

Bulgaria National Day

Friendly relations built on shared values

Borislav Kostov
AMBASSADOR OF BULGARIA

On the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Bulgaria — March 3 — I have the honor and privilege to extend to the esteemed readers of The Japan Times my heartfelt greetings and best wishes for their continued health, prosperity, happiness and peace.



On this day, Bulgaria celebrates its national liberation from five centuries of Ottoman rule. It was on this date 139 years ago that Bulgaria reappeared on the political map of Europe and embarked on the road to development as a modern independent state.

Having experienced deep changes and overcome major challenges in its long history, today Bulgaria is a proud member of the community of democratic nations, an active member of NATO and the EU and a factor of stability in Southeast Europe.

Strategically located at the gateway between Europe and Asia, with political and macro-economic stability, the lowest tax rates in the EU, a highly skilled competitive workforce and low operational costs, Bulgaria is highly beneficial to investors offering them also free access to the large EU market. Bulgaria has significant expertise and capabilities in a number of areas, including IT, business process outsourcing, automobile parts and systems manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, agriculture and agro-based industries and scientific research. Bulgarian

rose products, yogurt, wine, honey, herbal preparations and other health-related products are hugely popular well beyond our borders.

Bulgaria is also a major tourist destination. With its beautiful green valleys and mountains, moderate four-season climate, golden beaches along its Black Sea coast, abundance of hot mineral water springs with proven healing properties, rich and diverse cultural heritage dating back several millennia and modern facilities for summer and winter vacations and sports, Bulgaria provides excellent year-round opportunities for rest, recreation and entertainment.

Over the years Bulgaria and Japan have developed close relations of traditional friendship

based on shared values that have withstood the test of time. Our mutually beneficial cooperation encompasses the areas of political dialogue, trade and economy, education and culture, science, technology and sports and has acquired some unique features. Intensive people-to-people contacts supported by the activities of friendship groups and societies contribute significantly to the strengthening of our mutual understanding. Bonds of cooperation between municipalities, universities and schools constitute an important aspect of our relationship. Our countries readily support each other at international forums.

Bulgaria will always be grateful for the valuable and generous assistance and support extended

by Japan during the period of our transition to a democracy with a market economy.

With Bulgaria taking over for the first time the rotating EU presidency during the first half of 2018, a new dynamic will be added to our relationship with Japan within the framework of the EU-Japan strategic partnership.

The willingness to expand our friendly ties has been strong both in Bulgaria and Japan. The potential for enhancing our mutually beneficial cooperation is significant. We stand ready to work jointly with our Japanese friends and partners to further strengthen and expand our friendly and cooperative relations for the benefit of the people of Bulgaria and Japan.

Partners in strengthening cooperation

Hiromi Yoshida
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, JAPAN-BULGARIA
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION



On behalf of the House of Councilors Japan-Bulgaria Parliamentary Friendship Association, I would like to express my heartfelt greetings on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Bulgaria and Japan have long enjoyed very good relations with active exchanges between our House of Councilors and the Bulgarian National Assembly. Our parliamentary friendship association is now being restructured after the 2016 elections. We would like to continue our efforts to strengthen the friendly relations between our two countries together with the new Ambassador of the Republic of

Bulgaria to Japan H.E. Borislav Kostov. These days, many countries in Europe, including Bulgaria, are experiencing major political changes and this trend is likely to continue for some time. Against this background, we believe Bulgaria will play a greater role in the stability and development of all these countries and Europe as a whole.

Japan, as a partner of Bulgaria with shared values, follows closely the developments in Europe and looks forward to seeing Bulgaria actively engaged in tackling and solving these challenges. As the House of Councilors, having our parliamentary friendship association at the core, we would like to work together for the further strengthening of the cooperation between Japan and Bulgaria in various fields.

In closing, I would like to wish the Republic of Bulgaria continued success and prosperity.

Working as partners on global challenges

Toshimitsu Motegi
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-BULGARIA
PARLIAMENTARY LEAGUE OF
FRIENDSHIP



It is my great honor, on behalf of the House of Representatives Japan-Bulgaria Parliamentary League of


Friendship, to convey the most sincere congratulations on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Japan and Bulgaria have long enjoyed a friendly relationship. When speaking of Bulgaria, we immediately think of pleasant things such as roses, Bulgarian voices and the “trademark” of Bulgaria — yogurt. This friendly relationship has experienced many changes and develop-

ments within the context of rapidly changing international situations, and today Japan and Bulgaria are important partners with shared values, tackling common global challenges.

As symbolized by the visits of three ministers of Bulgaria to Japan last year — the ministers of economy, youth and sports and tourism — such friendly and strong ties continue to grow in a variety of fields. This isn't limited to the governmental level. For instance, I am delighted to witness that, moving toward the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, new interactions are about to begin among municipalities and their peoples.


As president of the House of Representatives Japan-Bulgaria Parliamentary League of Friendship, I am determined to work closely with our Bulgarian colleagues in supporting these active exchanges.




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to the People of Bulgaria
on their National Day



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to the people of the Republic of Bulgaria

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