultural heritage, which brings together elements of indigenous Slovak and various European traditions, living folk culture, vibrant city life, famous spa resorts and the beauty of its nature underlined by traditional Slovak hospitality make Slovakia a sought-after holiday destination.

Rich cultural interaction provides for strong bonds between art-loving communities and contributes greatly to mutual understanding. The Slovak Chamber Orchestra and the soloists of the State Opera Banská Bystrica toured Japan earlier this year. The outstanding Slovak musicians Ludovít Kanta and Henrich Tatár living in Japan are great envoys of Slovak culture, highly respected also for their various social activities. Traditionally, the winning works of Bratislava Biennale of Children Books Illustrations were on display in Japan in the course of last year. In the city of Košice, designated as a European Capital of Culture in 2013, the numerous presentations of Japanese culture have been held including theater performances and bonsai exhibitions.

I would also like to convey special greetings to all Slovak na-

## More interactions can only bring mutual benefit to Japan and Slovakia

Naokazu Takemoto  
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-SLOVAKIA PARLIAMENTARY  
FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

Slovakia is new for Japanese, but it is a wonderful European country with a long history.

My first visit to Slovakia was about 10 years ago with my colleague parliamentarians, including Tamisuke Watanuki, then speaker of the House of the Representatives. I was impressed by the kindness of the people as well as natural landscapes, such as the



waves of the Danube. Especially we enjoyed the mud bath at hot springs on the river bank. We have hot springs in Japan, too, but we do not have such kinds of mud baths. So, I hope that more Japanese tourists will visit Slovakia.

Also, many Japanese companies, such as Panasonic, are doing business in Slovakia with highly-skilled local workforce. Japan's gross domestic product is the third largest in the world today, but I believe that Japan is still No. 1 in the world in making technology-intensive and high-quality products. And I think that Slovak people are greatly contributing to it.

Slovakia has many attractions, including good wine. The more people get know

about Slovakia, the more people will become Slovakia's fans.

In June, Prince and Princess Akishino visited Slovakia. I am confident that more such high-level visits will be exchanged for years to come. As the head of the Japan-Slovakia Parliamentary Friendship League, I would like to visit the country in the near future. I believe that human interaction is the beginning of further development of our bilateral relations.

On the occasion of Slovakia's Constitution Day, as well as the 20th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Slovakia, may I extend my best wishes for the further development of Slovakia.

tionals here in Japan to express my acknowledgment of their continued support to the Slovak Embassy and for the role that

they play, particularly in the cultural sphere, in further enhancing bilateral relations between Slovakia and Japan. My sincere appre-

ciation also goes to all the Japanese agencies and companies that are actively engaged with Slovakia. Sincere thanks for a

huge portion of enthusiastic work and support that comes from our friends in the Slovakia-Japan Associations in various cities.

## Congratulations to the People of the Slovak Republic on their Constitution Day



Honorary Consulate of the Slovak Republic in Kirishima  
**Masahiro Yamamoto**  
Honorary Consul



**BARREL VALLEY PRAHA & GEN**

KIRISHIMA HIGHLAND BREWERY LTD.  
876-15, Fumoto, Mizobe-cho, Kirishima-shi, Kagoshima 899-6404  
TEL 0995-58-4868 FAX 0995-58-3621 <http://www.praha-gen.com/>

## Congratulations to the People of the Slovak Republic on Constitution Day

 Mitsubishi Corporation