

## Spain National Day

## Closer ties via trade, tourism and cultural exchange

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 people of Japan the message of goodwill and friendship from the Royal Family, the government and the people of Spain.

I also wish to convey my congratulations to the Spanish citizens living and working in Japan with their families, wishing them all the best in their personal and professional endeavors.

This year's celebration brings good news for all of us, with the new non-stop flight between Tokyo and Madrid by Spain's airline Iberia starting operations on Oct. 19. The new flight is expected to promote tourism, people-to-people exchanges and better mutual knowledge between Japan and Spain.

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 developed enormously in the last 400 years. They are today friendly and cooperative rela-



Iberia's new non-stop flight between Tokyo and Madrid will be launched on Oct. 19. IBERIA

tions based on the mutual respect and appreciation of our Imperial and Royal families, our governments and our people.

Today, the framework of our relations is the "Japan-Spain Association for Peace, Growth and Innovation," that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Prime Minister Mariano 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.

This year, Spain and Japan are non-permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. On the council, Spain serves the interests of the international community, promoting peace and security, supporting preventive diplomacy and mediation as the best instruments to avoid and resolve conflicts, contributing to U.N. peacekeeping operations and demanding the effective protection of civilians, women and children in armed conflicts.

On a bilateral level, we are making significant progress in the deepening of our relations.

We are finalizing negotia-

these exchanges through the Japan-Spain Symposium and the Bilateral Business Committee.

After their successful meetings in Tokyo and Shizuoka last April, they will convene soon again, this time in Malaga, Spain. As in previous cases, these meetings will present an opportunity for representatives of both our governments, the private sector and civil society to reflect together on the future of our bilateral relationship and present new fields of cooperation.

Additionally, we will continue promoting Spain's culture and heritage in Japan through a rich cultural program developed by Instituto Cervantes in Tokyo, along with the presentation of Spain's most important cultural institutions.

After the successful tour of Spain's National Orchestra in different cities this summer, we invite the Japanese public to attend the outstanding Dali exhibition that recently opened at The National Art Center in Tokyo.

Finally, I would like to recognize the excellent cooperation that we always receive from our Honorary Consulates in Sapporo, Nagoya, Osaka, Takamatsu and Fukuoka, in promoting Japan-Spain relations and supporting the Spanish communities in their respective jurisdictions.

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

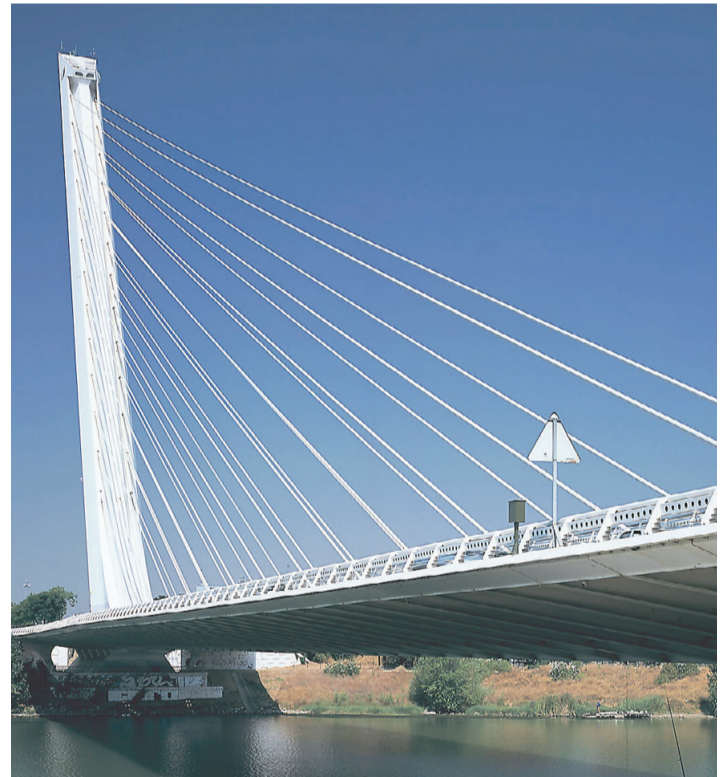
I wish to deeply thank The Japan Times for publishing this message and renew our commitment to serve the Spanish community in Japan and the interests of our bilateral relations for the benefit of our nations and our people.



The Damas Tower in the Alhambra, a palace and fortress complex in Granada TURESPANNA



World-renowned Guggenheim Museum Bilbao TURESPANNA



The Alamillo Bridge in Seville was built as part of infrastructure improvements for the 1992 Seville Expo. TURESPANNA



Sagrada Familia, designed by Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi, in Barcelona TURESPANNA

## Further raising cultural awareness

Tadashi Tsuzumi  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, JAPAN-SPAIN FOUNDATION

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

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 many events such as lectures on Spanish culture and economy, as well as film festivals, art exhibitions, trade shows, monthly meetings and nationwide competitions.

Also, as the Centro Hispanico del Japon (Hispanic Center of Japan), we promote exchanges not only with Spain, but also with Latin American countries. This is in line with the spirit of Hispanidad, which reinforces our reciprocal knowledge and therefore helps us develop by learning from each other.

I believe that the future of our foundation, which is the only officially recognized organization of its kind, will be bright, encouraging new members to participate and acquire further knowledge for each other's alliance and cooperation. I sincerely believe that the friendship between Japan and Spain will continue to be fruitful.



**Congratulations**  
on the Occasion of  
the National Day of Spain

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