

Romania National Day Special

Personal relations foster stronger national relations

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AMBASSADOR OF ROMANIA



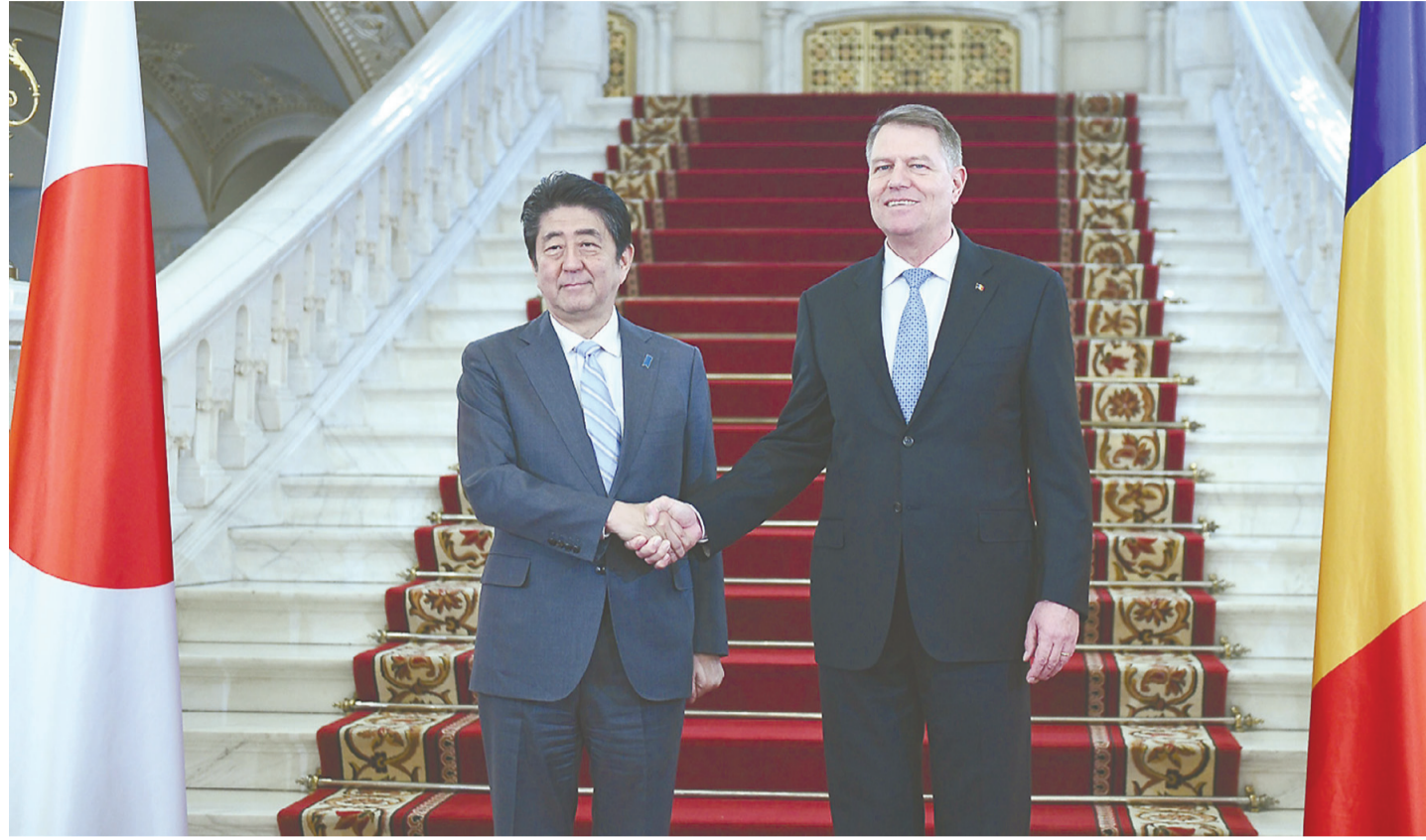
On the occasion of the National Day of Romania, it is my honor to express my deepest respect and convey heartfelt wishes of health and happiness to their Imperial Majesties, Emperor Aki-

hito and Empress Michiko, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the government of Japan, as well as peace and prosperity to the Japanese people.

This year, the celebration of our National Day has a very special significance, as we mark the centenary of unification, which saw, on Dec. 1, 1918, all historic provinces brought together into the modern Romanian National Unitary State, the fulfillment of our national aspiration for freedom, unity and dignity. One-hundred years after this milestone in our history, we take pride in the achievements that made Romania a free and democratic country, with a strong national and European identity, a growing economy and a vibrant social and cultural life.

2018 has been a pivotal year in our bilateral relations, as we were honored to receive the first visit of a Japanese prime minister to Romania. The historical visit of Abe to Bucharest is a strong testimony of the traditional friendship between our nations and offers great perspectives for increased political and economic cooperation, toward a strategic partnership.

The impetus of this important visit led the way to a close high-level political dialogue through visits to Tokyo of the Romanian



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Romanian President Klaus Iohannis in Bucharest on Jan. 16. EMBASSY OF ROMANIA

ministers of justice and business environment, who engaged in a productive dialogue with their counterparts. At the same time, we enjoyed an excellent cooperation in multilateral international fora and we used these opportunities also for bilateral contacts, such as the meeting between our deputy prime minister and the Japanese minister of foreign affairs in the margins of the U.N. General Assembly. Our newly established agency for official development assistance, RoAid, engaged in talks about

possible future cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency and we carried out annual consultations between our ministries of foreign affairs in Bucharest.

Increased trade and investment cooperation is a key priority and we strongly support the ratification of the economic partnership agreement, as well as the strategic partnership agreement between the EU and Japan, which will create new opportunities to expand our ties. Romania strongly supports open, fair and rules-based trade

and will promote in the first part of next year, in our capacity of the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, an early implementation of these landmark agreements.

We hope to see a continuation of significant Japanese investment in Romania, taking advantage of the positive economic environment, with steady gross domestic product growth, financial incentives for investors and a skilled labor force. This would add to the success stories of more than 70 Japanese companies already present in Romania, mainly in the auto industry, but also in other areas. Romania is already an established regional and European infor-

mation technology and communications hub, and we believe that companies focused on innovation appreciate the human talent and the high degree of specialization available. This year, after almost two decades, we convened a new meeting of the Japan-Romania Joint Committee on Science and Technology, and we are looking forward to working together on joint research and development programs.

We are encouraged by the diversification of people-to-people contacts, as well as the growing number of cultural exchanges and incoming tourists. There is no better way to improve our mutual understanding than direct contact and we hope to see an increase of Japanese people traveling to Romania to discover its natural beauty, diversity and rich cultural heritage.

The preparations for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo have already started. Together with the Romanian Olympic Committee, we have coordinated with the organizers and local authorities of the host towns for our delegation, Musashino and Matsudo, to whom we express our gratitude for their enthusiastic support. We hope our athletes will enjoy great success and contribute to an unforgettable 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

Romania will take over the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union on Jan. 1, 2019, with a focus on cohesion, a common European value, highlighting the benefits that a strong and cohesive union can bring to each of its citizens. We are determined to contribute with new ideas and projects toward a relaunching of the EU. Our efforts will also be directed toward making Europe a stronger global actor in an increasingly complex international environment.

Next year will also have special significance for our bilateral relations. Though our ties go back more than 100 years, in 2019 we will commemorate 60 years since the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. It is a good moment to take stock of our past accomplishments, which made possible the strong ties that we enjoy today and to build together toward a new level of cooperation and strategic partnership, based on the basic values of democracy and rule of law that we share.

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



The Coronation Cathedral in the city of Alba Iulia in Transylvania, built in the later part of the 19th century. On Oct. 15, 1922, King Ferdinand and Queen Marie were crowned here as monarchs of Greater Romania. EMBASSY OF ROMANIA



The Arch of Triumph in Bucharest was built in 1921-22 and re-built in 1936. The arch is seen as a monument to Romania's victory in World War I. Every Dec. 1, the military parades beneath the arch. EMBASSY OF ROMANIA



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