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Belgium and Japan celebrate 160 years of blooming friendship

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Starting with the Treaty on Amity, Trade and Navigation from 1866, the cooperation between Belgium and Japan hasn't stop growing. In an ever-changing world, we keep working together based on our shared fundamental values, such as freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

This translates in many economic and commercial exchanges, including the most recent royal economic mission to Japan in 2022, which counted 550 participants, and the latest high-level visit of HRH Princess Astrid with Belgian and Japanese ministers to the Osaka-Kansai World Expo, where the Belgian pavilion attracted 900.000 visitors. Our bilateral trade volume is estimated at an average 14 billion euros per year, with around 250 Japanese companies in Belgium, active in the industry, innovation and cutting-edge technologies. On a daily basis, there are also vibrant cultural and people-to-people exchanges, as well as academic partnerships between many Japanese and Belgian universities.

As Jan Jambon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Pensions, states: *"Japan is of tremendous importance for our economy, being the second foreign investor in Belgium, outside of Europe. 2026 will be a memorable year for the people of Belgium and Japan, giving momentum to an upbeat trajectory of enhanced collaboration and friendship over the coming years."*

Mr. Shuichi NISHINO, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of Japan emphasises that *"The solid and blooming interactions between our two countries, starting from the exchanges between the imperial and royal families, are bolstered by the firm commitment of numerous actors of both countries in a variety of fields. The various events programmed throughout this year, including the Brussels' Flower Carpet and the Ommegang, where Japan will be a country of honour, provide invaluable opportunities to rediscover the charm of an old friend and to develop new collaboration, including among the younger generations."*

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