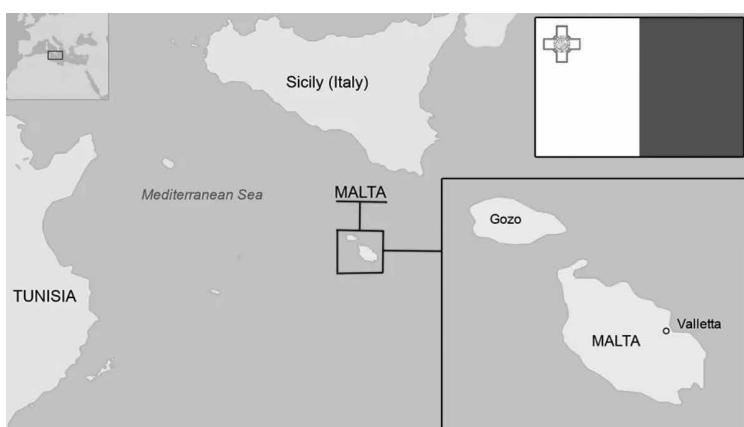


Malta– Japan’s Partner in the Heart of the Mediterranean Sea

André SPITERI

Ambassador of the Republic of Malta to Japan

André SPITERI was appointed as Ambassador of Malta to Japan in July 2014. He played a pivotal role in establishing Malta’s Embassy in Japan in September 2020, becoming the first resident Ambassador. With a background in various positions within Malta’s MFA, Ambassador Spiteri holds a master’s degree in International Relations from Ritsumeikan University.



sandy beaches, and azure sea. With various air connections, Malta is accessible to many people from Japan that choose to visit us for tourism, English language studying and other activities. Being in the European Union, the currency is Euro and being in the Schengen Zone, there is no need of a visa for travelling less than 90 days for Japanese citizens. The availability of world-class healthcare, education, and leisure activities ensures that relocating employees and their families can enjoy a comfortable and fulfilling life in Malta.

Nestled in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, Malta boasts a strategic location that bridges Europe, Africa, and the Middle East due to its strategic position. The Maltese islands were in fact an important strategic base for many civilizations like the Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Knights of St. John (now known as the Knights of Malta), as well as the French and British Empires. Having gained independence in 1964 and membership in the European Union in 2004, Malta looks forward to increased cooperation with like-minded countries like Japan. This geographic advantage positions the country as a gateway for Japanese businesses looking to establish a foothold in multiple regions. The island’s well-connected natural ports coupled with modern infrastructure facilitate efficient trade routes, ensuring the smooth movement of goods and services.

Tourism and Quality of Life

Perhaps one of the first images for Japanese people about Malta is a tourist resort with ample sunshine,

The Economy

Malta consistently receives strong marks from prominent credit rating agencies like Moody’s, S&P, and Fitch for its resilient and stable economy. According to leading economists, Malta’s economy displays a notable degree of flexibility. This means that when confronted with local or global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, its relatively compact economic structure enables a faster recovery compared to larger economies.

The backbone of Malta’s economy is its banking sector. Banks are well-capitalised, highly solvent, and largely take a traditional approach to financing based on retail deposits, which has served them well to navigate international tempests like the financial crisis in 2008 and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, making Malta’s economy very robust and resilient. Although Malta is in the eurozone, the facility to open foreign currency accounts is common. Due to anti-money laundering



Valletta, the capital of Malta

regulations, due diligence is very strict. This means that the jurisdiction is one of conducting legitimate business, to cement Malta's reputation as a respected European financial centre.

Sectors of Interest for Japan

Maritime Sector: Although thousands of kilometres apart, Malta and Japan are connected by the sea. Malta's flourishing maritime sector or blue economy contributes a substantial 14% to its GDP and supports around 22,000 jobs. Today, Malta offers modern facilities for transshipment and distribution; a cruise liners hub; international yacht marinas; a very successful and efficient Freeport and oil terminal. The Malta Freeport,

operated is the 3rd largest in the Mediterranean, handling around 3 million containers annually. Being just six nautical miles from the main Mediterranean Sea routes between Gibraltar and Suez Canal, Malta can offer various logistical advantages for Japanese companies looking to expand in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Renewable Energy Collaborations: Malta's commitment to sustainable development presents opportunities for Japanese firms to collaborate on renewable energy projects such as solar and wind power. By leveraging Japan's expertise in clean energy technology, Japanese companies can contribute to Malta's energy transition while gaining access to the



Malta Freeport



Quad Central Malta Business Centre

European and African renewable energy market. Of particular interest are hydrogen projects and offshore wind farms and other related projects that would require a large space of sea.

ICT and Innovation Centers: Establishing information and communication technology (ICT) and innovation centers in Malta can foster synergies between Japanese technological advancements and Maltese innovation. This collaboration can result in cutting-edge solutions, research, and development, benefiting both nations and creating a hub for technological excellence.

Financial Services and Fintech: Malta's strategic location and regulatory framework make it an attractive destination for financial services and fintech companies. Japanese financial institutions and fintech startups can benefit from Malta's fintech-friendly policies and use the country as a gateway to access European markets.

Manufacturing and Trade: Collaborations between Japanese manufacturers and Maltese businesses can lead to the development of high-quality products for both regional and global markets. Malta's logistical advantages make it a valuable partner for trade and manufacturing ventures.

Where to Start?

For most business investors, the first port of call is Malta

Enterprise, specifically its Business First Portal on <https://www.businessfirst.com.mt/>. This is a point of single contact which serves as a gateway to government business information and services. Here you will find practical information on Malta and how to set up a business, including details on regulations – both generic and industry specific. Moreover, Malta Enterprise can assist in pre-investment fact finding, allocation of industrial space, access to finance, investment credits and schemes to assist Japanese companies in export capabilities, research, and innovation, and more.

Conclusion

The partnership between Japanese businesses and Malta holds the promise of a mutually beneficial collaboration that can lead to economic growth, innovation, and cultural enrichment. Through specific projects across sectors such as renewable energy, ICT, maritime services, tourism, financial services, and manufacturing, Japanese companies can capitalize on Malta's strategic location in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea.



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