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A PARTNERSHIP FOR LIFE



Ambassador of Serbia to Japan Aleksandra Kovac



Former Ambassador of Japan to Serbia Takahiko Katsumata



RAS Director for International Cooperation Nikola Jankovic

Japanese-Serbian relations started with a simple letter sent in 1882 by the first king of Serbia to Japan's Emperor Meiji. In the last 141 years, the partnership between these two countries has emerged stronger, having weathered two world wars and lending each other support following civil conflict and natural disasters.

"Today, Japan is the second-largest Asian investor in Serbia. Both Serbia and Japan are long-term partners and will continue to contribute to the global community together," said Ambassador of Serbia to Japan Aleksandra Kovac, who added that the booming bilateral trade is proof of a thriving partnership.

Ambassador of Japan to Serbia Takahiko Katsumata, who was posted in Belgrade until May before his current assignment to Ankara in Turkey, echoed Kovac's sentiments, "Given our history of friendship and cooperation, I believe Japan and Serbia are excellent partners that can take on both regional and global issues for future generations," adding that there are "more than 30 Japanese multinational brands" doing business in Serbia today.

Japanese Business Alliance in Serbia

Executive Director Oliver Lepori stressed that Japanese companies in Serbia have directly contributed and remain committed to Serbia's economic, social and technological advancement.

Among the global Japanese brands that are no strangers to Serbia are Daikin and Toyo Tire. Toyo Tire opened a 600,000-square-meter manufacturing site in Indjija in December 2022. According to Toyo Tire Serbia executive Yoji Imura, Serbia's location in central Europe and highly qualified workforce make the country the ideal manufacturing hub.

In the meantime, Heating & Cooling Expert has been exclusively promoting and growing the Daikin brand in Serbia for more than 10 years. Founder Bojan Aleksic said many Serbian and Japanese companies, Daikin and HCE included, share similar business values, such as the commitment to excellence and putting the customers first, which is why many Japanese companies will find great business partners and opportunities in Serbia.

In the meantime, the Development Agency of Serbia (RAS) is at the forefront of efforts to attract more foreign direct

investment and promote the country's economic strengths around the world.

According to RAS Director for International Cooperation Nikola Jankovic, Serbia's attractive foreign investment policies, central location in Europe and high-quality talent pool cement the country's position as one of the world's top investment destinations. He added that Japanese expatriates will surely encounter an impeccable quality of life and enjoy the natural beauty of the country.

Complementing those efforts, the National Tourism Organization of Serbia is launching global campaigns yearly to bring in more international visitors. NTOS Director Marija Labovic said millions of tourists from around the world go to Serbia every year, charmed by its breathtaking nature, fascinating cultural and historical heritage, relaxing spas, vibrant cities, unique cuisine and sincere hospitality.

With its great variety of tourism products and well-connected airports offering direct flights to numerous destinations worldwide, Serbia offers tourists and business executives vast opportunities for unforgettable experiences, the director said. ■

DAIKIN: COMFORT AND SAFETY FOR ALL

Over the past 10 years, Serbia-based Heating & Cooling Expert has promoted Daikin in the country, making the Japanese brand the local leader in air conditioners, heating systems and air purifiers for industrial, commercial and residential use.

"We implemented many new ideas and prioritized listening to our consumers," said HCE CEO and founder Bojan Aleksic, who recalled that Daikin began in Serbia as a business-to-business seller. It was four years ago when HCE launched its Solution Store, allowing Serbian households to buy Daikin products directly, book consultations and set service appointments.

"We listen to the customer first and see what their needs are so that we can offer the perfect solution that meets all their needs. We are not here to simply sell products. We are here to provide meaningful solutions. Together with Daikin Central

Europe, we aim to serve the Serbian market by being a total solution provider," said Aleksic, who worked previously for Daikin Central Europe before setting up HCE in 2012.

"The different Daikin partners, local networks, and especially the people working at HCE, have one common goal: to make a good quality of life accessible for all," he stressed. ■

→ www.daikin.rs/sr_rs/customers.html



Heating & Cooling Expert CEO and founder Bojan Aleksic

SERBIA: EXPERIENCING EUROPE'S NEXT BIG THING

Its lush landscape, crystal-clear waters, charming cities rich in cultural heritage, and gastronomic meals make Serbia one of Europe's most beautiful and fascinating tourist destinations.

With Europe expecting at least 596 million foreign tourists in 2023, Marija Labovic, director of the National Tourism Organization of Serbia (NTOS), shared why more people should see, explore and experience Serbia.

"Serbia is a really outstanding destination for travelers who are searching for new experiences," said Labovic, who highlighted the country's five national parks, 16 nature parks, 70 nature reserves, and two UNESCO Biosphere Reserves as some of its top tourism spots.

Aside from its many therapeutic spa and spring resorts, tourists from around the world are also attracted to Serbia's distinctive cuisine and culture.

As more people resume post-pandemic domestic and international travel, Labovic said the NTOS was excited to work with the private

and public sectors in and outside of Serbia to position the country both as an "experiential meeting hub" for business travelers and an internationally recognized destination in the long run.

Under the Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan, the organization will increase its investment in marketing activities with key partner airlines, such as the national airline Air Serbia, to boost the country's valuable connections with

priority international markets.

Just before 2022 ended, Air Serbia announced that direct flights between Belgrade and Chicago would begin for the first time in three decades, from May 17. With Serbia on the pathway to being more accessible to a much greater number of people, Labovic invites everyone to come, create beautiful memories, and experience Serbia. ■

→ <http://www.serbia.travel>



Ramska Fortress in eastern Serbia



Tara National Park in western Serbia