

WHAT'S NEW from the Embassy of Japan in Luxembourg  
Number 10 – June 10th 2011

Almost three months have passed since the catastrophe that struck Japan on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011. From the very outset of the tragedy, we have received a lot of sympathy and compassion from the people of Luxembourg and members of Luxembourgish Government. On behalf of the people and the Government of Japan, I would once again like to express to you my deepest appreciation.

Signs of recovery began to appear in Japan. My most recent pleasure is that the economic mission headed by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Guillaume, the Hereditary Grand Duke of Luxembourg and led by His Excellency Mr. Jeannot Krecké, Minister of the Economy and Foreign Trade visited Japan from May 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>. I had the honour to accompany His Royal Highness during his stay in Japan.

At the invitation of Japanese Government, this was the first time for His Royal Highness to visit our country. To my happiness, The Crown Prince took advantage of the occasion to visit Kyoto to contact Japanese history and traditional culture on May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> prior to his official mission in Tokyo. H. R. H. was cordially invited to a luncheon hosted by Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress at the Imperial Palace on 17<sup>th</sup> May. As well, H. R. H. was also invited to a tea by His Imperial Highness The Crown Prince of Japan on the same day. I am sure that these events deepened further the close relationship between the Grand-Ducal Family and the Imperial Family.

I deeply appreciate that Luxembourgish VIPs including His Excellency Mr. Jean Asselborn, Minister of Foreign Affairs successively visited Japan just after the disaster caused by the earthquake of March 11<sup>th</sup> 2011, and showed the sense of solidarity to the nation and the people of Japan. Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn had a bilateral meeting with his Japanese counterpart,

Minister for Foreign Affairs Takeaki Matsumoto. During this ministerial meeting Minister Asselborn offered a generous support for Japan and they also discussed how to strengthen bilateral relations including economic tie. I think it meaningful that Luxembourgish high levels, thus, observed directly how strongly Japan is recovering, although it is still facing the consequences of Fukushima nuclear plant accident.

This time, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Guillaume has been of clear and strong intention to further develop the economic relationship between Japan and Luxembourg during his visit. This is why the economic mission led by Minister Krecké had contacts with various business people and held a lot of business promotion events intensively in Tokyo. I had the pleasure of accompanying H. R. H. and found again with admiration how faithfully the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg treats old Japanese business friends. I am convinced that his economic mission brings about great fruits in relationship between the two countries.

Needless to say, I, too, strongly hope to tighten the economic relationship between Japan and Luxembourg. Above all, I attach great importance to a conclusion of Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between Japan and EU, which will surely advance economic and business relationship between our two countries. This is the reason why I have been enthusiastic in advocating the start of negotiations of the EPA towards Luxembourgish friends from the beginning of last year.

In this regard, Japan and EU agreed to start the process for negotiations for the EPA at the 20th EU-Japan Summit on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2011. We have decided that the two sides would start discussions with a view to defining the scope and level of ambition of both negotiations. I am convinced that such joint effort will lead to the conclusion of the Japan-EU EPA in the near future, and hereby reinforce the economic/business relationship between Japan and Luxembourg.

Tightening of the economic bond between Japan and EU does not merely mean enhancement of interactive trade and investment but is also accompanied with broad harmonization of economic systems, including regulations and standards, which eventually lead to further harmonization of entire socio-economic system and activation of human exchange. This process could be compared to European experiences for a half century when once fragmented European countries have become united gradually.

We are witnessing, on one hand, various modulations and adjustments in economic and financial systems after the failure of Lehman Brothers. On the other hand, emerging nations are growing their powers marvelously. Amid such structural changes of the world, I believe it is beneficial not only for the EU and Japan but also for the entire world that we, Japan and EU, which share fundamental values and the vision to resolve global challenges, cooperate with each other and continue to be positioned to influence the world by exerting dynamism.

From such a point of view, too, I am very much pleased with the successful visit of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Guillaume to Japan and the economic mission led by H.E. Minister Jeannot Krecké. It is my sincere hope to strengthen the tie between Japan and Luxembourg with my Luxembourgish friends based on these recent bilateral developments.