

(Anniversary special)

Poland National Day

60th anniversary of restoration of diplomatic relations

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AMBASSADOR OF POLAND



It is my profound privilege and great pleasure to address for the first time, since I arrived to Japan, the readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of the Constitution Day of the Republic of

Poland. I would like to respectfully extend greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, the Imperial family, the government and the people of Japan. In Poland we celebrate our National Day on May 3, the same day as Japan's Constitution Day, to commemorate the adoption of the basic legal act by the parliament of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1791, Europe's first, and the world's second constitution.

This year Poland and Japan celebrate the 60th anniversary of our restoration of diplomatic relations. In 1957, on exactly the same date as today, May 18, the agreement on the restoration of diplomatic relations between Poland and Japan, signed on Feb. 8, entered into force. 2019 will mark the 100th anniversary of the establishment of official Polish-Japanese relations.

To underline this occasion, the visit of Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs Witold Waszczykowski to Japan began today. The minister will meet Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida to discuss the implementation of the bilateral strategic partnership, declared during the visit by Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski to Japan in February 2015. Today, Poland and Japan become strategic partners, together demonstrating their willingness and determination to promote shared values and interests on the global scene. Poland is ready, as Japan already does, to take ever-greater responsibility in maintaining global peace and security as a candidate for non-permanent membership on the U.N. Security Council for the 2018-2019 term. It would not be a new role for Poland, as Poland has been a Security Council member six times so far, most recently in 1996-1997. Tomorrow, Waszczykowski will talk about Polish foreign policy facing global challenges at the Japan National Press Club.

The evolving and progressive state of Polish-Japanese economic cooperation will manifest itself during Waszczykowski's visit, as a seminar on electric and fuel cell vehicles will be held at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tokyo. Economic cooperation is one of the most important dimensions of our strategic partnership with Japan. As the largest economy in Central and Eastern Europe and the sixth-biggest market in the

European Union, Poland is one of the key markets for Japan in Europe. Poland has almost doubled its gross domestic product over the last two decades and it is predicted that the economy of Poland will join the G-20 list of the largest in the world as soon as 2022. Japan already has more than 300 companies established in Poland, mainly in the fields of automotive, electronics and infrastructure. Every year, new Japanese companies decide to invest in Poland and the investors already settled in Poland are extending their initial projects.

A particularly encouraging trend in our bilateral relations is the development of scientific and technology cooperation between the two countries that has resulted in numerous projects of great importance in the area of clean coal technologies, medicine, nuclear physics and advanced materials. On June 16, a seminar on financial technology (fintech) will be held at the Polish embassy in Tokyo. Already 35 Polish companies and research institutes have applied to participate in the event promoting Polish IT technology that could be applied in the fintech sector.

Last year, Poland hosted numerous events of great importance, including the NATO summit, Global Summit of Women in Warsaw and World Youth Day in Krakow. This year, the 41st UNESCO World Heritage Committee session will take place in Krakow. Poland is also applying to hold the International EXPO 2022 in the city of Lodz, under the theme of city revitalization — a global challenge and condition for further development of agglomerations around the world.

As the ambassador of Poland to Japan I am also pleased with the growing number of Polish events in Japan. The Polish Festival in Roppongi Hills in Tokyo, a special promotional flagship event organized annually since 2011 by the Trade and Investment Promotion Section of the embassy of Poland in Japan will be held again at O-Yane Plaza in Roppongi Hills from Oct. 13 to 15. Visitors will have an opportunity to taste genuine Polish cuisine,



Minister of Foreign Affairs Witold Waszczykowski (left) and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in New York POLAND'S MFA / L. KAPLAN

enjoy the country's original culture and buy products made in Poland.

Cultural and people-to-people cooperation and exchanges continue to be the top priority in Polish-Japanese relations. During his visit to Japan, Waszczykowski will inaugurate a panel exhibition on the history of our bilateral relations at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies that will present a century of friendship between Poland and Japan. This year, on the 60th anniversary of the restoration of Polish-Japanese diplomatic relations, numerous cultural events will be held in Japan. The most remarkable are an exhibition of the outstanding Polish graphic designer, Roman Cieslewicz, held in the Ginza Graphic Gallery, and the screenings of new Polish movies such as final work of Andrzej Wajda, "Afterimage," and "Body" directed by

Malgorzata Szumowska. Thanks to the efforts of Hiroko Nakamura, the fourth-prize winner in the seventh International Chopin Piano Competition, who passed away in 2016, The Japan Paderewski Association was founded this year. It contributes to popularizing Polish pianist and composer Ignacy Jan Paderewski, who was also a politician and diplomat that played an important role in Poland's struggle for independence in 1918.

Rising numbers of Polish citizens living in Japan and Polish tourists visiting Japan call for widening and strengthening cooperation with Japan also in the area of consular assistance, as well as commerce and culture promotion. To that end, a network of honorary consulates is being developed. The Consulate of Republic of Poland in Kobe run by the Honorary Consul Masahiko Suruga, opened



NATO Summit in Warsaw POLAND'S MFA / S. IDRA



Royal Castle in Warsaw POLAND'S MFA / M. CIESZEWSKI

in 2015. While in Japan, Waszczykowski will appoint the Honorary Consul General in Hiroshima, Takashi Yamashita, making another step forward strengthening Polish-Japanese bilateral relations.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I would like to warmly invite you to visit Poland, the motherland of Fryderyk Cho-

pin, Maria Skłodowska-Curie, Andrzej Wajda and Japan-friendly people, who are fascinated by the Japanese culture and spirit. Starting from July 3, LOT Polish Airlines will increase the number of direct flights between Warsaw and Tokyo from three to four times a week. Please feel welcome to visit Poland!

The Royal Baths in Warsaw POLAND'S MFA / M. CIESZEWSKI



Fryderyk Chopin's monument in Warsaw's Royal Baths POLAND'S MFA / M. CIESZEWSKI

Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Poland
on Their National Day



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