

Slovakia constitution day

Friendly relations based on shared values and ethics

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AMBASSADOR OF SLOVAKIA

Today, Slovakia celebrates its National Day to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic on September 1, 1992, that paved the way to the establishment of independent Slovak Republic on January 1, 1993, after the peaceful division of common state of the Czechs and the Slovaks. Since then the Slovak Republic has undergone a profound economic and social development, experienced dynamic



growth and solidified its position of responsible and trustworthy member of international community.

Slovakia and Japan enjoy excellent friendly relations based on sharing common values and principles. The recent years have seen frequent high-level contacts between the two countries demonstrating mutual willingness to explore new horizons, exploit the mutual potential and convert it into concrete forms of cooperation. Slovakia, the European Union member state, actively contributes to enhancing strategic partnership and deepening cooperation of the EU and Japan. The Visegrad Group and Japan format offers another opportunity for mutual collaboration.



There is a strong potential for further development of economic relations. Slovakia could be an interesting investment destination for Japanese

companies due to its political and economic stability, strengthened by the common European currency Euro, competitive taxation system and availability of highly

skilled and educated workforce offering the highest labour productivity in the region. Steadily growing infrastructure, large selection of industrial land and offices available for purchase or lease, harmonised investment incentives and high innovation potential for R&D projects are further assets. Sectors of R&D, Design & Innovation, Technology centres, ICT & SW development, BPO - Regional headquarters and tourism centres offer attractive investment opportunities. Additional opportunities can be found in the traditionally strong sectors with the growth potential in Slovakia: Machinery & Precision engineering, Automotive, Metallurgy & Metal processing, Electronics and Chemistry & Pharmacy. Mutually beneficial cooperation in research and educational exchanges are becoming an increasingly important field of our bilateral cooperation.

Cultural exchanges are vital part of our ties, contributing to better mutual understanding between the two Nations. Successful tour of the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra to Japan in July this year is just one of numerous examples.

Slovakia with its historical and cultural richness and natural wonders has much to offer to foreign visitors. Eight exceptional Slovak treasures have a privileged place among



Clockwise from top left: Main Square of Slovakia's capital Bratislava; Built in the 13th century, Orava Castle is considered to be one of the most beautiful castles in Slovakia; Traditional folk costumes from western Slovakia SLOVAKIA TOURISM BOARD



the world cultural and natural heritage sites inscribed on UNESCO list. Spis Castle, one of the UNESCO sites, is among more than two hundred castles and castle ruins in Slovakia. The Kremnica Mint has been making coins since 1328 and is the oldest continuously-operating enterprise in the world. Travel back in time and see what life in the Slovak countryside looked like in past centuries. The picturesque wooden village of Cichany is actually the first-ever folk architecture reservation in the world. The highest wooden Gothic altar in the world by Master Pavol of Levoča, carved from linden wood, can be found in St Jacob Church in Levoča. Unique folk culture of Slovakia can be experienced at many folk festivals that are held around Slovakia in sum-

mer. Interesting gastronomic experience may be found by traveling the Wine Route, especially during autumn when wine harvest is celebrated. The first produce of the season — young wine but also more ancient wine gems may be tasted in November, during traditional open-cellar days. In spring lovers of good wine can enjoy St Urban's Say, the feast of the patron of wine and vine-growers. High Tatras and other Slovak mountain ranges offer excellent opportunities for climbing and alpine hiking. There are only four accessible aragonite caves on the planet and Slovakia is one of two European countries to have this unique natural phenomenon — ours is the Ochtinska Aragonite Cave. These attractions, together with traditional cuisine and hospitality could be-

come an inspiration for more Japanese travelers to come to Slovakia and spend unforgettable time.

In conclusion, I would like to convey my sincerest gratitude to numerous Japanese institutions, agencies and friends from all walks of life, including several Japan-Slovakia friendship associations in Japan, for their engagement with Slovakia and valuable contribution to bilateral cooperation and exchanges. There is much more that can be done together and I firmly believe that under the joint efforts of both sides the Slovak - Japan friendly relations will further accelerate its development. Let me wish readers of The Japan Times, and the whole people of Japan happiness and prosperity.

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



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



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