

# Greece National Day Special

## Close ties founded on shared perspectives and ideologies

**OLGA KLIAMAKI**  
AMBASSADOR OF GREECE



March 25 presents an opportunity for all the Greeks at home and around the world to join our National Day celebrations in unity, paying tribute to all those who contributed to the

long struggle for the ultimate, universal value: freedom.

The successful outcome of the Greek Revolution, which started 205 years ago, was the result of a collective effort, supported by both Greeks and philhellenes all over the world, by people who believed in the ideals of the revolution and admired

the Hellenic spirit and history, tracing back to the birth of democracy, philosophy, theater and the Olympic Games.

On this day of pride and gratitude, we cannot help but return to our core values and priorities, while looking into a brighter future and building upon our recent achievements.

Greece is a member of the European Union and NATO, and currently serves as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council. In these roles, Greece actively pursues peace, stability and multilateralism in an increasingly challenging international environment, guided by democratic principles and international law. Japan shares the same ideological compass and a similar worldview, positioning our countries closer together, despite the geographical distance.

Since the visit of Prime Minister Kyriakos

Mitsotakis to Japan in January 2023, our bilateral relations have been elevated to a strategic partnership, facilitating the further enhancement of the bilateral framework and of the contacts between our governments and people.

In 2024, during the celebrations of our 125 years of diplomatic relations, Princess Kako visited Greece and our Minister of Tourism Olga Kefalogianni came to Japan, among a series of cultural events in both countries.

Last year, the potential of our partnership extended further, thanks to the bilateral contacts of high-level ministers. Dimitris Skalkos, secretary general for international economic affairs at Greece's Foreign Ministry, visited Japan for the Ukraine Mine Action Conference 2025. Last year also saw the first visit of a Greek Minister of Defense, Nikos Dendias, to Japan. During his stay in Tokyo, Dendias met with his Japanese counterpart Shinjiro Koizumi, focusing on ways to promote defense cooperation in innovation and advanced technologies.

The long history and significant contributions of Greek and Japanese culture to the world serve as a bridge between our two peoples, who share mutual respect and admiration, drawing parallels between cultural concepts, such as ancient Greek theater and noh, while observing common values, like hospitality and respect for the elders.

During the recent celebratory events on the International Day of Greek Language (Feb. 9), which was recently recognized globally at the UNESCO General Conference in Samarkand in November 2025, we were pleased to engage in fruitful discussions with Japanese people of all ages.

In 2026, economy and trade are emerging as key drivers of closer relations



Thessaloniki, Greece's second-largest city, will host its 90th namesake international fair, featuring Japan as the Honored Country. K. KOUZOUNI, GREEK NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION



Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi escorts his Greek counterpart, Nikos Dendias, past an honor guard on Dec. 4, 2025, in Tokyo. EMBASSY OF GREECE

between our countries, following an upward trend in our bilateral trade balance. The fields of tourism, energy and shipping, as our countries have some of the biggest merchant maritime fleets worldwide, bear a particular significance, as well as the potential for growth in bilateral cooperation.

The announcement of Japan's participation as the Honored Country at the 90th Thessaloniki International Fair in 2026, 100 years after the establishment of the largest international fair in Greece,

represents positive momentum for our relations, placing Japan among the top priorities of our economic diplomacy. A panorama of Greek and Japanese companies and organizations from the sectors of tourism, technology, innovation, the automotive industry, energy and health care will exchange views and best practices at a business level in Thessaloniki, while multiple events and festivities will bring Japanese culture and traditional concepts, like *takumi* (artisanship), closer to the Greek people.

Considering this momentous occasion, and thanks to our common values, I am certain that our bilateral partnership will continue to grow in all levels, working closer together.

Congratulations to all Greek people on our National Day. Long live the friendship between Greece and Japan!

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*

## Fostering friendship, mutual understanding

**YASUYOSHI KARASAWA**  
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-GREECE SOCIETY



I extend my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of Greek National Day 2026.

March 25 is commemorated as the anniversary of the declaration of Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1821. After nine years of war, Greece was finally recognized as an independent state under the London Protocol of February 1830. I deeply sympathize with the fact that the Greek independence and the prosperity enjoyed today were achieved through the precious sacrifices made by many Greek citizens in those days.

Greece is renowned as a birthplace of Western civilization, exerting a profound influence on people all over the world

in various fields. The polis, or Greek city-state, is known as the prototype of modern democracy. The ancient Olympics Games have been revived in modern times as a festival of peace, inspiring people across the globe through the outstanding performances of athletes.

I express my sincere respect for the remarkable development Greece has achieved, overcoming even the hardship of the financial crisis of the 2010s, advancing digitalization and decarbonization and enhancing its presence within the Europe Union. I now hope for the further development and prosperity of Greece.

The diplomatic relationship between Greece and Japan has steadily grown since its establishment in June 1899. In 2023, during Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' visit to Japan, our bilateral relationship was elevated to a strategic partnership, marking a new stage of even closer ties.

This September, at the Thessaloniki International Fair held in Greece's second-

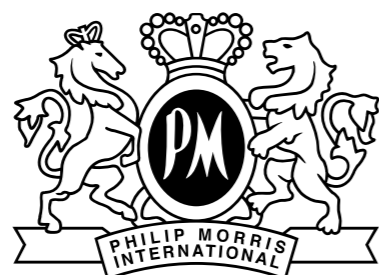
largest city, Japan will participate as the Honored Country. Among others, many Japanese companies operating in Greece will participate in this event. I believe this is a wonderful opportunity to further deepen the ties between our nations.

Both countries share strong traditions in maritime transportation and also face similar natural challenges, such as earthquakes and wildfires. For this reason, it is essential for us to further strengthen our cooperation, especially in disaster management and response.

The Japan-Greece Society has been actively engaged in the enhancement of friendship and mutual understanding between our countries since its establishment in 1972. This society will continue its efforts to promote and strengthen cultural, artistic and economic exchanges between our countries. As president of the society, I would like to ask for your continued support and cooperation from all those concerned, including the diligent subscribers of The Japan Times.

**Congratulations**  
*to the People of Greece*  
**on Their Independence Day**

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