

Italy national day

EXPO Milan 2015 committed to boosting economic growth

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AMBASSADOR OF ITALY

Today Italy celebrates its 68th anniversary as a Republic.

Italy-Japan relations are deeply rooted and vital as we are like-minded countries on many global issues, sharing common values such as democracy, the promotion of peace, fundamental freedoms, human rights and the rule of law. As nations, we are also proud of our traditions and culture.



The Japanese ministers of defense, agriculture and economy met their Italian counterparts in Rome in early May, and on June 5, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will meet our Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi. The two heads of government are strongly committed to overcoming the long period of deflation, boosting economic growth and increasing job opportunities, especially for the young and women.

Italy and Japan are also engaged in close cooperation in the field of peace and security, to contribute to a more secure and stable world. It has to be stressed that Italy will take over the EU Presidency from July 1st, for the second semester of the year.

Historically, the earliest contacts between the two countries trace back to the Momoyama period, when Italian missionaries arrived in Japan.

Just a few months ago a record of these first contacts was rediscovered. A portrait of Ito Mancio, leader of the mission sent to Rome in 1582 by the Jesuit missionary Alessandro Valignano, has been found in a private Italian collection. The portrait painted by Domenico Tintoretto (the son of Jacopo Tintoretto) in Venice, during the stay of the mission in Italy, is an important cultural and historical icon of the first relations between Japan and our country, together with the portrait of the samurai Hasekura Tsunenaga, recently displayed in Sendai and at the Tokyo National Museum in Ueno.

Economic relations between Italy and Japan are very positive. Italian exports, both in traditional and innovative sectors — such as pharmaceuticals and machinery — increased last year and we hope they will continue this positive trend also in 2014.

Alongside the so-called traditional sectors, notably fashion, design and food, Italy is a global player with outstanding expertise in high-technol-

ogy, aerospace and renewable energy.

For many years, Japanese travelers have elected Italy as their first European destination when traveling outside Asia. Direct flights to Rome, Milan and recently to Venice, offer the chance to visit the most famous Italian cities, with their variety of cultural, environmental and historical sites. Many other locations are waiting to be discovered by Japanese visitors.

Investment between our two countries have been increasing in the last few years. However, there is still great unexploited potential. We believe that the economic recovery of both Italy and Japan and a stronger economic interconnection will ensure new opportunities in the upcoming years, together with an increased cooperation in research and development.

Economic partnership agreements and free trade agreements will provide important opportunities to further strengthen economic ties.

The two countries face many common challenges such as the exposure to natural disasters; the quest for secure, efficient and clean energy; and the necessity of meeting the needs of aging populations.

As far as these challenges are concerned, further cooperation between our countries in the fields of education, research and innovation could be very useful and provide effective answers.

EXPO Milan 2015, which runs from May 1 to Oct. 31, 2015, will turn the world's attention to Italy. The theme — Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life — aims at opening a dialogue between international players to discuss some of the main challenges that we are facing, including the problems of nutrition and the resources of our planet. Furthermore, EXPO Milan 2015 aims at improving our knowledge about new food technologies, scientific discoveries and research, different ways of food preservation, traditional cultures and sustainability.

144 Countries — representing 94 percent of the world's population — will take part in the Universal Exposition, together with international organizations and nongovernmental organizations. The exhibition site is expected to welcome over 20 million people and allow them to experience a cultural journey, sampling food and traditions from all over the world.

On the occasion of our National Day we will have the great honor of hosting the Lombardy Governor and former Minister of Interior, Roberto Maroni, as a speaker at

the Universal Exposition.

Japan has joined the Universal Exposition with the very interesting theme of "Harmonious Diversity." The Japanese Pavilion will be presented at a National Day reception at our Embassy.

Taking part in the EXPO Milan 2015, Japan can present its food culture that is healthy and genuine and very similar to the Italian cuisine. In fact, interest in Japanese food is recently increasing in Italy, while Italian restaurants are spreading all over Japan.

We hope that Japan will follow the path of geographical indications, as this is a fundamental issue for the promotion of high quality food.

Culture is a sector in which Italy and Japan are continuously engaged in a lively exchange.

In May, the Italian Film Festival successfully concluded, entertaining Japanese audiences during Golden Week.

We have just hosted the tournée of the Theatre Opera di Roma, with the participation of Maestro Riccardo Muti and a very outstanding cast of world-renowned musicians and artists, who performed two masterpieces of Verdi, Nabucco and Simon Boccanegra. In September, the Teatro Comunale di Bologna will be performing in Kyoto and Tokyo and in November, the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia will come to Tokyo and then move on to Kyoto, Miyazaki and Nagoya.



Milan is Italy's second-largest city after Rome and the center of commerce, industry and finance. The entire city is participating in numerous events leading up to the opening of EXPO Milan 2015. (Above) A banner of the Expo is seen against a backdrop of the Milan Cathedral. (Right) A computer image shows a large piazza at the crossroads of the Decumanus and the Cardo boulevards — the two main streets at the Expo venue — symbolizing the union of Italy with the world.

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Furthermore, we will have beautiful exhibitions from important Italian museums, with some of their masterpieces shown for the first time in Japan. The Poldi Pezzoli Mu-

seum's exhibition from Milan, just closed in Tokyo and is now open in Osaka; the exhibition of the collection of the Galleria degli Uffizi of Florence will show next autumn important

Italian Renaissance artists' works.

We wish to diversify our cultural offering to Japan, presenting also some contemporary artists so far never shown. For



Built in the 15th century by the Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, the Sforzesco Castle was the site of many historical events and is now a major tourist attraction. FOTOTECA ENIT

instance, there will soon be an interesting exhibition of Giorgio De Chirico.

Information regarding these and more cultural events and all the details are

available on the website www.italyinjapan.com and the social networks of the Embassy (<https://www.facebook.com/ambasciataditalia>, Twitter: [tokyo@esteri.it](https://twitter.com/tokyo@esteri.it)).

Congratulations
on the 68th Anniversary
of the Proclamation
of the Republic of Italy



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