



# Increased Interest for Economic Cooperation between Serbia and Japan

**Nenad Glišić**

**Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to Japan**

H.E. Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Nenad Glišić, spent his early academic days in Tokyo, back in the seventies. H.E. said "it is with a great sentiment that I had the opportunity to come back to Japan, 35 years later, as a senior diplomat". Representing Serbia in Japan is a great privilege that brings tremendous responsibility. Along with this responsibility comes sincere intention to deepen bilateral relations and friendship between our two nations- and JOI is an important part of this process.

**S**erbia is a member of JOI since 2005. This period brought many changes in the world economy, in Serbia, and relations between Serbia and Japan. In 2011 then President of Serbia, Boris Tadić visited Japan, met with His Imperial Majesty Akihito, then Prime Minister Naoto Kan and many other high officials and representatives of leading companies. This, historical visit marked the introduction of visa free regime to Serbian citizens visiting Japan and the beginning of official approval of the, so called, "yen loan". The project, worth EUR 250 million, focuses on fume gas desulphurization at thermo electric plant "Nikola Tesla" in Serbia, near Belgrade, which brings this main electric power producer in Serbia, in line with EU environmental standards.

In spite of recent catastrophic floods, that took place in May this year, Serbia has a solid reconstruction plan that is backed by international donors, among which Japan plays significant role. Generosity of Japanese citizens, who provided substantial and warmhearted aid to people in Serbia, was another confirmation of traditional friendship between two nations that last for more than 130 years.



H.E. Mr. Nenad Glišić in his office

Serbian King Milan Obrenović the First, following Berlin Congress in 1878, which recognized Serbia as an independent state, wrote, after his coronation in March 1882, a personal letter to Japanese Emperor Meiji. This was the first diplomatic correspondence between sovereigns of Serbia and Japan.

**A**lthough Serbia faced many challenges, its market based, euro driven economy proved to be able to cope with difficulties brought by Lehman shock and European debt crisis. The most prosperous sectors are agriculture, food processing, automotive industry and components, metal processing, electrical appliances and electronics, IT sector and pharmaceuticals. Great number of foreign investors from US, Germany, Austria, Italy and many other countries confirm this fact.

In order to improve its economic position Serbia is committed to attracting foreign direct investment and highly values investments from Japan. Companies like Japan Tobacco International (that exports approximately USD 40 million a year from Serbia), joint venture of Mitsui-Alltech in beer yeast and food additives production (helped by Asahi Food and Healthcare management and technology) and Panasonic, producing components for LED lighting, all increased their production capacities, investment and number of employees in Serbia.

Continuous efforts of Serbian Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SIEPA) to promote Serbia and its potentials, supported by JOI, resulted in organizing a small scale seminar at JOI, in May this year, about the IT industry

in Serbia. Seminar was a great success as it discovered, what has not been well known in Japan, that Serbia has a great number of young, talented people and companies in IT sector, that have market access to the EU and Middle East countries.

Visit of Keidanren in September this year brought one more historically important change in relations between two countries as 26 member delegation had the opportunity to meet Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić, relevant ministers, institutions and company representatives. Main organizers were Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and SIEPA.

Seminar about investments in Serbia, held in the beginning of October this year, in JBIC auditorium, organized by SIEPA and JOI, supported by JBIC, JETRO and UNIDO was yet another event of key importance in the process of bringing Serbia closer to Japan. More than 70 attendees could learn about experiences in Serbia from esteemed representatives of Japan Tobacco International, Asahi Food and Healthcare and Panasonic. Honest, unbiased, yet very positive comments encouraged the audience to find out more, and will, hopefully, increase already growing interest of Japanese companies to develop business or

investments in Serbia.

Political stability, Government committed to economic development, EU candidate status, adoption of new laws and number of free trade agreements and preferential treaties with EU and US bring Serbia advantages that are hard to match. Increased number of Japanese companies that visit Serbia confirms this and offers a strong motivation to continue our efforts in intensifying economic cooperation between our countries. Therefore we encourage you to contact SIEPA, our Embassy, gain more information and, most of all, to visit Serbia.

**明治から続く日本とセルビアの繋がり**

- ・ 明治19年(1882年)より「金鳥」はセルビアの除虫菊の輸入により蚊取り線香の生産を開始する
- ・ ユーゴスラビア(セルビアを含む6カ国の連邦国)は1990年代までは東ヨーロッパで最も発達していた国であったため日本・セルビア貿易額も6千万ドルに達していました
- ・ 近年駐セルビア日本企業の増加により、2014年には新たに「日本ビジネスクラブ」が設立されました。
- ・ 欧州一の親日国セルビア - 平成23年東日本大震災後セルビア各地ではいち早く募金活動が行われ、約3億円の義援金が集められ、震災の1か月後の時点では欧州で最も多い義援金でした。

Continuous friendship between Japan and Serbia since the MEIJI era



Serbia IT seminar held in May



Serbia Investment Seminar held in the beginning of October

### JOI 特別会員

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