

Mattarella on mission in Japan from 3 to 10 March, will meet Ishiba and Emperor Naruhito

The trip could provide an opportunity for discussion regarding the alliance with the United States, which is crucial for both countries in terms of security and economic exchanges.

February 21 2025

© Agenzia Nova - Reproduction reserved



The president of the Republic, **Sergio Mattarella**, will be in Japan from March 3 to 10 for a demanding institutional visit, which will come at the culmination of a phase of intense deepening of bilateral relations and which will touch on the political and institutional, economic and cultural spheres of cooperation between Rome and Tokyo. The visit, in the pipeline for several years, fills a gap in some ways: the last trip by a President of the Republic to the Asian country dates back to 16 years ago, and saw as protagonist **Giorgio Napolitano**. Mattarella's mission, in which the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation will participate on behalf of the government **Edmondo Cirielli**, will take place between Tokyo, Kyoto and Hiroshima, and includes meetings between the President of the Republic and the Emperor **Naruhito** and the Japanese Prime Minister, [Shigeru Ishiba](#).

The mission's program includes an arrival in Tokyo on Monday, March 3, followed by an evening meeting with the Italian community in the Japanese capital. The day of March 4 will be dominated by institutional commitments, with a visit to the Imperial Palace and a meeting with Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako. In the afternoon, Mattarella will visit the Diet Building - Japan's bicameral parliament - and will meet the presidents of the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors. In the late afternoon, a stop is planned at the Meiji Kinenkan concert hall, where a concert by the tenor will be held in the

presence of representatives of the Imperial House. **Vittorio Grigolo**, an important moment of cultural exchange.

On Wednesday, March 5, Mattarella will visit the headquarters of Keidanren, the Japanese Confindustria, for a meeting with important economic and business figures from the two countries: the event will precede a large business forum scheduled for May 13 in Rome, with the participation of about 200 Italian and Japanese companies, which will be a continuation of this dialogue and will further strengthen the economic pillar of the strategic partnership. In the afternoon, after a visit to the Senso-ji Buddhist temple, Mattarella will meet Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba.

On March 6, the President of the Republic will leave for Kyoto for two days of cultural engagements. Mattarella will visit the Nanzen-ji temple and garden and meet his fellow countrymen. The following day, the Head of State will visit the Kinkaku-ji Golden Pavilion, the Kyomizu-dera Buddhist temple and the Minami-za Kabuki theatre. On March 8, after a stop at the To-ji temple, Mattarella will leave for Hiroshima, where he will visit the Peace Memorial and Museum. In the evening, the President of the Republic will visit the headquarters of Nihon Hidankyo, the association of survivors of the nuclear bombings, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year. It will be another moment dedicated to public debate, with a necessary reference to the crises and conflicts underway at a global level. On Sunday, March 9, after a visit to the Itsukushima Shinto shrine, Mattarella will leave Japan and stop in Astana, Kazakhstan, before returning to Italy.

Mattarella's trip to Japan comes at the end of two years marked by a historic turning point in relations between our country and Japan, the beginning of which can be traced back to the entry into force of the Strategic Partnership Agreement in January 2023. Last year, however, the Prime Minister [Giorgia Meloni](#) and former Japanese Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida** approved, on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Borgo Egnazia, the Bilateral Action Plan for the period 2024-2027. In the last two years, there have also been numerous meetings at government levels, both between prime ministers and ministers, thanks also to the Japanese presidency of the G7 in 2023 and the Italian presidency last year. The Bilateral Action Plan approved last year identified seven main areas for deepening cooperation between Italy and Japan: diplomacy; defense and security; economic resilience and security; economic and industrial cooperation; culture and exchanges between people; academic collaboration and scientific research; food and agriculture.

Cooperation in these areas is not only developing on a bilateral level, but also in a broader framework, that of the European Union-Japan partnership - especially with regard to trade - and with NATO for security. Mattarella's mission will mark the start of a further phase of intensification of exchanges in each of these sectors, also dictated by the geopolitical and macroeconomic challenges posed by the turbulent global scenario. Italy and Japan have many points in common, despite the great geographical distance. First of all, there is a strong commonality of views on the main geopolitical dossiers, from the conflict in Ukraine to the challenges of the Asian and Indo-Pacific theater, to which Italy is paying increasing attention in its role as an important member of the EU and NATO. Last year's regional tours by the Amerigo Vespucci and the Cavour Carrier Strike Group brought Italian naval diplomacy to Japan, and concretely demonstrated our country's determination to cooperate with our allies for a free and open Indo-Pacific, based on respect for the status quo and the rules of international law.

In the background, Mattarella's visit will therefore also raise the common theme of relations with China, as well as those with South Korea. In the context of relations with the leading Asian power, Tokyo finds

itself balancing on the one hand the concern for Chinese assertiveness in the region and the risk of a conflict in Taiwan, which would see Tokyo deployed on the front line alongside the United States. On the other, the centrality of relations in the economic sphere, with an objective partnership of trade - China is the leading destination for Japanese exports - which it is in Tokyo's interest to preserve. China is also a crucial interlocutor for managing the challenges posed by North Korea's ballistic and nuclear programs: a trilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of Japan, China and South Korea could be held in Tokyo next month. However, Japan is also an important interlocutor in the context of Italian policies for Africa: Tokyo is a traditional development partner for numerous emerging countries, and together with India and several African countries it is a partner of the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC).

Mattarella's trip to Japan could provide an opportunity for discussion regarding the alliance with the United States, which is crucial for both countries in terms of security and economic exchanges: Japan, like Italy, is a commercial power and derives 23 percent of its GDP from exports. The hypotheses of duties and the apparent crisis of trade agreements are a cause for concern in both Rome and Tokyo, especially since one of the pillars of the Japanese economy is participation in free trade agreements, and the Asian country has for years positioned itself as a promoter of economic integration and a model of good trade practices in the Indo-Pacific, through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CpTpp).

From an economic point of view, Japan is the world's fourth largest economy and a very important partner for Italy, with which it has numerous collaborations in place not only in traditional sectors such as fashion and agri-food, but also in the technological field. Around 150 Italian companies currently operate in Japan, and 380 Japanese companies in Italy. Cooperation in the aerospace sector has recently stood out, of which the Global Combat Air Programme (Gcap) for the development of a sixth-generation fighter in collaboration with the United Kingdom is emblematic: a project that is also the spearhead for collaboration in the academic, technological and research fields. At a time when there is a risk of a contraction in some export items, the relaunch and deepening of economic and commercial relations with Asia takes on even more importance: Mattarella's visit will shortly precede the Universal Exposition 2025, the program in the Japanese city of Osaka from 13 April, which for six months will also see our country as a protagonist thanks to the Italian Pavilion, and a very busy calendar of events aimed at promoting economic cooperation, investments, academic and cultural exchanges.

Source: <https://www.agenzianova.com/en/news/mattarella-on-mission-in-japan-from-3-to-10-march-will-meet-ishiba-and-emperor-naruhito/>