

Macedonia national day

Forging a path for a greater economic, cultural partnership

Andrijana Cvetkovik
AMBASSADOR OF MACEDONIA

On this special occasion when we celebrate the Independence Day of The Republic of Macedonia on Sept. 8, I have the honor in the name of the President of Macedonia Gjorgi Ivanov and the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski to extend warmest regards to their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, the government and the people of Japan. I am also honored to extend gratitude to our Honorary Consul General Masatake Matsuda, the President of the Japan-Macedonia friendship association Fumio Furuya and all Japanese people that have contributed toward strengthening our bilateral ties, including all Macedonian citizens residing in Japan.



Twenty-four years ago, in 1991, a Referendum of Inde-

pendence took place and it confirmed our determination to build a future of an independent Macedonia, previously part of Yugoslavia as a federal state, proclaiming a sovereign parliamentary democracy. Ever since the independence proclamation the Republic of Macedonia has chosen the path of EU and NATO integration.

Last year we marked the 20th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations with Japan. To honor this important occasion several bilateral meetings were held in both Macedonia and Japan. Among the most significant was the visit of Prime Minister Gruevski to Japan and his meeting with His Majesty Crown Prince Naruhito, and the summit held with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The summit held in Tokyo reconfirmed the commitment on both sides to maintain and further strengthen bilateral ties, especially in the area of economy, education and culture.

For the purpose of further cultivating the diplomatic, eco-

conomic and cultural relations, in 2013 the Republic of Macedonia opened its embassy in Tokyo, and last September I arrived in Tokyo to take the post of the first resident ambassador. We expect this step to strengthen the diplomatic ties between Macedonia and Japan.

I am happy to be among the few ambassadors that speak Japanese fluently and have deep knowledge of Japanese culture, which comes from nine years living in this beautiful and very close-to-my-heart country.

The Republic of Macedonia is deeply grateful for the support that Japan has given us in the transitional period toward attaining numerous priorities, such as promoting well-being, building stronger institutions and maintaining high standards to protect our environment. This cordial relationship between our two countries is now stepping into a new phase that will open the door for further cooperation.

Gateway to Europe

One area of unexplored potential for cooperation is the economy, and that is due to the fact that Macedonia is largely unknown by Japanese companies. Very few people in Japan know that Macedonia ranks fifth best for starting a business in the World Bank's Doing Business 2013 survey and is the third-best-reformer in the world. Macedonia has the lowest taxes in Europe, one of Europe's best industrial zones set up exclusively for foreign investors; where companies receive a 10-year tax holiday, and



Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski (left) meets with Crown Prince Naruhito at the Togu Palace in Tokyo, on June 30, 2014, during his visit to Japan. EMBASSY OF MACEDONIA

the country recorded the third-highest GDP in Europe last year, with forecasts to maintain this trend in the years to come.

Many foreign companies have chosen Macedonia as a country to set up their factories and businesses because of the fact that even though Macedonia is home to only 2.3 million people, with free trade agreements in place and excellent infrastructure connecting to all of Europe, it is in fact a market of 650 million people.

The Republic of Macedonia is a very beautiful and ancient country in the heart of the Balkans, with a long history, interesting archeological sites and natural beauty and I invite all Japanese citizens to visit Macedonia.

In conclusion, I look to a bright future and envision that our two friendly countries will walk into the future as partners, supporting and respecting each other while building better prospects for future generations through cultural, economic and educational exchange. To all readers of The Japan Times, let me extend my warmest regards for peace, prosperity, health and happiness.

Reliable partners working to deepen relationship

Fumio Furuya
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MACEDONIA FRIENDSHIP
ASSOCIATION



Embassy of Macedonia opened last year and Andrijana Cvetkovikj assumed her post as

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Macedonia.

Diplomatic relations between Japan and Macedonia began in 1994. Commemorating the 20th anniversary of our diplomatic relations, the

ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Japan, which I appreciate very much.

When the 1963 big earthquake struck the capital Skopje, a Japanese team led by late architect Kenzo Tange undertook the reconstruction project.

In thanks for this, pro-Japanese Macedonian people provided help in the fund-raising efforts for Japan in the aftermath of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for this help.

I pray the relationship between the two countries will further develop this year.



Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski (fourth from left) and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe hold a summit meeting in Tokyo on July 1, 2014. EMBASSY OF MACEDONIA

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to the People of
the Republic of Macedonia
on the Occasion of
the 24th Anniversary of
Their Independence*



Japan Macedonia Association
<http://japanmacedonia.com>

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