

2025 Emperor's Birthday Reception: Remarks by Ambassador Yamawaki (21 February 2025)

Your Excellency Mr. Alexis Vafeades, Minister of Transport, Communications and Works,

Ministers, Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for honouring us with your presence to celebrate the sixty-fifth birthday of the Emperor of Japan.

This year, Japan will host the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, Kansai, the second largest city with a unique and diverse culture. The unifying theme of the EXPO is 'Towards a Brighter Future for All'. I hope it will be brighter from this year and on.

On the other hand, however, there are still major concerns in the international world. In the Middle East, a ceasefire agreement has been reached in Gaza. I very much hope that this will lead to an improvement in the humanitarian situation and long-term stability in the region.

The war in Ukraine has not ended. Achieving a just and lasting peace and reconstruction is essential.

Japan respects the international law and does not accept any attempt to change the status quo by force. Japan and Cyprus share the common values, such as the rule of law, democracy, and human rights, and that is why Japan appreciates Cyprus' continuous efforts to provide humanitarian aid in the region.

Furthermore, Japan welcomes the ongoing efforts by both sides, the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities to resolve the Cyprus Issue, which has existed for more than 50 years. Japan will continue to support the earliest possible solution in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions to establish a federal state.

Deepening the relationship between Japan and EU is also essential. Last year we agreed on the Japan-EU Security and Defence Partnership.

Cyprus celebrated its 20th anniversary of EU membership last year, and will take over the EU Presidency next year. I hope that this opportunity will lead my country to accelerate cooperation with Cyprus and, at the same time, the relations between Japan and EU.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am glad that the bilateral relations between Japan and Cyprus are deepening.

Last year, three Cypriot ministers visited Japan.

The Deputy Minister of Shipping visited a shipyard in Nagasaki to attend the naming ceremony of two ships ordered by a Cypriot company.

A business mission led by the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Energy visited Japan for the first time and had face-to-face contacts with Japanese business counterparts.

The Deputy Minister of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy attended the Science and Technology in Society forum in Kyoto and signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Japanese Minister of Education and Science.

From Japan, senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Cyprus for a bilateral political consultation.

Last autumn, Japanese universities and research institutes, in cooperation with the Cyprus Institute, held a three-day symposium in Nicosia in which more than 30 Japanese participated.

In the field of renewable energy, researchers of University of Cyprus will visit Japanese laboratories this year for discussions on battery and hydrogen.

New multilateral joint research with Japan has been approved. It involves the Cyprus University of Technology in the field of agricultural robotics.

As part of the cultural exchange, the Cherry Blossom Park in Kambos Village was inaugurated three years ago. Our Embassy joined the festivities in the village to enjoy both the blossoms and the cherries. I would like to encourage everyone to visit the park.

It has been seven years since our embassy opened. In the future, we want to expand our cooperation with Cyprus in a wide range of areas, including diplomacy, business, innovation, people-to-people contacts, and cultural exchanges.

To conclude my remarks,

I am very pleased to say that last year, traditional Japanese 'Sake' brewing joined the UNESCO's World Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Embassy has imported sake directly from Japan for tonight. I hope you will enjoy both Japanese sake and Japanese cuisine.

Please also enjoy the flower arrangements in this hall, which the Cyprus Philanthes and Ikebana Club kindly created for us.

I would like to thank you all once again for being here tonight to celebrate the Emperor's birthday with us.