

# Spain national day

## Dual Year: Commemorative events strengthen bilateral bridges

Miguel A. Navarro  
AMBASSADOR OF SPAIN

On the occasion of our National Day, I have the honor to convey to the Imperial family and to the people of Japan the traditional warm message of friendship and goodwill from the Spanish Royal Family.



Oct. 12 marks a stellar moment in the history of Spain. It is the date of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and a landmark in the Age of Discovery.

One century later, the Keicho Mission sent by the Daimyo of Sendai, Date Masamune, to the King of Spain, Philip III, proposing a transpacific commercial treaty. This made Japan the first Asian country to cross this vast ocean eastward and was the first Japanese diplomatic mission to the Western World. It was also the first globalization attempt in history.

Four hundred years later, Spain and Japan have celebrated this historic event with a Dual Year (2013-2014), which was graced by the High Patronage of our two Crown Princes, H.I.H. Crown Prince Naruhito, who honored us with an official visit to Spain last June on

the occasion of the opening of the Dual Year, and H.R.H. Crown Prince of Spain, now H.M. King Felipe VI. The Dual Year has covered a wide range of more than 500 activities, from joint business initiatives to many different cultural events, which have largely contributed to building new bridges between our two societies.

In particular, the official visits to Japan of the President of the Spanish Government H.E. Mariano Rajoy and the Speaker of the Lower House, H.E. Jesus Posada, and the official visits to Spain by Japanese Prime Minister, H.E. Shinzo Abe and Foreign Minister, H.E. Fumio Kishida have largely contrib-

uted to the leap forward in our political bonds in the last twelve months, including the adoption of a Partnership for Peace, Growth and Innovation.

The XVII Spain-Japan Symposium in the northern Spanish city of Santander in November will focus on the future of our bilateral relationship and on the lessons learned regarding smart cities with the purpose of increasing our cooperation in both fields.

Keeping momentum is important to consolidate the work that has been done in the past years and to open new prospects for the future. The year 2018 will mark another important celebration, namely the 150th anniversary of our bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, which resumed and consolidated thereafter our historical conflict-free ties ever since. In a fortunate coincidence, 2018 will also commemorate the Meiji Restoration, making the year an even more special occasion.

Spain, like Japan, is being confronted by significant challenges. Once our financial difficulties have largely been overcome, our most important economic priority is to consolidate growth and foster employment. The government has already implemented wide-ranging structural reforms through overhauls of social security, pensions, labor legislation, further liberalization of goods and services markets and more transparency in the public sector regulation. As a result, Spanish economic growth rates are currently among the highest in the Eurozone, strong exports have turned chronic deficits in the

current account balance of payments into an increasing surplus and the public deficit — which was over 9 percent of GDP in 2011 — will be reduced to 5.6 percent by the end of this year. Additional measures to foster competitiveness and entrepreneurship are in place, and foreign direct investment inflows show that Spain is today an outstanding platform for doing business with Europe, Africa and Latin America.

Japan has been an important political, economic and cultural partner for Spain for a long time and is highly valued in my country. We strongly wish to continue exploring better ways and opportunities for reinforcing our friendship and expanding our bilateral cooperation in new areas to further consolidate this old relationship.

With my appreciation to The Japan Times for publishing this message.



Situated on the Guadalquivir River, Seville is a major tourist destination and home to three UNESCO World Heritage sites. ©TURESPAÑA



The Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela has been a place of pilgrimage on the Way of St. James since the Early Middle Ages. ©TURESPAÑA

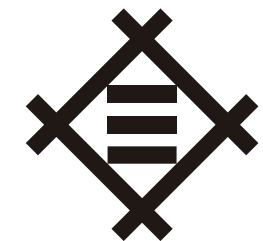
### Congratulations

on the Occasion of  
the National Day of Spain

 Mitsubishi Corporation

### Congratulations

on the Occasion of  
the National Day of Spain



MITSUI & CO.