

OKA Commissioner Lee encourages Korean adoptees in France, Hangeul school teachers

Also meets with heads of major Korean associations in France: ‘I am proud and heartened by efforts to restore identity’

The Overseas Koreans Agency announced on May 19 that Commissioner Lee Sang-duk traveled to Paris to hold a meeting with adopted Koreans and Hangeul school teachers for the first time overseas to listen to their concerns and encourage them. France is the country with the largest number of adopted Koreans in Europe.

The meeting, held at the Sofitel Hotel in Paris on May 16, was attended by members of the Roots of Korea (Racines Coreennes, Chair Lee Jae-dong) and the Korea Nantes Association (Chair Jeon Heon-joo), the oldest organizations of adopted Koreans in France, and more than 50 adopted Koreans who have entered mainstream French society.

“I am proud and heartened that adopted Koreans are succeeding in their countries of residence, learning the Korean language and culture, and striving to restore their Korean identity,” Lee Sang-duk said in his opening speech, adding that the government is sincerely working to resolve the difficulties of adopted Koreans.

At the meeting, Kim Min-cheol, director of the OKA’s Exchange and Cooperation Division, explained in detail the government’s policy direction for adopted Koreans and the major projects currently underway, and interacted with the participants.

Lee Jae-dong thanked the OKA for organizing the meeting and said that with the support of the agency, the Racines Coreennes will celebrate its 39th anniversary in September with events across France.

“Adoptees feel that Korea is their roots, and they try to promote Korea in their countries of residence,” said Jeon Heon-joo, who introduced the various activities of Korean associations in France, including promoting Korean culture and arts in local areas and organizing gatherings for adopted Koreans.

Adoptees made recommendations to the OKA, such as establishing a scholarship program for the second and third generations to visit their home country and the need to maintain Korean citizenship for the second generation.

In the afternoon of the same day, Lee attended the European Association of Korean Schools (Chair Lee Jang-seok) teacher training, where he encouraged more than 150 field teachers and officials from 64 Hangeul schools in 18 countries across Europe. The teachers gathered in the auditorium applauded the visit and expressed their pride as local teachers who are fulfilling the mission of teaching Hangeul abroad.



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (1st row, 7th from L) takes a commemorative photo with more than 150 teachers from 64 Hangeul schools in 18 countries across Europe at the European Association of Korean Schools teacher training on May 16.



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (1st row, sitting, 3rd from L) takes a commemorative photo with participants at the first invitational meeting of overseas adopted Koreans in Paris on May 16.

Teacher training on theme of ‘Going Global with Roots’

This year’s teacher training program featured a variety of educational programs and was sponsored by the OKA in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in France, the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education, the World Federation of Overseas Korean Traders Associations (World-OKTA), the Korean Women’s Association in France, the Korean Scientists and Engineers Association in France, and the Korean Education Center in the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

This year’s training was themed “Going Global with Roots” and focused on providing the latest educational information and specialized lectures to Hangeul school teachers. Professor Kim Taek-soo of Kyung Hee Cyber University spoke on “preparing Korean language classes for the era of AI full-stack and sovereign AI” and professor Han Jeong-hee of Baekseok University spoke on “characteristics of Korean grammar and teaching methods.”

In the breakout discussions, the teachers were divided into kindergarten and elementary classes, middle and high school classes, and adult and multicultural classes to share their teaching practices and concerns, and discuss positive teaching methods. In addition, Lee Min-ho, director of the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education, introduced the “Overseas Korean Education Support Project” and suggested future collaborations with Hangeul schools in Europe.

During the training, teachers discussed various topics, such as language teaching methods, cultural experience classes and planning programs for the next generation. In particular, they shared their experiences in adapting to non-face-to-face classes after COVID-19 in order to help them solve practical problems in the classroom. Participants also discussed historical and cultural tours of Paris, teacher-teacher fellowship programs and ways to educate multicultural children.

Commissioner Lee: ‘Language education is first step to finding Korean roots’

“Language education is the first step in finding the roots of the Korean people,” Commissioner Lee said in his congratulatory remarks. “In the age of

AI, Korean language school education needs to change, and I hope this training will be a practical opportunity for such a transition.”

“It is important to foster creative education methods and a sense of global citizenship that are adapted to the digital environment,” said Moon Seung-hyun, South Korean ambassador to France. “Thanks to the dedication of teachers, the children of European compatriots are finding their roots and identity and growing into proud global citizens.”

In his opening remarks, Lee Jang-seok, president of the European Association of Korean Schools, emphasized: “Even in the age of AI and digitalization, the fundamentals that we must convey to our children remain unchanged. Beyond language education, Hangeul schools are playing a role in conveying the spirit, culture and history of our people.”

In addition, he asked teachers to “learn deeply and gain joy from this training with the attitude of a ‘teacher-educator’ who teaches, learns and grows together.”

On May 15, Commissioner Lee held a meeting with 30 representatives of major overseas Korean organizations in France, where he highly praised the development of the local Korean community and called for strengthening intergenerational communication and active participation of the next generation of compatriots.

The OKA shared that representatives of compatriot organizations asked for a reduction in negative perceptions in Korea of Koreans living abroad, a lowering of the age for multiple citizenship and support for preparations for the 140th anniversary of France-Korea diplomatic relations next year. 🇫🇷