

Finland Independence Day Special

2019 to mark century of diplomatic ties

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AMBASSADOR OF FINLAND



On Dec. 6, 1917, the parliament of Finland approved the Declaration of Independence, which marked the start of the journey of our nation as an independent state.

Last year, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of our independence with an abundance of events in Finland and around the world. Next year, 2019, will mark the 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Finland. We anticipate the coming centennial to entail the most vivid cultural exchanges ever between Japan and Finland.

In the spirit of openness, the Embassy of Finland in Tokyo has launched a special website at www.japanfinland100.jp to help the Japanese public follow and take part in the joint celebrations throughout the year, in all corners of Japan.

In this very special period of time, I'm happy to note that the relations between our countries are excellent, while at the same time becoming even more closely knit and versatile in many fields.

The joint statement on strategic partnership issued by President Sauli Niinisto and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in March 2016 gave a solid foundation and a political road map for the development of our relations in the future. The implementation of the partnership is progressing well and cooperation is intensifying in many areas.

Japan is Finland's third-largest trading partner outside Europe, and our exports to Japan grew to the record level of almost 1.3 billion euros last year. The economic partnership agreement between the EU and Japan, likely to enter into force in early 2019, will further enhance business opportunities between our countries.

The most promising sectors seeing interest in business cooperation and investments both in Japan and Finland are information and communications technology and digitalization, health and well-being, energy, arctic cooperation, forest industry and design and cre-

ative fields, as well as startup ecosystems. In other words, opportunities on both sides are countless.

Many direct daily flights between Finland and Japan further accelerate the close cooperation in spite of the geographical distance.

Finland and Japan are connected also as being leading countries of innovation and technological expertise. In the 2018 Bloomberg Innovation Index, both countries featured in the top 10 of the most innovative countries in the world. The index ranks countries using data collected from major economic institutions, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

By combining our strengths, we can together find sustainable solutions to national and global challenges of the future, such as aging societies and climate change.

Our citizens value and are genuinely interested in each other. Despite the differences in our culture, we are connected by our appreciation for silence and nature, functionalism and simplistic design as well as top-notch quality in our work.



Trees blanketed in snow at Koli National Park in eastern Finland. The hills, forests and lakes in the park have inspired the work of many Finnish artists. JUSSI HELTTUNEN FOR VISIT FINLAND

Our values and views on international issues are also well aligned. We believe in agreements and the rules-based international cooperation, which we want to reinforce together.

Overall, the relations between Finland and Japan are today more intense and positive than ever. As ambassador of Finland, I am very excited to be able to continue furthering our relations together with my staff, in view of the upcoming diplomatic anniversary and the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

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

Congratulations

Republic of Finland on the
101st Anniversary of Independence



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