

Estonia Today

ESTONIAN – JAPANESE RELATIONS

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

1918-1940

- 6 March 1919** Japan recognised the Republic of Estonia *de facto*
- 26 January 1921** The Supreme Council of the Entente (including Japan) recognised the Republic of Estonia *de jure*
- 8 March 1921** Japan also recognised the Republic of Estonia through a separate act
- 1 September 1929** Visa formalities between Estonia and Japan were abolished
- 21 June 1934** A trade agreement between Estonia and Japan was concluded through exchange of notes
- 1935** The first honorary consul of Japan – Voldemar Puhk - started his activities in Tallinn
- 1937** Japan's ambassador to Riga was co-accredited to Tallinn
- 1939** Japan established a diplomatic bureau in Tallinn, functioning until 1940.

As of 1991

- 6 September 1991** Ambassador of Japan Hirokazu Arai conveyed to Tallinn the official statement of Japan's government's recognition of the independence of the Republic of Estonia
- 10 October 1991** The diplomatic relations between the two countries were restored
- 1 January 1993** Japan's Embassy in Tallinn was opened
- 4 March 1996** The Republic of Estonia opened its Embassy in Tokyo - the first one in Asia.

REPRESENTATION

IN ESTONIA

As of January 2001 Ambassador of Japan to Estonia is Mr. Norimasa Hasegawa (residing in Helsinki). Former ambassadors: Mr. Yasuji Ishigaki (1998-2000), Mrs. Sumiko Takahara (1995-1998), Mrs. Hisami Kurokochi (1992-1995) and Mr. Hirokazu Arai (1991-1992). As of March 2001 Japan's chargé d'affaires ad interim is Mr. Mizuho Morita.

IN JAPAN

As of July 2000 Estonia's chargé d'affaires ad interim is Peeter Miller. 1998-2000 Estonia's Ambassador to Japan was Mark Sinisoo and 1996-1998 Heikki Vallaste was chargé d'affaires.

VISITS. MEETINGS

FROM ESTONIA

- May 1992** Governmental delegation of the Republic of Estonia led by Prime Minister Tiit Vähi
- October 1992** Minister of Foreign Affairs Trivimi Velliste at the G-24 meeting (Tokyo Conference on Assistance to the New Independent States) in Japan
- March 1996** Minister of Foreign Affairs Siim Kallas
- December 1996** Minister of Economic Affairs Jaak Leimann
- March 1997** President of the Republic of Estonia Lennart Meri and a business delegation accompanying him
- February 1998** Prime Minister Mart Siimann
- September 2001** Minister of Economic Affairs Mihkel Pärnoja, accompanied by business delegation
- September 2001** the JETRO (Japan External Trade Organisation) arranged a joint economy exhibition of the Baltic countries "The Baltic Exhibition" and an investment seminar in Tokyo.

FROM JAPAN

- September 1991** Governmental delegation from Japan
- October 1991** Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Muneo Suzuki
- September 1992 and May 1998** Delegation from "Keidanren", Union of Japan's economy organisations
- July 1996** Mrs. Kiyoko Ono, representative of the Chamber of Councillors of Japan's Diet
- August 1999** Delegation of the Special Committee on Okinawa and Northern Problems of the House of Representatives of Japan's Diet
- September 1999** Mrs. Asako Okai, deputy director of the II West-European bureau of the European and Oceanian department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
- September 1999** Mr. Takahiro Shinyo, deputy director general of the European and Oceanian department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

In autumn 2001 Japan is planning a high level visit to Estonia to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the restoration of bilateral relations.



AGREEMENTS

- Declaration of Intent between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Industrial Bank of Japan (Signed and enforced 11.03.1996)
- Agreement on the Implementation of a Purpose-oriented Scholarship to be Granted for the Equipment of the Language Laboratory of the Tartu University and protocol of procedural details adherent to it. The amount of the *Japanese Cultural Grant Aid* - 29.7 million Yen (signed and enforced 16.07.1998)
- Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Estonia and the Government of Japan on the Abolishment of Visa Requirements (signed 01.11.1999, enforced 01.12.1999)
- Implementation Agreement on a Purpose-oriented Scholarship to be Granted to the Estonian National Opera and protocol of procedural details adherent to it. The amount of the *Japanese Cultural Grant Aid* - 46 million Yen (signed and enforced 29.09.2000)

19.12.2000 the legal basis between Estonia and Japan was established for further treaty relations, *i.e.* that only those bilateral agreements concluded after 20 August 1991 will be in force.

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

The economic relations between Estonia and Japan are good and stably progressing.

Investments

Japan's total volume of investments into Estonia has not changed essentially in recent years. As of 31.12.2000 Japan's direct investments into Estonia constituted 2.9 million EUR (0.1% of the total investments), thus placing Japan as Estonia's 26th foreign investor. Primarily it has invested into wholesale and retail sale trade, the industry and foodstuffs.

Trade

During the last five years the import from Japan (on the 5th place) grew by 61% and the export to Japan (on the 29th place) grew by 6%. The export articles were earth metals, milk powder, wood products, ski equipment. From Japan primarily cars and car spare parts, machinery and installations (*e.g.* optical fixtures) are imported.

In March 2001 Estonia's export to Japan increased to circa 3.2 million EUR, Japan has with a share of 8.3% emerged as the third export partner. The import from Japan in March constituted 7.2%, in February 10.8% and in January 4.0% of the total import. The export to Japan from January through March 2001 has been modest.

CULTURAL RELATIONS

Since 1996 friendship groups are active in the parliaments of both countries (the president of the Estonian friendship group is former Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Kakizawa, number of members 13; the

chairman of the current Japanese friendship group is Mr. Voog, number of members 14).

Since 1991 a Japanese-Estonian friendship society led by Mrs. Sirje Okada is working on Hokkaido (helping to substantiate and arrange the stay of visiting Estonian delegations to Japan).

In 1992 the Estonia-Japan Association (led by Heikki Vallaste) was established in Tallinn. The Association deals with organising exhibitions and lecture series as well as introducing Japanese culture.

Schooling opportunities in Japan

- **JICA** (Japan International Co-operation Agency) enables (finances) complementary training of Estonian specialists in various areas of life (energetics, environment protection, criminalistics etc.). Estonia is offered about ten training opportunities annually.
- **Japan's Ministry of Education** (Monbusho) offers scholarships for studies for the bachelor and masters degrees at various Japanese universities.
- The **Japan Foundation** arranges excursions to Japan; assists in obtaining financial aid within the framework of various programmes (literature related, audio-visual donations from Library Support Programme and Teaching Material Support Programme to many Estonian libraries.)

Within the framework of the Dispatch of Experts opportunities are offered to invite Japanese lecturers, experts etc. to Estonia.

As of March 2001 the Government of Japan enables to apply for purpose-oriented scholarships within the framework of Grant Assistance for Cultural Grass-Roots Project (the Estonian Humanitarian Institute was supported this year with about 64,000 EUR for the procurement of study materials and technique).

In Estonia, the Japanese language and culture may be studied at the Estonian Humanitarian Institute, the language centre of Tartu University, the Tallinn Pedagogical University, Tallinn Järveotsa High School and the Tallinn Language School.

Japan has been visited many times by the Ellerhein girls' choir and the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir. In 1998 the Estonian Music Days took place in Japan (Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Hortus Musicus, Andres Uibo, the organist *et.al*). The Baltic Animated Film Festival is scheduled for October 2001 in Tokyo.

At the eastern music festival Orient in Tallinn, Japanese music and dance ensembles have performed (in spring 2001 the Japanese drum ensemble). In August 2000 the Japanese Ballet Group Chambre Ovest performed, in October 2000 the Japanese culture days took place (film program, lectures, ikebana competition, a presentation of calligraphy, food degustation etc.). Scheduled for autumn 2001 is a kabuki theatre. Japanese ceramics has been exposed in Estonia (May 2001), as well as photographic art and calligraphy.