

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Mizuuchi Ryuta,  
Ambassador of Japan to Austria,  
at the “Ambassador Reception” of the Magazine Cercle Diplomatique in Vienna,  
On 29th November 2024**

Dear Ms. Fürnweger and Mr. Bursky,  
Dear Dr. Plassnik,  
Dear Mr. Hennig,  
Dear Ms. Eibensteiner,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to stand in front of you today on the occasion of the presentation of Cercle Diplomatique Magazine featuring Japan. First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the co-publishers, Ms. Fürnweger and Mr. Bursky. My thanks also go to companies, Lower Austria Government and the WKO for their sponsorship. I would like also to thank the Hotel Astoria for offering us such a wonderful venue for this reception.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of you for joining today. Frankly, I did not anticipate such a great level of interest in this special publication on Japan. Scheduled to bring my responsibility as Ambassador of Japan to Austria to an end pretty soon and return to Japan one week before Christmas, I am deeply moved today to be given this opportunity at the final phase of my mission in Austria.

Concerning the contents of the publication, I like the excellent title of my cover interview, 'We are partners in shared values'. I put forward my candid observations on various aspects of Japan-Austrian relations. But in short, our relationship, namely between Austria and Japan, stands out as an 'exemplary bilateral relationship', at a time when the international order based on the rule of law faces challenges. I firmly believe that if we, as 'partners in shared values', like Japan and Austria, can mutually ensure our economic security in our relationship, including the issue of supply chains, it will be beneficial not only for both of us,

but, at the end of the day, also contribute to strengthening the international order in general.

Talking about my activities in Austria, my mission involves not only that of Japan's Ambassador to Austria, but also Japan's Permanent Representative to the OSCE and Ambassador to Kosovo. Austria as a platform of diplomatic activities is quite dynamic, and I am always excited to have such wonderful opportunities to engage in fruitful and rewarding events in all these three functions. For examples:

In Austria, to date, my primary focus is to lay the ground for strengthening the ties between our two countries in economy, business, and academic exchanges on the eve of next year's Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. More than 30 twin-city partnerships enrich the contents of our bilateral relations. With our support, we are trying to make them even more sustainable. The latest development in this regard was marked with the "twin-castle (Zwillingsschlösser) partnership" between Schloss Schönbrunn and Himeji-Jo, both UNESCO cultural heritage sites. Partnerships on the level of Bundesländer are also in the making. Following the partnership between Burgenland and Shiga Prefecture that was materialized last year, we are encouraged by further initiatives and interests in this regard.

On the OSCE front, the current situation can be characterized as the Organisation's "identity crisis". I believe, however, that the partnership between the OSCE and its Asian Partners including Japan has been so much strengthened in the past two years that it now serves as a reminder of the organisation's founding visions to overcome confrontation through confidence-building, and contribute to ensuring sustainable peace and security. Japan will continue to spearhead this endeavor and enhance the visibility of Asian partners, since the current geographical scope of OSCE seems to match that of our "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" vision.

With regard to Kosovo, I am deeply impressed by how Japan's recognition of Kosovo's independence 16 years ago, and our continued support since then, have made a significant contribution to Kosovo's nation-building as a democratic state. The visit by our Former Foreign Minister Kamikawa to Kosovo this summer which we prepared from Vienna was an articulation of our commitment to bringing stability to the Western Balkans.

During my two-years' activities as Japanese Ambassador, I was able to forge many wonderful friendships which supported me here in Austria. This I value as

the true treasure in my life. Government Commissioner Dr. Plassnik, in particular, kindly told me that I can call her my 'Austrian girlfriend.' Making a "Dutzfreund" is not always easy in Austria, but I am happy having been able to work out so many "Dutzfreundschaften", including with many of you who are gathered here.

Though I am leaving Austria as Ambassador on December 17th, I will leave my heart here so that I can come back anytime you need me, or when I think I am needed for some reason. It will be always my pleasure to work for our bilateral relationship. Finally, I would like to reiterate my thanks to you all for gathering here today. Thank you!