

# Spain National Day Special

## Crippling curbs on tourism, trade, exchanges receding

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Spain's National Day, Oct. 12, takes place at a special moment for Spain and Japan. After almost two years of the world suffering the COVID-19 pandemic, harsh restrictions on

international mobility and a considerable decline in person-to-person, economic, political and cultural exchanges, we have begun to see the light at the end of the tunnel. A clear and sustained decrease in the number of infections is underway, allowing us all to look at 2022 with prudent optimism.

COVID-19 has been a test for the international community and a tragedy for those who have fallen victim to its lethal effects. These personal losses and the pain they have caused among families and friends will always be present in our hearts.

Vaccination has been revealed as the primary factor in curbing the pandemic. Spain is one of the countries with the highest percentage of fully vaccinated people, almost 80% of the Spanish population. Thanks to this, the number of infections has decreased dramatically and the incidence rate is already at low levels.

But Spain is aware that the fight against the pandemic is global. The next goal is

to quickly get the majority of the world's population vaccinated. Spain is strongly collaborating in these efforts both bilaterally and through the different regional and international initiatives.

The pandemic has severely limited international mobility. International tourism, business travel and international cultural and personal relations have declined in an unprecedented manner. In these difficult circumstances, Spain and the international community as a whole congratulate Japan and are very grateful to the country and the Japanese people for generously hav-

ing been able to hold successfully the celebration of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

As the pandemic situation is improving, particularly in the European Union and Japan, we all hope that sooner rather than later, we will be able to start reverting barriers, opening borders and reconnecting and restoring international mobility between Japan and Europe to pre-COVID levels.

Although economic relations have also been impacted negatively by the pandemic, our trade continues to be strong and we expect good growth for 2022, espe-

cially in such sectors as food, machinery, pharmaceuticals, automotive, clothing and fashion. The economic outlook for Spain appears bright. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has increased its growth forecast for Spain to 6.8% in 2022, thanks to the positive effects of vaccination and post-pandemic EU funds.

Tourism has been among the great casualties of the pandemic, but we are working hard to promote Spain in Japan as an attractive and safe tourist destination in 2022. Spain has reinforced its commitment

to the international recovery of sustainable tourism, as well as reinforced the World Tourism Organization with a new headquarters in the center of Madrid. We are confident that 2022 will see Japanese tourists return to Spain to enjoy our rich and varied tourist offerings, which have made Spain one of the three most-visited countries in the world.

2021 comes to an end with some reasons for optimism. We sincerely hope that 2022 will be a better year for all, and that Spain and Japan will continue to strengthen their strategic partnership at all levels.



Spain is the world's third-largest wine producer, offering excellent red, white and sparkling wines. ICEX

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

### Congratulations

*on the Occasion of  
the National Day of Spain*

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Spain's renewable energy is the key to achieving its decarbonization goals. ICEX

