

WHAT'S NEW from the Embassy of Japan in Luxembourg  
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The busiest month of the year has just begun and we are sliding into winter day by day.

In Japan, there were really enormous challenges after the Great East Japan Earthquake on 11<sup>th</sup> March. Following the basic guidelines for reconstruction from the Earthquake which was finalized on July 29, our Government has been giving the most priority to recovery and reconstruction efforts. The infrastructure and economy of the coastal areas of Tohoku, which were washed away by the tsunami, are recovering. The daily lives of those outside the affected areas, including the metropolitan area of Tokyo, have practically returned to normal. In order to bring the nuclear power station accident to a complete calmdown without delay, we have been making every possible effort to steadily implement the Roadmap towards Restoration. Although there remain a number of crucial challenges to be addressed, Japan will continue to be fully engaged in the efforts for recovery as rapidly as possible. I take this opportunity again to express our heartfelt gratitude to the compassion and solidarity expressed by the international community, in particular, by the people of Luxembourg.

At the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly which was held on September 20-23 in New York, our Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda expressed his determination that Japan would recover from the Earthquake and move forward step by step towards a peaceful, prosperous and brighter future. Our Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba led discussions as a co-chair of the Interactive Session of the United Nations High-level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security.

Now I touch upon major events in the latter part of this year in terms of the partnership between Luxembourg and Japan. In July, to our happiness, Monsignor Jean-Claude Hollerich was newly

appointed as archbishop of Luxembourg and I had the honor to attend his inauguration ceremony in the Cathedral on 16 October. He has spent more than twenty years in Japan, first studying the language, then teaching at Sophia University in Tokyo, and being promoted to Vice President of Sophia University. I strongly believe that this event will contribute a lot to further enhancement of our bilateral relations in coming future.

Another important achievement which took place on 30 November was the exchange of Notes for the entry into force of the "Protocol amending the Convention between Japan and Luxembourg for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income and/or to a Certain Other Tax" (signed on January 25, 2010). The Amending Protocol will enter into force on 30 December 2011. The Amending Protocol revised the provisions concerning the exchange of information regarding taxes in the current Convention in line with the international standard. After the entry into force of the Amending Protocol, the effective exchange of information based on the international standard regarding taxes between the tax authorities of both countries will be operational, and is expected to contribute to the prevention of international tax evasion.

I believe that the cooperation between Japan and the EU is quite essential to the global economic recovery. Following the agreement in May this year to start the process for negotiations of EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement), Japan will continue to work closely with the EU towards the next phase. We count on the consistent support from the Government of Luxembourg in this regard.

Cultural exchanges between our two countries were very fruitful also at the latter part of this year. Our Embassy will continue to organize various cultural events next year with a view to promoting mutual understanding and friendship. Please be noted that at the Vakanz 2012 to be held at Luxexpo on 20-22 January next year, Japan will be the guest country.

Our world is becoming more and more complex than ever before facing many difficult issues such as debt crisis, democratization, nuclear energy, global environment etc. I am convinced that Japan will remain one of the most reliable partners of Luxembourg and the EU to address those challenges. I hereby confirm my constant commitment on the efforts to further strengthen mutual confidence with the people of Luxembourg in next year too.

Takashi SUETSUNA