



ROMANIA



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A hundred-year partnership

Romanian Ambassador Ovidiu Dranga speaks with Bridges about the 100-year relationship between Romania and Japan

Bridges: Japan and Romania celebrated 100 years of diplomatic ties in 2021. How would you describe the current bilateral relationship?

Ambassador Dranga: Like all anniversaries, this centennial is an opportunity to take stock of what we have succeeded to build in the past, while looking forward and planning for the future. We have done well so far but we aim for much more. Romania and Japan have a solid friendship, based on mutual respect, shared values and principles and on the common approach of global challenges.

Our economic ties are steadily growing and we are currently working on intensifying and diversifying Japanese investments in Romania. At this point we are very close to signing a strategic partnership between our countries, with focus on research and innovation, security and defense, reflecting our like-mindedness and the shared set of geopolitical sensitivities and strategic imperatives.

What is the embassy doing to strengthen ties between the two countries?

One of our priorities is to enhance Romania's visibility here in Japan as a reliable European partner and as a tourist and study destination for the Japanese people, with a special focus on younger generations. Though the pandemic is still a hindrance, we are nevertheless working on several high-level official visits, as well as on facilitating business contacts and intensifying people-to-people exchanges.

I assumed my duties in Japan rather recently, in September 2021, but I have already traveled in several prefectures. I am confident that strengthening ties with the local authorities and businesses and creating connections with their counterparts in Romania will provide us with renewed energy and inspiring ideas, beneficial for the growth of Romania's relations with Japan.

Our aim is to associate Romania, an active and resourceful



Ovidiu Dranga, Ambassador of Romania to Japan

member of NATO and the European Union, with advanced technology, information technology and economic progress in the eyes of the Japanese public, who could therefore appreciate our history and traditions as much as our propensity for creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

With the challenges we are all facing following the pandemic, what are your hopes for the Romania-Japan relationship in 2022?

Beyond the difficulty of the pandemic, we need to make the best out of this situation that has taught us how to work better together and be more cohesive, highlighting the importance of resilience — of our medical systems and of our supply chains. This will be part of our focus in the development of our relations, which, as I mentioned, will be elevated next year to the strategic partnership level.

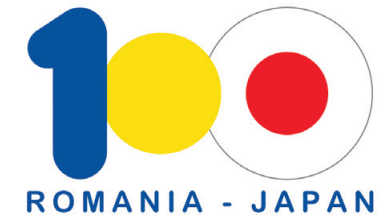
Our expectations are high because the potential for intensified cooperation has been underexplored. Although 9,000 kilometers apart, Romania and Japan share common concerns regarding economic security, since they are called on to manage complexity and interdependence as responsible members of the values-based Western community.

What message do you have for our readers regarding the next 100 years in terms of trade and cultural ties between Japan and Romania?

I am certain that our friendship and partnership will endure at least 100 more years. In my short time here, I have already met many Japanese officials, businesspeople and regular people interested and passionate about Romania, giving me confidence in the future of our bilateral relations.

The embassy will continue to build on this foundation, enhance dialogue, diversify fields of cooperation and provide support wherever and whenever necessary. We aim at creating new emotional bridges between large Romanian and Japanese communities, inviting them to discover each other through culture and academic exchanges, through cross-examination and mutual understanding of their history and traditions. ♦

Read the full interview at Bridges: www.sms-bridges.com



Romania and Japan: The next century of strategic cooperation

Bogdan Aurescu, Romania's minister of foreign affairs

Bridges: With Romania and Japan marking 100 years of close ties in 2021, what does the future hold for this important relationship?

Aurescu: I am confident that a new century of valuable exchanges between Romania and Japan lies ahead of us, as well as closer ties between the Romanian and the Japanese people. This anniversary provides an opportunity to take stock of the history and the milestones of our bilateral relationship, while jointly planning its way forward. Romania and Japan are natural partners and like-minded countries, sharing deep mutual respect for each other, as well as for fundamental values, such as democracy and freedom, which should ground both our bilateral cooperation and our efforts to advance post-crisis recovery and resilience at the international level.

The most recent document steering our relationship is the 2013 Joint Statement for a Renewed Partnership between Romania and Japan, signed by His Excellency Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, in his capacity as minister for foreign affairs at that time. The eight years that have passed since that moment have proven the closeness and compatibility of our approaches: Romania and Japan work in harmony, have similar positions on most regional and global issues and support and complement each other in various areas. In this vein, we have recently decided to advance our bi-



Bogdan Aurescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania

lateral ties to the level of a strategic partnership, which we aim to conclude in the very near future. It will be a framework agreement spanning four key areas — political ties, strategic cooperation, economic exchanges and cultural, scientific and people-to-people relations — and an ambitious plan for a resilient future.

Our political dialogue is consistent at various levels, starting at the highest level — the president of Romania attended the enthronement ceremonies of his majesty the emperor in October 2019. In addition, in terms of strategic cooperation, both our countries are promoters of peace, both advocate peaceful solutions to tensions in their respective regions (the Black Sea, Ukraine in Romania's case, and, in the case of Japan, the South China Sea,

the East China Sea and the Indo-Pacific in general) and both countries actively support the rules-based international order and the international law. Moreover, Romania's status as a NATO member state provides an additional framework for enhancing cooperation in this area, as Japan is a partner country to the alliance.

I would also like to highlight the good prospects for deepening Romanian-Japanese cooperation in the Indo-Pacific area. Japan boasts a long and successful engagement in the region, promoting its vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific. The U.S. is also at the forefront of advancing FOIP. The European Union has recently launched its own Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, looking not only to play a more prominent role in a region of growing importance, but also to bring its own contribution in the Indo-Pacific. Along these lines, the new EU strategy provides important opportunities for engagement with Japan. Thus, Romania, as an EU member state, looks forward to step up efforts of building upon these opportunities; for example, Romania can contribute with expertise in areas such as cybersecurity, law of the sea, disaster management and more, while working together with Japan. ♦

Read the full interview at Bridges: www.sms-bridges.com



AAGES: The right solutions

AAGES Group conducts its business from Sangeorgiu de Mures in the very heart of Romania.

Founded 31 years ago, today the group boasts a 4,400-square-meter facility and comprises three companies:

AAGES is responsible for the development, design, processing and manufacturing of induction heating equipment and systems.

Electroterm manufactures filtering chokes and inductors for induction heating applications and

products, integrated into AAGES equipment.

AAGES HTC is a hardening workshop that uses AAGES-made machines for case hardening. It is responsible for elaborating the hardening processes for new applications.

Induction heating is a process used in modern manufacturing to bond, harden or soften metals with speed, consistency and control.

AAGES S.A. manufactures and distributes machinery for induction heating applications for

surface hardening, mass heating for forging, melting, dedicated solutions and equipment such as bimetal strip heaters or strip heaters for bluing.

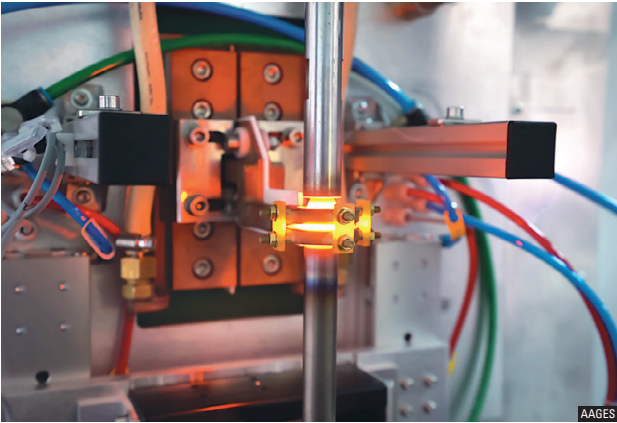
All projects are started with an understanding of the application specifications to provide customers with the best solutions and equipment.

Establishing long-term partners has enabled AAGES to achieve success in Romania and internationally.

"We listed on the Bucharest Stock Exchange four years ago and today AAGES equipment has been delivered to customers in over 25 countries," said AAGES founder and Managing Director Gabor Molnar.

"I first visited Japan in 1977 and I appreciate the world-class technical expertise that the Japanese have developed. As a company, we have established ties with Japanese businesses and have delivered equipment to customers in Osaka, Japan."

Innovation is a vital key to success. AAGES



An AAGES surface hardening machine

was initially founded by a group of engineers from the Targu Mures branch of the Research and Design Institute for Electrical Engineering Bucharest. Today the company continues to work closely with and innovate with technical research institutions.

AAGES produces a large range of induction heating machines for different applications, and the automotive sector, via the electric car revolution, continues to drive our business. Certified under ISO 9001:2015, AAGES remains committed to delivering efficient, reliable and

environment-friendly products.

"As with Japan, we have capable designers and world-class engineers here in Romania," Molnar said.

"While European customers account for three-quarters of our business, we continue to develop strong connections with our Japanese friends and look forward to serving customers across Europe and Asia." ♦

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New opportunities on the horizon for aviation leader Turbomecanica

Radu Viehmann, President and CEO of Turbomecanica

Bridges: Turbomecanica has an illustrious history. How important is it for Turbomecanica to continue building partnerships and driving innovation?

Viehmann: It is of the utmost importance for any business to be flexible. Recent years have shown us that risk planning and contingency actions need to be fine-tuned in order to navigate these challenging times.

In the past, partnerships and businesses were driven by legal terms and clauses. Today we notice that general attitudes have shifted to include "putting shoulder to shoulder" and "offering a helping hand." Communication, understanding and help have contributed to a more united business community. Building strong partnerships plays an important role in business continuity planning and also provides new development opportunities.

As a company, Turbomecanica continues to be a reliable partner for do-



mestic and international customers in the aviation industry and we are looking forward to expanding our partnerships.

In this respect, 2021 marked an important strategic achievement for the company as we received EASA (European Union Aviation Safety Agency) Part 145 C7 certification. This adds to our list of capabilities, including our existing EASA Part 21G production certification and our wide range of maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services provided to partners such as Rolls Royce, Leonardo Helicopters, General Elec-

tronic, Airbus and Safran Helicopter Engines.

Turbomecanica is the only national manufacturer and provider of MRO services to the Romanian Ministry of Defense, Secret Services and Navy. With regard to engine and helicopter assemblies, our goal for 2022 is to further enhance our capabilities by gaining the military certifications EMAR (European Military Airworthiness Requirements) Part 145 and Part 21.

Looking to the future, our business innovation strategy represents our desire to reinvent ourselves in terms of our capabilities and continuously improve our processes in terms of efficiency, efficacy and digitalization.

What can customers and partners expect from Turbomecanica in 2022 in terms of quality, capability and flexibility?

We have earned our reputation by delivering quality solutions to our customers. Last year, Rolls Royce appreciated Turbomecanica for being one of the few partners capable of delivering conforming parts for their recently developed business jet engine.

Our flexibility relates to our ability to adjust quickly and calmly to short-term change. This allows us to address unexpected tasks effectively and react to changes in the demands of our customers and partners.

Our machining capabilities and special chemical processes and heat treatment solutions enable us to provide complete in-house services, an asset for many of our customers.

Customers and partners can always expect high-quality services as we aim for perfection, enhance production and create MRO opportunities supported by our EASA and EMAR certifications.

Flexibility is the golden word during these challenging times. We promise to support our existing and future customers as we develop fruitful partnerships together.

We are fully aware that reliable partnerships are built over time and look forward to consolidating future opportunities. We are well positioned to welcome new civil and military aviation partners and strategic investment partners who are willing to work together on projects that rely on our expertise and know-how.

By sharing technological knowledge and our experienced workforce and impeccable quality systems, new opportunities are on the horizon for Turbomecanica. ♦

www.turbomecanica.ro



Wise Finance Solutions working to actively strengthen Romanian-Japanese relations

Bogdan Hossu, General Manager of Wise Finance Solutions

Bridges: Why do companies choose to work with Wise Finance Solutions?

Hossu: We have established a presence in Japan, a unique step for a company with Eastern European origins, and are able to serve Japanese clients in their own language.

With our roots in Central and Eastern Europe, Wise Finance Solutions and our staff in Japan provide comprehensive information on major European countries.

We have strengthened our cooperative networks with partners such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Japan Bank for Interna-

tional Cooperation and private companies.

Today our main activities are focused on financial consultancy, project management, consultancy for obtaining nonreimbursable funds for investments, and human resource services.

As Romania and Japan look toward the next 100 years, how do you see investments and partnerships developing?

Japanese people are outstanding and have a unique mindset. Long-term growth is a key aspect of Japanese society and thus Japanese people are often prudent until they make a first step.

Japan has begun to



discover Romania quite recently and therefore we should be patient and better understand their approach to partner countries while recognizing members of the Japanese business community are very reliable partners.

Wise Finance Solutions and our staff in Japan provide comprehensive information on major European countries."

BOGDAN HOSSU
General Manager
Wise Finance Solutions

What message do you have for our readers regarding both the future of the Romania-Japan relationship and Wise Finance Solutions?

Japanese companies have focused on Asian

markets as an initial step toward their foreign expansion.

Nevertheless, they realized the risk of concentrating their hubs in certain areas in light of the impact of the pandemic on supply chains and continued competition.

From this perspective, Romania and its neighboring countries are well positioned as investment destinations in the next few years.

At Wise Finance Solutions, we will continue contributing to the European and Asian partnership and actively strengthen the Romania-Japan relationship. ♦

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