

# Spain National Day

## Promoting peace, growth and innovation

Gonzalo de Benito  
AMBASSADOR OF SPAIN

On the occasion of our National Day, I have the honor to convey to the Imperial family, the government and the people of Japan the message of goodwill and friendship from the royal family, the government and the people of Spain.



I wish to convey as well my congratulations to the Spanish citizens living and working in Japan with their families, as they represent Spain in this great country, and wish them all the best in their personal and professional endeavors.

We celebrate today a stellar moment in the history of our

country. On Oct. 12, 1492, Christopher Columbus, sailing westward through the Atlantic, discovered the Americas, in a mission sponsored and supported by the Spanish Crown.

A little more than a century later, in 1613, the Keicho Mission sent by the Daimyo of Sendai, Date Masamune, to the King of Spain, Philippe III, made Japan the first Asian country to cross the Pacific eastward in what was the first Japanese diplomatic mission to the Western world.

Both missions prove the courage and boldness of Spanish and Japanese sailors in what can be called the first globalization attempts in history.

Our bilateral relations have enormously developed in the last 400 years. Today there are friendly and cooperative relations based on the mutual re-

spect and appreciation of our imperial and royal families, our governments and our people. Through them, we promote peace, economic growth, innovation and mutual knowledge and interest between our citizens.

Throughout 2013 and 2014, we celebrated the Spain-Japan Dual Year, which was graced and honored by the official visit to Spain of H.I.H. Crown Prince Naruhito in June 2013.

Since then, we have promoted bilateral relations through reciprocal visits, including those by Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, as well as foreign ministers Jose Manuel Garcia Margallo and Fumio Kishida and other ministers and senior officials.

Just in the past year, we have benefited of reciprocal visits of

no less than 10 ministers and secretaries of state from the ministries of foreign affairs, defense, economy, finance, energy, research and interior.

The Japan Spain Foundation frames our relations today for the peace, growth and innovation agreed upon in a declaration that Abe and Rajoy signed in Tokyo in October 2013.

This is a comprehensive and far-reaching declaration through which we are enhancing our cooperation to the highest level, promoting together peace, trade, investment, research, innovation and deeper knowledge and appreciation between our citizens through tourism and cultural exchanges.

Today, Spain is a nonpermanent member of the U.N. Security Council for the 2015 to 2016 period. There, we serve the interests of the whole international community, promoting peace and security, defending the use of preventive diplomacy and mediation as the best instruments to avoid and resolve conflicts, supporting the effectiveness of U.N. peacekeeping operations and demanding the effective implementation of protection of civilians, women and children in armed conflicts.

We very much look forward seeing to Japan elected as a nonpermanent member of the U.N. Security Council for the 2016 to 2017 period in the upcoming elections later this month. This will allow us to share our common goal of promoting peace and security in these difficult times.

On a bilateral level, in the last year, new agreements on customs cooperation and defense cooperation have entered into force.

Today, we are negotiating agreements on cooperation in tourism, on sports, and on working holiday visas for students that will promote new exchanges between our youth, our civil societies and our companies.

As a result of our enhanced

relations, bilateral trade is rapidly growing. Spain's exports to Japan reached ¥367.5 billion in 2014, an increase of 16.49 percent compared to 2013. Japan's exports to Spain were ¥370.4 billion, an increase of 8.59 percent.

We are pleased to see new investments by Japanese companies in Spain in the last year, showing renewed confidence in our economy after we have completed long fiscal consolidation and structural reforms that have put Spain's economy again on a solid path of growth.

In the tourism sector, the number of visitors is significantly increasing as well.

We are most pleased to see the interest of Japanese tourists in Spain. The number reached 475,060 in 2014, representing an increase of 26.82 percent compared to 2013.

The number of Spanish tourists to Japan is growing as well, with 60,542 visitors in 2014, up 36.2 percent from 2013.

These figures are proof of the growing importance of our relationship and the very positive trend under our association for peace, growth and innovation.

In the upcoming months, we will continue promoting these exchanges through the XVIII Japan-Spain Symposium that will take place in Shizuoka. On this occasion, representatives of both governments, the private sector and civil society will reflect together on the future of our bilateral relationship and new fields of cooperation in renewable energy, tourism, smart cities, biotechnology and others. The symposium will be, as has been the case in previous editions, a significant contribution to the promotion of our common interests.

We will also continue promoting Spain's culture and heritage in Japan through a rich cultural program developed by Instituto Cervantes in Tokyo with the presentation in



Inaugurated in 1851, Madrid Atocha is the largest railway station in Madrid. In 1992, the old station building was converted into a concourse with shops, cafes, chic clubs and a verdant tropical garden. TURESPAÑA

Japan of Spain's most important cultural institutions.

We invite the public to attend the outstanding exhibition, which was inaugurated last week, of the Prado Museum at the Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum in Tokyo, as well as the performances of Spain's National Ballet in several Japanese cities starting Oct. 31 in Tokyo.

Japan is an important and respected political, economic and cultural partner for Spain. We strongly intend to continue exploring ways and opportunities for strengthening our friendship and expanding our bilateral cooperation in new areas to further consolidate our relationship.

I wish to deeply thank The Japan Times for publishing this message and would like to renew our commitment to serve the Spanish community in Japan and the interests of our bilateral relations for the benefit of our nations and our peoples.



Constructed from the 9th to 11th century by Moorish emirs, Alhambra is a palace and fortress located in Granada, Andalusia, and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. TURESPAÑA



Clockwise from left: Spain is the world's fourth biggest producer of wind power; Andasol Solar Power Station in Andalusia, Spain, is Europe's first commercial plant to use parabolic troughs; Spanish companies are among the leading infrastructure operators and municipal services providers for developing sustainable solutions around the world. SPANISH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## Striving to further increase awareness of Spanish culture

Tadashi Tsuzumi  
DIRECTOR GENERAL, JAPAN SPAIN FOUNDATION



On behalf of the members of the Japan Spain Foundation, I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations on National Day of Spain.

Understanding the significance of the special day, we are proud and happy to have continued to engage in activities based on the very spirit of *Hispanidad*, or Hispanicity.

The Japan Spain Foundation was established in 1957, mainly through the efforts of former Japanese Envoy to Spain Yakichiro Suma, former Japanese Ambassador to Spain Shinichi Shibusawa and those who returned home from Spain such as newspaper correspondents, doctors, businesspeople and academics. We now have more than 87,000 members, including Honorary Patron H.I.H. Princess Takamado and Spanish ambassador to

Japan as our honorary president.

Thanks to subsidies from the governments of both countries and support from members, we have acquired a five-story building, Casa de Espana, in Tokyo's Minato Ward. The building serves as the center of cultural exchanges, such as lectures on Spanish culture and economy, lectures in Spanish on Japanese culture, film festivals, art exhibitions, trade shows, monthly meetings, nationwide competitions and other events.

Also, as the *centro Hispanico del Japon* (the Hispanic center of Japan), we will promote exchanges not only with Spain but also with Spanish America such as Mexico and Latin American countries. This is in line with the spirit of *Hispanidad*.

I believe the future of our foundation, which is the only officially recognized organization of its kind, will be bright, together with the Kingdom of Spain, and the exchanges and friendship between Japan and Spain will continue to be fruitful.



Casa de Espana (4-5-18 Shiba, Minato Ward, Tokyo) is the center of Spanish culture in Japan. JAPAN SPAIN FOUNDATION

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on the Occasion of  
the National Day of Spain

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With three generations of experience complementing our strong background in logistics, production and distribution, we are proud to provide the very best client service.

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For more information:  
Felix Solis Japan Office  
5-24-9 Nagayama, Tama  
Tokyo 206-0025, Japan  
Tel & Fax: +81-42-374-6125

www.felixsolisavantis.com

