

France National Day Special

Joint roles factor into overcoming coronavirus

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As we celebrate France's National Day, our countries have experienced, for several months, the spread of coronavirus and its consequences on our societies, our economies and our

everyday lives. Today, more than ever, our thoughts go to all the people who have been affected, to those who lost their lives and their loved ones. In Japan, my fellow citizens, who have suffered from the crisis, are looking at the earliest possibility to be reunited with their families and resume their business operations.

The President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron has decided to dedicate this year's celebration to all those who are fighting the pandemic, starting with the medical workers. Thank you for your dedi-

cation. Our deepest gratitude also goes to all those who kept essential services running while we were protecting ourselves by staying home.

From a sanitary crisis, the coronavirus has become a major global challenge. While viruses hardly stop at borders, the response to such a global challenge calls for more international cooperation, not less. In rebuilding our societies we have the opportunity to rethink the way we interact, work, trade and travel in a more inclusive and sustainable way.

Through their strong partnership and their long friendship, France and Japan can do a lot together to bring this positive agenda forward. Our countries can build on their joint efforts to strengthen global health, which has always been a key priority for both of us, lately during our respective presidencies of the Group of Seven and Group of 20 in 2019. We must go further.

Researchers from France and Japan have been conducting research projects in medical science, in particular on infec-

tious diseases. The Pasteur Institute, Kyoto University and the University of Tokyo are engaged in joint studies on the genetics of infectious diseases and the immune response. These are part of the many issues that we are tackling together, including childhood cancers, neuroscience and regenerative therapies, to name just a few.

Research partnerships are now extending to the coronavirus. The Pasteur Institute and its international network, together with Kyoto University, are developing a very innovative technique that would allow the detection of viral infections. With the help of this new kind of test, researchers will be able to analyze coronavirus dynamics among medical workers in Japan. As a part of this joint research project, we are launching, from today, a crowd-funding campaign seeking to raise as much as ¥10 million (<https://academia.securite.jp/fr/UKyoto2>).

Our pharmaceutical companies can also work together to develop as fast as possible the vaccines and treatments that we need.

As far as our economies are concerned, 2019 was an excellent year for our bilateral trade as we benefited, both in France and in Japan, from the entry into force of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement. We must therefore do our utmost to prevent the pandemic from stopping this positive momentum. The wide array of measures to support our businesses at home and abroad that both our countries have put in place will help greatly.

Some industries are more at risk than others. For obvious reasons, tourism and all the sectors depending on it are in a most dire situation. We must help them recover. As a first step, the European Union and its member states have agreed to gradually lift travel restrictions from July 1. France, which was already allowing nationals and foreign residents to come and go, is now also allowing the entry of travelers from a

dozen countries, including Japan.

In this respect, the coronavirus will test our nations' ability to remain open to the world. It is also in their interest. As ever, Japan and France have a special role to play to pave the way.

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



President Emmanuel Macron speaks at a news conference with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on June 26, 2019. SOIZIG DE LA MOISSONNIERE / PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC



Macron listens to a researcher during a visit to a Sanofi Pasteur laboratory, the vaccine unit of French drugmaker Sanofi, in Marcy-l'Etoile near Lyon on June 16. REUTERS



Congratulations
on the Occasion of
the National Day of
France

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