

Keynote Speech at the Inauguration Ceremony on 8th January

Mr. Saito, Chairman & Representative Director of Nippon Express Holdings,
Mr. Krauter, Founder & CEO of cargo-partner Group Holding AG,
Distinguished guests,

Today, I am here to witness the fruit of intensified partnership between Japanese and Austrian businesses culminating in the marriage of cargo-partner and Nippon Express Holdings. Let me first express my sincere gratitude for being invited on this auspicious occasion. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all those involved who have worked hard to make this day a reality.

Nippon Express has long been a leader of the transporting sector in Japan. Established as a government-led company in 1937, it expanded after World War II to become a global logistics enterprise whose services now include transportation, supply chain management and logistics consultation. We diplomats benefit a lot from the company's services because it is regarded as the most reliable international moving company, and on many occasions has safely transported our private property back and forth. Where Nippon Express' services are available, we most often turn to the company to help with our relocation.

Cargo-partner, on the other hand, is relatively young, having started as an air freight expert company with a staff of only 5 people in 1983, but has steadily developed to establish itself as an innovative logistics enterprise with its hub in Vienna at the heart of Europe. Since then, it has expanded first in Europe and later world-wide including in Asia. I am aware that the company is highly respected in Austria, having for example won the WKO's Gold Export Prize 2023 for the transport branch. It also supported last year's Sake Week Vienna, a promotional event for Japanese spirits in which I called for the establishment of a supply chain for seafood from Japan to Europe. I am very grateful for cargo-partner's active engagement, and certain that it will play an important role in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I understand that the marriage between these two successful companies reflects a future-oriented global strategy on both sides, aiming to bolster their own strengths, and explore new horizons in the field of global logistics, counting on many synergies that will certainly emerge from the union. The geographical complementarity of Asia and Eastern Europe is just one example of that. There are of course also challenges of global magnitude which are better tackled by combining the wisdom of both companies rather than facing them alone. In any case, for me as Ambassador of Japan in Austria, who has been constantly advocating for stronger ties between Japanese and Austrian businesses, this partnership between cargo-partner and Nippon Express is an excellent achievement which I warmly welcome and appreciate.

The importance of logistics has been reaffirmed in the wake of the spread of COVID-19 that began in 2020. In the midst of a global lockdown, goods necessary for our daily life and industry, such as medicine, food, car parts and semiconductors, faced a serious impasse due to a sudden stop of global transportation networks, and increased transportation costs are something we are grappling with to this day.

The world is currently facing other challenges such as for example the prolonged aggression by Russia against Ukraine, which has reminded us that securing supply chains among value partners is of utmost importance. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that this marriage between a Japanese and an Austrian logistics company comes at the most appropriate moment.

I am sure that strategists from both parties have identified a number of potential areas of expansion and growth. I would like to add my personal hope that this partnership will be a herald of a Japanese-Austrian joint involvement in the post-war reconstruction efforts in Ukraine, having noted that cargo-partner is already supporting a project for Ukrainian children and young people in Moldova.

I also wish to acknowledge cargo-partner's active engagement in cultural

exchange between Japan and Austria. Today, the company is a corporate member of the Austrian-Japanese Society and a sponsor of Japannual, the only film festival featuring Japanese movies in Austria.

This is another aspect of the company's commitment that I wish to commend very much. As Japanese business globalizes and localizes, the distance between the company and the Japanese community at large tends to widen. Cargo-partner's commitment to Japanese-Austrian relations is therefore truly appreciated. By the same token, I wish to welcome the new Japanese staff of Nippon Express who will be permanently in service in Austria and, I am sure, play an active role in our bilateral relations.

This gives us an incentive to celebrate, and indeed, Japan and Austria have much to celebrate together, such as last year's 150th anniversary of Vienna World Exposition of 1873, in which Japan had participated for the first time under its modern government. Likewise, we are both lovers of classical music, natural beauty, winter sports, and appreciate tasty food and a high level of hygiene. These commonalities will contribute to an increased flow of goods between our countries that require the highest standard in handling, such as musical instruments, medical supplies, high-tech related components, sake(!) and fresh seafood.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, I wish to touch upon the Osaka-Kansai Expo which will be held next year. Nippon Express has been designated by the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition as a "Recommended Logistics Service Provider" and a "Designated On-Site Cargo Handler", as a logistics provider with sufficient facilities and personnel to ensure the smooth operation of the Expo. Cargo-partner will certainly have its share and bring even more Austrian and European clients to the Expo. By combining the wisdom and know-how of both parties, I can imagine that the "Nippon Express orchestra" with its newest member cargo-partner will be "composing the future" – I'm referring here to the Austrian pavilion's motto - of logistics that will bring Japan and Austria, and the entire world much closer together.

(Check Against Delivery)

With these remarks, I would like to end today's greeting by expressing my best wishes for the continued success and growth of Nippon Express and cargo-partner in the future, as well as the business relationship between Japan and Austria.

Thank you for your attention.