

新年レセプション大使御挨拶

[English]

Your Excellency, Ms. Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission,
General Robert Brieger, Chairman of the European Union Military Committee,
Honorable Members of the European Parliament,
Ambassadors, Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for gathering here today to start this new year with us.

Over two years have passed since I arrived in Brussels in 2020, and despite the turbulent time that we have experienced because of the pandemic and the situation in Ukraine, I am pleased to have this opportunity today to meet with you all to celebrate the

New Year in person for the first time in three years.

To begin, I would like to say a few words in the hope that 2023 will be a year of peace and prosperity.

We are now at a historic turning point. The free, open and stable international order that we have all together defended after the two world wars, is now in grave danger. The Russian aggression against Ukraine is one of the reasons for this unfortunate turn of events. However, even in Asia and other parts of the world, we are facing serious challenges. In addition, in other matters pertaining to the economy, environment and other areas, we have no time to find solutions to all the global issues. We must act strongly to defend the international order based on the rule of law and multilateralism. Japan and the EU, together with our allies, will continue to support Ukraine and work even more closely this year to restore peace as soon as possible. Japan and the EU with all other like-minded

countries remain strategic partners with common fundamental values such as democracy, rule of law and freedom, and we will continue to promote cooperation in areas as diverse as the EPA, the SPA, the Green Alliance and the Digital Partnership.

This year, Japan will assume the extremely important responsibilities of the Presidency of the G7 and take on the role of non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. In these difficult times, Japan would like to further promote cooperation with the EU in all multilateral frameworks, including the G7, the G20 and the UN, with the aim of maintaining a peaceful and stable international order in Europe, Asia and all over the world, including the Indo-Pacific region.

[French]

Son Excellence (Madame) Margrethe Vestager, vice-présidente exécutive de la Commission européenne,

Général Robert Brieger, président du comité militaire
de l'Union européenne,

Honorables députés du Parlement européen,

Ambassadeurs, Invités distingués,

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Lorsqu'une nouvelle année commence, le signe zodiacal de l'année est toujours un sujet important de conversation au Japon. Le signe zodiacal de cette année est le lièvre et l'année du lièvre est censée signifier que certaines choses qui se sont produites au cours de l'année écoulée vont prendre fin, menant à une prochaine étape de prospérité et de croissance. Espérons sincèrement que ce sera le cas.

[English]

When a new year begins, the zodiac sign of the year is always an important topic of conversation in Japan. This year's zodiac sign is the rabbit and the Year of the Rabbit is said to mean that the various things

that have happened in the past year will come to an end, leading to the next stage of prosperity and growth. Let us sincerely hope that this will be the case.

[French]

Je vous souhaite à vous, à vos familles, à vos collègues et au monde entier une merveilleuse année. Passez une excellente soirée accompagnée de quelques saveurs japonaises.

[English]

I hope that you will enjoy this evening's selection of Japanese delicacies. I wish you, your families, colleagues and the world a wonderful year ahead. I hope that you will enjoy this evening's selection of Japanese delicacies.

Arigato Gozaimashita.