

Romania national day

Romania, Japan: renewed partnership for 21st century

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AMBASSADOR OF ROMANIA

On the occasion of the National Day of my country, Romania, — I would like to extend my greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, the government and the people of Japan, and to all readers of The Japan Times.



Every Dec. 1, the Romanian people celebrate the Great Union, achieved in 1918, when all the territories inhabited by Romanians joined together in a sovereign and unitary state.

Romania and Japan, even though geographically separated by thousands of kilometers,

have been closely connected by a wide range of substantial ties, consolidated throughout the decades, especially since 2002, when the Romania-Japan Joint Declaration on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership was signed.

The year 2013 provided renewed opportunities for extended bilateral political dialogue, economic cooperation and cultural exchanges. As a full-fledged member of the European Union since 2007, Romania has resolutely continued throughout this year to pursue the goal of strengthening its relations with Japan, in the context of which the EU and Japan are fully engaged in realizing a strategic partnership, and concluding a comprehensive economic partnership agreement.

The bilateral dialogue between our countries was deeply enhanced this year.

In February, H.E. Titus Corlatean, minister of foreign affairs of Romania, paid an official working visit to Japan, at the invitation of his Japanese counterpart, H.E. Fumio Kishida. By signing on that occasion the Romania-Japan Joint Declaration on a Renewed Partnership, bilateral relations entered a new stage. The document identifies new fields of cooperation, paving the way for a consolidated partnership into the 21st century.

Another example of the increased dynamics of bilateral relations was the visit to Romania in August of H.E. Sadakazu Tanigaki, minister of justice and president of the Japan-Romania Parliamentary Friendship League. Minister Tanigaki was received by Prime Minister Victor Ponta, and had talks with H.E. Robert Cazanciuc, minister of justice, H.E. Titus Corlatean and the leadership of the Roma-

nia-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Group. A Joint Declaration on Cooperation between the two Ministries of Justice was signed on that occasion, thus opening a new path to follow for an enhanced partnership.

Furthermore, at the beginning of October, H.E. Mihnea Costoiu, minister delegate for higher education, scientific research and technological development, attended the works of the "Science and Technology in Society" Forum, held in Kyoto. During his stay in Japan, in Kyoto and Tokyo, Minister Costoiu had talks with H.E. Hakubun Shimomura, minister of education, culture, sports, science and technology, and H.E. Ichita Yamamoto, minister of state for science and technology, and visited the Japan Meteorological Agency and the Tokyo Institute of Technology.

Among others, Minister Cos-

toiu invited Japanese researchers to join the ELI-NP (Extreme Light Infrastructure — Nuclear Physics) project — an EU project involving the world's most powerful laser, to be built in Romania — and proposed the creation of a Romanian-language lecturer's office at a Japanese university.

Also in October this year, Romania was among the some 140 countries to sign the Minamata Convention on mercury.

The peak of the bilateral dialogue was reached Oct. 29, when Prime Minister Victor Ponta had talks with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Istanbul, Turkey.

Economic cooperation is another most significant aspect. Makita Corp. with its largest investment in Europe, other Japanese companies like JTEKT Corp., Calsonic Kansei Corp. and Yazaki expect good profits out of their investments in Romania, despite the hardships created by the sovereign debt crisis in Europe. There are signs that the financial turbulence in Europe is over, offering thus an additional reason for our countries to consolidate their economic ties.

With relatively low-cost labor and steady prospects of economic growth inside the EU market, Romania has significant advantages to attract Japanese investors in new fields such as medical equipment, infrastructure, energy and agriculture.

Another field with great potential is tourism. By the end of this year, Shiseido Co. will finalize its investment in the first international spa in Romania to be certified by the European Spas Association. It will be the first dedicated spa in Eastern Europe. The number of tourists visiting each other's countries has increased in recent years, with more and more Romanians traveling to Japan, and experiencing its traditional "omotenashi," and with many Japanese discovering Romania's hospitality, rich culture and pristine nature.

The close relationship between our countries is also visible at the level of cultural cooperation, intensely cultivated thanks to the efforts of an increasing number of Japan-Romania friendship associations



whose activities cover various domains of interest, including music, visual arts, handicrafts and sculpture.

With the aim to promote the complex identity of our country, comprising specific national and European cultural dimensions, it is our guiding policy to present to the Japanese public traditional and contemporary Romanian values, by actively developing cultural projects and engaging in joint European events, like the annual "Europe Comes to Your School" program, consisting of EU and country presentations made by EU diplomats in schools around Japan, on the occasion of May 9, Europe Day. Romania was present this year, too, at the European Film Festival in Japan.

A good example of fruitful cooperation in the cultural field is, since 2005, the annual Romanian International Classic Music Contest, organized in Tokyo by the Japan-Romania Music Association. Young musicians from Japan have the opportunity to discover the jewels of the Romanian school of music and to be promoted to the world stage. Also, this year was marked by the visit to Japan of the delegation of the National Oina Federation.



Landmarks: (Top) Bran Castle is known as "Dracula's Castle." (Above) An aerial shot of Bucharest shows the Palace of the Parliament, the world's second-largest building after the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. ROMANIAN EMBASSY

"Oina" is the Romanian traditional sport, a sort of ancestor of baseball. In future, we may witness the birth of the first "oina" team in Japan, at the famous Ashikaga Institute of Technology in Tochigi Prefecture.

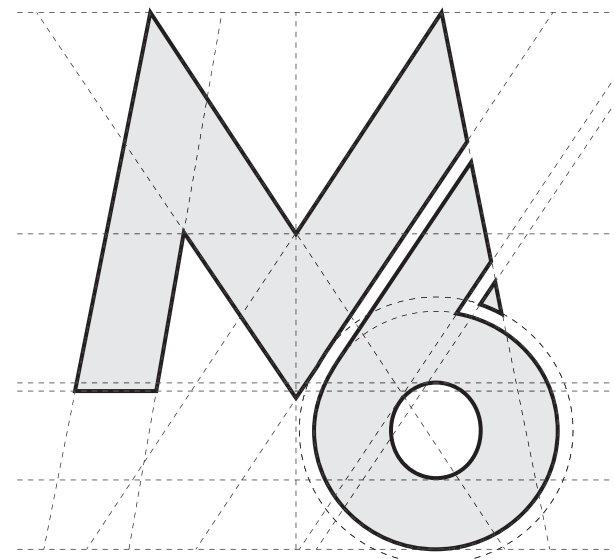
Increasing academic exchanges is another feature of the ever-expanding interaction. In September this year, the Babes — Bolyai University from Cluj — Napoca and Bucharest University concluded agreements of academic cooperation with

Ehime University.

With such sound prospects for the further development of the friendly ties between Romania and Japan, I am confident that the exchanges between our peoples will steadily expand in the future.

I therefore invite you to join us, to visit Romania and see for yourselves the notable changes that have transformed my country for the better in recent years, and to be part of a partnership that brings us closer and closer.

PADECO is honored to work together with esteemed Romanian people in completing the country's landmark project in transport development:
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We send our congratulations to Romania on its way to sustainable development and wish all Romanians a very happy National Day!

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Congratulations
to the People
of
Romania
on the Occasion
of
Their National Day



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