

# Italy National Day

## Fruitful cultural and business exchanges

**GIORGIO STARACE**  
AMBASSADOR OF ITALY



On June 2, Italy celebrates its National Day; a day which commemorates the foundation of the Italian Republic. The relations between our two countries date back many years, as the first

Japanese and official diplomatic relations are more than 150 years old and to locate the pioneers of Italian-Japanese contacts we need to look to the 16th century.

Our friendship keeps being reaffirmed every day, in many different ways. In the political field, the latest G-7 is the most recent example of our common views in all the major global topics. Building on the results achieved by the previous Japanese presidency, in Taormina we committed once again to fight global warming, work for free trade and against protectionism, work together for Africa and solve the migrant emergency. Most importantly, Italy, chairing the G-7 meetings,

has worked closely with the Japanese government to maintain, together with G-7 leaders, a strong and unified position in the North Korean crisis, reaffirming our like-minded vision of international order and our commitment on non-proliferation and disarmament.

The growing number of high-level and ministerial visits is another sign of our ties growing stronger, day by day, as proved by Defense Minister Roberta Pinotti's visit and meetings with Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and Defense Minister Tomomi Inada just a few days back.

Besides politics, the Italian soft power in Japan is a landmark, and the "Made In Italy" brand has no competitors among our Japanese friends. We are really thankful for all the appreciation and support toward our country.

Of course, Italy has always enjoyed our Japanese friends' culture: Our calendar of activities is rich of initiatives in this sector, ranging from art exhibitions to plays and from movies to concerts. In the second half of the year, please do not miss, for example, the exhibition on the Japanese role in the Italian renaissance that tells the intriguing story of the above-mentioned mission to Italy of Ito

Mansho and his companions in 1582. Also, exhibitions on DaVinci, Giuseppe Arcimboldo, as well as the tour of Teatro Massimo, coming from Palermo to play all over Japan, will keep presenting our history and art to the Japanese public.

However, today's Italy is much more than what its classical image recalls. We are technology and innovation, and the scientific partnership between Japanese and Italian institutions keeps growing. Humanoid robotics and their social uses and implications, prospects opened by artificial intelligence and the internet of things are just some of the common grounds of research. Particle physics experiments carried out at the KEK accelerator facilities in Tsukuba, and the joint activities for monitoring volcanic activities are only two of the ongoing Italian-Japanese projects.

Italy is also about business, as Italian exports to Japan registered a 7.1 percent increase in the first four months of this year, with the choices of Japanese consumers going not only to Italian fashion, but also automotive, pharmaceuticals, electronics and machinery, together with food. Counting on the long-lasting support paid to Italian products in this last sector, for example, we



will hold the second edition of Italian Cuisine Week in November.

We believe the potential in our relations is still significant, and we will not spare opportunities of introducing to the very attentive Japanese public the best our country has to offer. Proud of all the work we carried out in the first half of the year, my team and I will keep working in the months to come to honor my mission of representing Italy and building more bridges with this beautiful land. With all the representatives of the Italian network, Sistema Italia, we look forward to a closer future together.

**World leaders pose for a group photo at the ancient Greek Theatre in Taormina, Sicily, during the G-7 summit meeting on May 26.** AFP-JJJI

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