Japan and the U.K.: Centuries of collaboration, cultural friendship and continued cooperation

Japan and the U.K. share a solid, strategic friendship built on hundreds of years of bilateral ties. It is a bond that, over centuries, has resulted in a profound sense of mutual respect and robust cooperation across a wide range of fields.

Japanese-U.K. ties have flourished along a broad avenue of cultural exchange. As Japan’s Ambassador to the U.K., Kajima likewise acts as a conduit for the growing relationship between the nations.

Hayashi further noted that “the level of interest in Japanese culture among the British people is exceptional,” pointing to various forms of cultural and educational exchanges, including the Japanese people’s affinity with the British crown.

This rapport was especially evident when HM Emperor Naruhito and HM Empress Masako flew to the U.K. to pay their respects when HM Queen Elizabeth II was laid to rest in September 2022. “Their Majesties’ presence at the funeral demonstrated our determination to work together to tackle climate change,” Hayashi said.

Reciprocal Access Agreement has been hailed as one of the most significant milestones, Hayashi also underscored the significance of the joint development of the next-generation fighter aircraft by Japan, the U.K., and Italy, and the Japanese-U.K. Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in 2020, the very first E.U.-Japan economic partnership that promotes efforts to achieve 2050, growing its presence in the renewable energy sector.

John Harcourt, Managing Director of Kajima Europe

Kajima Europe: Spearheading Japanese investment in Europe’s real estate markets

A major developer and investor, Kajima has a significant presence in the U.K. for over 50 years. Grounded in its roots as a general contractor, the Japanese giant has mostly diversified over time, investing, developing and managing assets across U.K. and European markets. With over 410 billion 91.7 trillion in assets under management, Kajima’s London-based team is at the center of a green transition. The U.K. is looking to a massive expansion in the renewable energy sector.

John Harcourt, the firm’s managing director, said: “The U.K. and London have traditionally been the stepping-off point for Japanese investors entering European markets. While increasingly diversifying across new markets, we remain committed to working on behalf of our partners, and the expectation is to be advanced across the continent.”

Key to Kajima Europe’s success is its unique blend of Japanese business ethos with the local expertise of its on-shore management team. Harcourt said: “It’s a winning combination. Our team is experienced in identifying the best opportunities that align with the strategies of our internal funds and those of our co-investment partners, producing double-digit returns.”

While continuing to invest on behalf of partners in sectors such as logistics, developing over 1.4 million square feet (50,000 square meters) of warehouse developments in over 100 office buildings in London, Kajima is looking to a massive expansion in the renewable energy sector.

“The U.K. and countries across Europe have some of the most ambitious climate targets in the world. To date, we’re three plus years focused solely on renewable and sustainable energy solutions — from large-scale solar plants to photovoltaic and wind energy solutions for SMEs in retail and public enterprises,” Harcourt said.

Hayashi underscored that the two heads of state met during his previous trip last May. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited the U.K. following his previous trip last May, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited the U.K. for the graduation of the U.K. Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, which came in a substantial conclusion in the current international climate. “This January, following his previous trip last May, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited the U.K. meeting with Prime Minister of Japan. The reciprocal Access Agreement was signed by the two prime ministers signed the Reciprocal Access Agreement,” he said.

Among other pressing matters, Hayashi shared that the two heads of state discussed the U.K.’s accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, which came in a substantial conclusion in the current international climate.