

Your Excellency Prime Minister BOLOJAN,
Your Excellency President CONSTANTINESCU,
Deputy Prime Minister GHEORGHIU,
Minister BUZOIANU, Minister PÎSLARU,
Honorable Members of Parliament, State Secretaries, Excellencies, Distinguished
guests, ladies, and gentlemen,
Good evening, bună seara!

Thank you for joining us to celebrate His Majesty, the Emperor's Birthday. His Majesty will turn 66 on February 23.

In His New Year's reflections for this year, His Majesty noted that last year marked the 80th anniversary since the end of the war. Reflecting on this significant milestone, His Majesty recalled the hardship of the past and the steady efforts that have built Japan's peace and prosperity today. It also reminds us of the importance of passing history to future generations. At the same time, His Majesty also expressed profound sorrow for those still suffering wars and conflicts now in various regions around the world.

At the Annual Imperial New Year's Poetry Reading, His Majesty read the following:

"Watching the morning star, Shining high in the sky,
I pray sincerely for, Peace in the new year."

His Majesty's message is simple and clear, yet very powerful: a sincere prayer for a world where people can live in tranquility.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a matter of policy, the peace that Japan seeks is a just and lasting peace, rooted in human dignity, and supported by the rule of law. It is not "peace at any cost."

Peace is not something given; it is something we must actively build and protect. For over 80 years, Japan has pursued a path of peace. We have steadfastly upheld the rule of law, not the rule of force. This is precisely why we strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force, anywhere in the world.

In this context, the security environments of the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific are inseparable. Driven by this understanding, we stand firmly with Romania in supporting Ukraine against Russia's invasion. Crucially, we also stand together in supporting Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova on their path toward European integration. In these uncertain times, our partnership with Romania is more vital than ever.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last year was a major turning point for both Romania and Japan. Romania welcomed President Nicușor Dan and Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan, who is with us here tonight.

In Japan, we saw our first female Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi who gained a renewed mandate earlier this week. Under new leadership, the Japan-Romania Strategic Partnership remains steady and firm. A strategic partnership is not a slogan. It is a long-term commitment to work together.

Our partnership is visible in real projects and exchanges. Japanese cooperation continues to contribute to Romania. The Bucharest Metro Line M6, a project supported by Japan, entered a key phase of the tunnel drilling beginning last April. Business dialogue gained strong momentum. The economic mission led by Vice-Minister Akiyoshi Kato had a meaningful meeting with Prime Minister Bolojan. We strengthened our foundation for future collaboration through the 3rd Innovation Forum in Iași and the 2nd Energy Forum in Japan.

Furthermore, Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai was a vibrant platform for bilateral exchanges. The Romanian Pavilion captivated nearly one million visitors, showcasing Romania's economic strength and rich cultural heritage.

Science and technology ties are also advancing. Construction of the Optical Center at the Extreme Light Infrastructure - Nuclear Physics continues with Osaka University and Okamoto Optics. Also, just three days ago, the Third Joint Committee on Cooperation in the field of Science and Technology held in Magurele and a new bilateral Memorandum was signed, demonstrating our shared dedication to pioneering research.

Cultural exchange is expanding in the capital and beyond. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of Japanese language education at the University of Bucharest. The "Romania-Japan Cooperation Center" in Cluj-Napoca and the "Japanese Cultural

Center” in Iași were opened last year. Our engagement is thriving, from the Japanese Speech Contest to the East European Comic Con or Cherry Blossom Festival. These events help us, especially our younger generations, to build lasting friendships.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, I would like to return to the image of the "morning star" from His Majesty's poem. In Japan, this star signifies a new dawn and the promise of hope.

In a world often clouded by uncertainty, the deep bond between Japan and Romania shines like that star. It is a constant, guiding light that helps us navigate even the most difficult times. This enduring friendship gives us the courage to move toward a brighter and more stable future, side by side.

With that spirit in mind, tonight is also a chance to share Japan with you in a tangible way. In this room, we are proud to have Japanese companies and our Romanian partners shown on the slide. On the technological front, please explore the vehicles on display in the foyer, on the ground floor, and in front of the hotel entrance. Beyond technology, we celebrate art and music. We thank the National University of Music Bucharest for playing the national anthems and Ikebana International Bucharest Chapter for the magnificent Ikebana arrangement here tonight.

Last but not least, for culinary delights, our Embassy chef has prepared Wagyu beef sukiyaki and sushi. All ingredients including wagyu beef, scallops, and sushi rice are imported from Japan.

Please also try sushi-rolls from EDO SUSHI; beer and drinks by Ursus, Asahi Beer group; matcha sweets offered by JETRO Bucharest; and Japanese tea by Mr. Muresan. We hope that you enjoy fully the tastes of Japan.

In conclusion, guided by His Majesty's prayer for peace and the light of the morning star, let us advance our Strategic Partnership to new heights together.

Mulțumesc pentru atenție. Thank you very much.