

Your Excellency, President of Senate, Mr. Nicolae Ciuca（ニコラエ・チウカ）
Minister of Culture, Mrs. Raluca TURCAN（ラルカ・トゥルカン）,
Minister of Energy, Mr. Sebastian BURDUJA（セバスティアン・ブルドジャ）,
Your Excellency Former President of Romania, Mr. Emil CONSTANTINESCU
（エミル・コンスタンティネスク）,
Chief of Defence Staff, General Gheorghiță Vlad
（ギョルギツツァ・ヴラッド）

Members of the Parliament, Presidential Advisors, State Secretaries,
Ambassadors, Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

ブナ・セアラ！

スント・カタエ・タカシ・アンバサドールル・ジャポニエイ・シイ・アム・ウンチエブ
ット・ミスィウニャ・ウン・ロムニア・ペ・ドウワゼツチ・シイ・ドイ・イアヌアーリエ

I know that I greet many of you in person for the first time today. I look
forward to working with you all here for the enhancement of Japan-
Romania relations and for international friendship and goodwill. I kindly
ask for your support in these endeavors.

February 23rd saw His Majesty the Emperor turn 64 years old. It is with
profound honor that we celebrate this occasion in your presence.

Now, I would like to mention some of the recent milestones of Japan-Romanian relations. In 2018, Prime Minister Abe made a historic visit to Romania for the first time as Japanese Prime Minister. Following the centenary of diplomatic relations in 2021, September 2022 witnessed visits to Japan by His Excellency Mr. Nicolae Ciuca (who are here today with us) and His Excellency Mr. Marcel Ciolacu, respectively as Prime Minister and Speaker of the Chamber of the Deputies, culminating in the Joint Statement signed between President Klaus Iohannis and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida last March. This elevated our bilateral relations to that of Strategic Partners.

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the resumption of diplomatic relations between Japan and Romania, another milestone where we are poised to put each item outlined in our Strategic Partnership into concrete action. During my tenure, I am committed to creating an environment conducive to that objective.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The international community has transitioned into the complete end of the post-Cold War era. The free and open international order based on the rule of law is now being challenged in unprecedented and blatant way notably through Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, now in its third year, and human dignity is being threatened.

A month ago, I visited Galati to see firsthand the support for Ukrainian refugee children by a Japanese NGO, and last week, UN agencies' refugee support center in RomExpo, Bucharest. These visits and my experiences in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan have made me keenly aware of the inseparability of security here in Europe and in the Indo-Pacific region. I have also reaffirmed the importance of security cooperation with Romania and other like-minded countries. We are determined to continue to actively promote cooperation.

The latest decision has been the resumption of the dispatch of the resident defense attaché to Romania as one of the concrete ways to realize the security cooperation stipulated in the Joint Statement.

Japan has stood with Ukraine since the very beginning. As the G7 Chair last year, Japan led international discussions on supporting Ukraine and its surrounding neighbors including Romania and Moldova, and Japan has provided robust package, including additional \$1 billion in financial assistance. Japan has stood with Ukraine and will continue to do so.

Last Monday, Japan invited the Prime Minister Shmyhal from Ukraine and hosted “Japan-Ukraine Conference for the Promotion of Economic Growth and Reconstruction.” Japanese Prime Minister Kishida expressed his determination to make “Japan’s unique contribution” to Ukraine.

The Conference resulted in 56 cooperation outcome documents between Japanese authorities, Japanese companies, and their Ukrainian partners, such as the MOU to provide two-step loans between Japan’s Bank for International Cooperation, and the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, of which Romania is a member.

Romania facilitates the transport of Ukrainian grain and is contributing to the security environment in Ukraine, Moldova, and the Black Sea region through initiatives like the establishment of a European F16

training center as well as the demining of the Black Sea together with Ukraine, Türkiye, Bulgaria, and Georgia. I would like to pay special tribute to Romania's admirable stand with Ukraine.

Beyond governmental relations, 2023 saw symbolic achievements in economic cooperation between Japan and Romania.

One such achievement is the opening of the Braila Bridge in July last year. The project not only symbolizes the "bridge" between our two countries through Japanese latest technology but also serves as a symbol of Japan-EU cooperation capitalizing on EU funds. Furthermore, the bridge has improved connectivity not only within Romania but also with Ukraine, Moldova, and beyond.

We aim to continue to encourage win-win economic relations so that Japan and Japanese companies can contribute to Romania's economy and the region's growing strategic importance. In particular, the construction of Bucharest's Metro Line 6, which started last year, is recognized as a flagship project for both countries.

It's important to note that the deepening of economic relations at the private level is not one-way from Japan to Romania but progresses in both directions. Japan is committed to boosting economic activities between our two countries through increased direct investment in Japan. JETRO Bucharest has a booth in the right corner of this hall this evening with some related materials.

Romania is also known to be a country full of tourist attractions. Last week, I visited Sibiu for the first time, and I was impressed by its picturesque cityscape with a sense of long history. I intend to continue visiting various places within Romania to see with my own eyes, convey the charm of Romania to Japan, and make efforts to encourage many people to visit Romania.

Our bond goes far beyond politics and economics. At the community level, Romania has many learners of the Japanese language, enthusiasts of traditional cultures such as tea ceremony and martial arts, and fans of pop culture like anime and manga.

We at the Embassy would like to make efforts to introduce Japan to as many Romanian people as possible with the help of these fans. Today, we have prepared ikebana flower arrangements, Japanese tea, and Japanese sake among other things. We hope that you will enjoy a moment of Japanese culture this evening.

This year, we will continue our efforts in implementing projects and promoting exchanges that contribute to the development of bilateral relations. We look forward to your support and cooperation in these endeavors this year.

I would like to conclude my remarks by hoping for the further development of the cooperation between Japan and Romania, contributing to the peace and prosperity of the international community.

ムルツメスク・ペントル・アテンツィエ ! Thank you for your attention!