

# Norway National Day Special

## Norway and Japan share fruitful oceanic bonds

ERLING RIMESTAD  
AMBASSADOR OF NORWAY



Today, Norwegians all over the world mark our Constitution Day. Children are parading in the streets of every city, village and hamlet of Norway to celebrate democracy, freedom and peace. Norwegians in Japan have been gathering in Kobe and Tokyo to take part in the festivities.

Norway and Japan share fundamental values and political aims, and we are both strong supporters of human rights, democracy and free trade.

The bilateral ties between Norway and Japan have been strong for a long time, and have further strengthened over the last year.

Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg visited Japan in February. She met with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the two leaders reconfirmed the strong relationship between our countries. Solberg also visited Norwegian and Japanese businesses, representing another backbone of our bilateral cooperation. Additionally, she met with Japanese and Norwegian students to hear how we can fur-

ther improve the cooperation within research and education.

Norwegian Minister of Fisheries Per Sandberg visited the cities of Choshi and Tokyo last year and Japan's Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ken Saito came to Bergen and Austevoll in Norway in early May. Both visits have again highlighted the strong partnership between Japan and Norway in the seafood business. Norway's aquaculture industry is world-renowned, and Japan is a very important market for Norwegian seafood. We are happy that Japanese people like salmon and Norwegian mackerel. However, our partnership goes much further than this. There are important Japanese investments in the Norwegian seafood business, and together we can develop the global seafood market further through industrial partnerships and technological innovation. There are great opportunities in this field.

Last week, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ine Eriksen Soreide visited Japan and met with her Japanese counterpart, Taro Kono. They discussed the security policy situation in East Asia and the latest developments on the Korean Peninsula, but also exchanged views on how we can further strengthen the economic partnership between Japan and Norway. There is still huge potential for more trade cooperation, and for increased collabo-

ration within research, innovation and technological developments.

The ocean binds Norway and Japan together. We have common interests in the sustainable management of resources and in strong international frameworks and regimes. Both Norway and Japan also have strong maritime traditions, and the maritime and shipping sector forms an important part of our business relations. Businesses in both Norway and Japan invest in maritime technology that stimulates green growth for the maritime industry, such as the use of environmentally friendly solutions and green fuels. The strong Norwegian presence, from both government and industry, at the Sea Japan maritime fair at Tokyo Big Sight in April underlines this point.

In addition, we see new business relations developing. There is a growing interest in Japan for Norwegian furniture, design, fashion and music. Health care and welfare technology are other areas where we see great potential to build even stronger relations between our research communities and business.

As a result of close collaboration over many years, Norwegian and Japanese research and academic institutions have developed solid partnerships. Increased research collaboration, including mobility between higher education and research institutions, is a high priority for Norway.

Ties are also strong in the cultural field. This year, we are particularly looking forward to the big Edvard Munch exhibition, including the famous painting "The Scream," that will open in Tokyo in October.

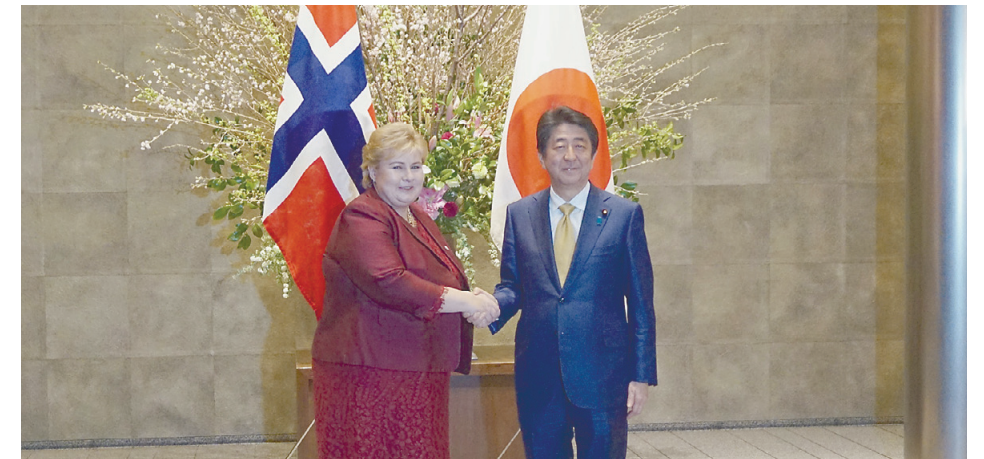
Equal opportunities are an essential value for us. We must make good use of all human talent, regardless of age, background, sexual orientation or gender. When Solberg spoke at Ochanomizu University in February, she said that: "The need to enhance equal opportunities is still a key global issue. Giving women and girls the opportunity to succeed is the right thing to do; not only for the women and girls concerned, but also for the societies and

economies they are a part of"

Together with other European colleagues, I participated in the Tokyo Rainbow Pride Parade during Golden Week. LGBTI (Intersex) rights are human rights that transcend borders. Together, we are moving toward more openness and tolerance.

I wish you all a happy May 17!

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*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*



Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands at their meeting in Tokyo on Feb. 14. EMBASSY OF NORWAY



Trolltunga, meaning "troll tongue," is one of the most scenic cliffs in Norway. The cliff is in Odda, Hordaland county, extending over Ringedalsvatnet lake. SVEINUNG KLYVE / WWW.FJORDNORWAY.COM

**Congratulations**  
*on*  
**the Norwegian**  
**Constitution Day**



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