

# National Day of Bulgaria

PUBLICITY

## Bulgaria-Japan partnership expanding

By Marieta Arabadjieva  
Ambassador of Bulgaria to Japan

Bulgaria celebrates the anniversary of its long-sought liberation on March 3 — the day the country reappeared on the European map after five centuries of foreign rule. Upon gaining sovereignty in 1878, Bulgaria embarked on a path of modernization at almost the same time that the Meiji Restoration began in Japan. Railways and factories were built at a fast pace, and by the end of the 19th century — a mere 20 years or so — Bulgaria's economy had grown more than four-fold.



Marieta Arabadjieva

The geographic distance between our two countries was never an obstacle to official contacts. In 1909, Prince Kuni Kuniyoshi was the first member of the Imperial family to visit Bulgaria.

We are also proud to acknowledge that a noble Japanese national fought for the liberation of Bulgaria: Baron Seigo Yamazawa was a military correspondent, an officer in the Imperial Japanese Army and a descendant of a samurai family from the Satsuma domain. He took part in the battle for the city of Plevna, which was crucial for the liberation of Bulgaria in 1878.

These instances underline the long-standing connections between Bulgaria and Japan, which have nurtured mutual understanding and respect throughout the years.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the introduction of Bulgarian yoghurt to Japan, which has since become a symbol of the friendship between our countries. In 2024 we will celebrate a triple anniversary: 115 years since the first bilateral contacts, 85 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations, and 65 years since the resumption of diplomatic ties.

Today, our two nations enjoy a dynamic and multi-layered partnership that continues to expand into new areas. Japan is one of Bulgaria's oldest and most important partners in the Asia-Pacific region.

The war in Ukraine, which has caused unjustified human suffering and created unprecedented challenges for global security, has again reinforced that Bulgaria and Japan are like-minded partners who share fundamental values and uphold the principles of international law. In December 2022 the Japanese government announced that it will work with international organizations in Bulgaria to provide financial assistance to the 150,000 Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria. The Western Balkans is another geographic region where Bulgaria and Japan successfully partner in joint



Signing of MoU between Invest Bulgaria Agency and Japan Institute for Overseas Investment, Tokyo, at the residence of the Bulgarian Ambassador on Sept. 8, 2022

projects for disaster management and offer support for small and medium-sized enterprises.

A number of Japanese companies have recognized the benefits and potential of Bulgaria's strategic geographic location and skilled workforce and have set up successful businesses in the country. In 2022, delegations from Invest Bulgaria Agency and the Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency visited Japan to strengthen our economic ties. In recent years, Bulgaria has attracted high profile Japanese investments from such companies as the Yazaki Corporation, Sumitomo Electric, and SEGA Corporation — the most recent

being a strategic investment by the Nidec Elesys Corporation, which in December 2022 opened its first European R&D center in Sofia for its electric drive division.

Educational and scientific collaboration in 2022 was strengthened via a visit by the President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to the STS Forum in Kyoto, and through the signing of new MoUs of understanding between Bulgarian and Japanese universities.

Based on a solid foundation of mutual trust and genuine friendship, I am confident that the relationship between Bulgaria and Japan will continue to grow stronger.

### Tokai Univ. maintains close ties with Bulgaria

By Tatsuro Matsumae  
President, Tokai University Educational System  
President, Japan-Bulgaria Society

I would like to extend my best wishes to the people of Bulgaria on this special day.

The Tokai University Educational System (TES) is a private educational institution established in 1942 by Dr. Shigeyoshi Matsumae, from a burning desire to nurture those who could build a happier and more harmonious society. Since then, we have sought to be pioneers of change and have made it our task to help build a harmonious and civilized society, with a focus on on international exchange activities.



Tatsuro Matsumae

The Bulgarian government and TES signed a mutual exchange agreement in 1969. We are proud not only of our exchange of students and researchers, but also of our cooperation in the excavation of Thracian ruins and the hosting of concerts by the Children's Choir of the Bulgarian National Radio. As a result of many years of academic and cultural exchanges, our Bulgarian alumni set up the Bulgarian Branch of the Tokai University Alumni Association in 1994 and have subsequently hosted various events.

As President of both TES and the Japan-Bulgaria Society, I am honored to help foster friendly relations between the two countries. Please accept our best wishes for the continued peace and prosperity of the Republic of Bulgaria.

## Celebrating Bulgaria's National Day and its friendship with Japan

By Hisashi Nakayama  
Former Honorary Consul of the Republic of Bulgaria  
Executive Councilor of Meiji Co., Ltd.

On the occasion of Bulgaria's National Day, I wish to extend my congratulations to the Republic of Bulgaria and its people.

Japan and the Republic of Bulgaria enjoy a very long friendship that goes back more than 110 years. During that time, exchanges of culture and people between our two countries have flourished. Although the pandemic situation remains unpredictable, last year, for the first time in three years, we were able to accept four high school students from Bulgaria to study in Japan under the Meiji Bulgaria Scholarship program hosted by the AFS Japan Association. Many of the international students who have come to Japan under this program in the past have



Hisashi Nakayama

visited Japan again or have found employment in Japan. I am very happy to see resume an exchange of people that will lead to future cultural exchanges and strengthen relations between our two countries.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the launch of Meiji Bulgaria Yogurt in Japan. This brand has created such a strong impression that today, when Japanese people think of yogurt, they think of Bulgaria, and when they think of Bulgaria, they think of yogurt. A friend of mine even traveled to Bulgaria because he wanted to try authentic yogurt there. We have raised awareness of yogurt as one of the keywords that symbolize Bulgaria. This is something that we were only able to achieve thanks to full and continuous cooperation from the Republic of Bulgaria. I hope that this brand, which symbolizes the strong relationship between Japan and the Republic of Bulgaria, will continue to grow in the future.

The situation in Ukraine has led to a great many difficulties. I sincerely hope that the Republic of Bulgaria can take a leadership role in Europe and help end the

turmoil in the region.

For my part, I will continue to do my utmost to further strengthen ties between the Republic of Bulgaria and Japan.

I wish continued growth for the Republic of Bulgaria and good health and happiness to all its citizens.

### CONGRATULATIONS to the People of the Republic of Bulgaria on their National Day

### Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Bulgaria in Izumiotsu



Honorary Consul  
Yuzuru Hirano

5-1 Nagisa-cho, Izumiotsu-shi, Osaka 595-0055  
Tel: 0725-23-8380

### Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Bulgaria on their National Day

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The Bulgarian government and the Tokai University Educational System sign an agreement for their cultural exchange.

### Congratulations to the People of the Republic of Bulgaria on their National Day

#### Deeper Ties of Friendship

The Tokai University Educational System has been engaged in academic and cultural exchanges with Bulgarian government bodies, universities and private organizations for many years.

meiji

Congratulations

to the people of the Republic of Bulgaria  
on their National Day



Meiji Co., Ltd.

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