

09
2025

재외동포의



Window into Overseas Koreans



Special Article - Announcement of Overseas Korean Literary Awards winners

Special Feature - Now it's K-tourism

Overseas Korean of the Month - Dr. Seo Se-mo, 'eternal family doctor of Koreans in Hawaii'

Current Issues & Topics - 11th World Korean Politicians Forum

Patricia Lee, Nevada's first Supreme Court justice of Asian and African descent



제3대 김경협 재외동포청장 취임식

2025년 9월 10일(수)



‘I will go beyond connecting with overseas Korean community to strengthening solidarity’

I previously sponsored the introduction of the Basic Act on Overseas Koreans, which centered around the establishment of the Overseas Koreans Agency. Eight years later, standing here as the head of the OKA is a moment of profound emotion. At the same time, I feel a profound sense of duty and responsibility as the first head of the OKA under a sovereign government of the people.

First, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest respect and gratitude to the former commissioner and all staff members who dedicated themselves to building this new agency on a solid foundation.

We are currently in an era of profound transformation, both internally and externally. Externally, we face rapid changes, such as intensifying competition between the United States and China, the restructuring of global supply chains, and AI technological innovations. Internally, we face complex domestic and international crises, such as population decline and the disappearance of rural communities.

Amid this rapid uncertainty, I intend to focus my efforts on the following four areas.

First, I will go beyond connection to strengthen solidarity with the compatriot community. The globalization of the Korean Wave and the Republic of Korea's standing in the global economy were not achieved solely through government efforts. These achievements are possible thanks to the tireless dedication of our compatriots, who have played roles no less valuable than diplomats in their respective countries.

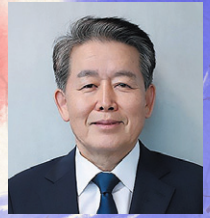
I will actively connect the experience, knowledge and global networks of the compatriot community with our society. The government will support the private diplomacy activities of our compatriots and establish a solidarity platform where compatriot experts in various fields, including science and technology, culture and arts, economics and education, can collaborate with the homeland.

Second, we will actively strive to foster the identity of overseas Koreans. Korean identity does not stem solely from blood ties or nationality. It stems from language, history, culture and mutual understanding.

Among these, Korean language education is the most effective means of strengthening the roots of the next generation of Koreans and fostering a sense of national unity between Koreans at home and abroad. We will significantly expand support for Hangeul schools and systematize the Korean language curriculum for the next generation of Koreans.

Third, we will expand customized support for overseas Koreans, befitting our nation's status. With the rapidly changing global situation, many Koreans are exposed to various threats, including political and legal instability and discrimination. In this context, the OKA must serve as a strong foundation for our compatriots abroad. We will strengthen support

Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup
of the Overseas Koreans Agency



for Koreans in crisis and other difficult situations at home and abroad, establishing a detailed and robust support system.

Furthermore, we will carefully develop policies to ensure that people from diverse backgrounds, including children from multicultural families, adoptees and those with historically special ancestry, can feel a sense of belonging as members of the Korean people.

Fourth, I will strengthen support for the growing number of diaspora residing in Korea. South Korea faces a national sustainability crisis due to population decline and the disappearance of provincial communities. In rural areas, the simultaneous exodus of young people and the aging population threaten the very existence of local communities.


In this context, the continued influx of foreign national compatriots into Korea represents the most effective and realistic solution. They possess a strong understanding of Korean language and culture, and possess strong ties to their homeland, making them highly likely to settle into local communities.

We must now recognize compatriots residing in Korea not as mere returnees but as members of a community committed to building a shared future. We must systematize Korean language education, housing and employment support, and local community integration programs to ensure their stable integration into our society.

Furthermore, by attracting and supporting the settlement of young compatriots residing abroad, we will actively leverage the capabilities of Koreans from around the world and contribute to securing a future growth engine for South Korea.

I have heard that our agency is staffed by members with diverse careers and backgrounds. Just as overseas Korean communities around the world, despite living in regions with different languages, cultures and historical backgrounds, are connected by their shared Korean roots and demonstrate their strength, the diverse experiences and perspectives of our employees will serve as strengths that enable us to develop more in-depth policies for our overseas Korean community and view our compatriot communities from a broader perspective.

Strengthening solidarity between compatriots and our homeland begins with our own solidarity. Organizations and societies that are only competitive and lack cooperation will eventually collapse or even perish. In football, I value and praise players who excel at assists more than those who score goals.

Let's create an organizational culture of mutual respect, trust and cooperation, and work together to achieve the national goal of "strengthening solidarity with the overseas Korean community." 



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This magazine can also be viewed at <http://webzine.korean.net>

Grand Prize winners Park Tae-in (poetry), Kim Hye-jin (short stories), Kim Ji-hyun (essays)

OKA announces 13 winners in three categories: poetry, short stories, essays
OKA Commissioner Kim: ‘We will continue to develop awards as platform for sharing literary talent’

제27회 재외동포 문학상

2025. 6. 4.(수)
~ 6.30.(월)
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응모 자격

- 거주국 내 시민권·영주권 취득, 또는 7년 이상 장기체류한 재외동포
- 단, 청소년(만 7세 이상~19세 미만)은 시민권·영주권 취득, 또는 5년 이상 장기체류한 재외동포

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부문	출품 편수	1편당 최고 분량	글자수	작품 요요 서식
시	3~5편	제한 없음		
단편소설	1~3편	16,000자 내외	15쪽 내외	
수필	1~3편	5,000~10,000자 내외	5~10쪽 내외	

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재외동포청
Overseas Koreans Agency

시상 내역

	시	단편소설	수필	수상작별 상금
대상	1명	1명	1명	500만원
우수상	1명	1명	1명	250만원
가작	2명	2명	3명	100만원

시상식·초청 행사

- 지원 내역: 항공료, 숙박비, 식비 등 참가비 일체
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- 일정, 장소, 항공료 상한액은 추후 수상자 개별 통보

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◎ 코리아넷(korean.net) 공지사항 접속
↓
◎ 하단의 '온라인 신청 바로가기' 버튼 클릭
↓
◎ 신청서 작성 → 응모 작품 첨부
↓
◎ 저장 (제출기간 내 수정 가능)
↓
◎ 마이페이지 → 신청서 확인 → 신청 완료 (최종 제출 후 수정 불가)

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A poster for the 27th Overseas Koreans Literary Awards

Literature by overseas Koreans is a story conveying the longing for a homeland, etched by a pen in Hangeul. Works that capture the lives and culture of overseas Koreans have the power to connect lives separated by time.

The Overseas Koreans Literary Awards, now in its 27th year, is recognized for its profound impact as a bridge connecting the 7 million overseas Koreans and the Korean people.

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup) announced on Aug. 25 the winners of the 27th Overseas Koreans Literary Awards, open to overseas Koreans worldwide, including 13 works (four poems, four short stories and five essays).

The grand prize in the poetry category went to “Work that Bends the Border” (Park Tae-in), the short story category to “Crocodile” (Kim Hye-jin) and the essay category to “Gosari” (Kim Ji-hyun).

The announcement was made through the Overseas Koreans Agency (oka.go.kr), Korean.net (korean.net) and Sotong24 (sotong.go.kr).

The 13 winners will receive a total of 30 million won in prize money and a certificate of merit, and the winning works will be published and distributed as a collection titled “A Window into Overseas Korean Literature.”

For first time, all winners will be invited to their homeland for awards ceremony

This year’s contest, which ran for the entire month of June, attracted significant interest from overseas Korean writers, receiving over 2,400 entries from 61 countries worldwide, an 89

percent increase in entries compared with the previous year.

Reflecting this enthusiasm, the OKA will invite all winners to their homeland for the first time this year to hold an awards ceremony and various networking events with Korean writers.

The judging panel included leading Korean writers, including Jeong Ho-seung, Na Hee-deok and Moon Tae-jun (poetry category); Gu Hyo-seo, Eun Hee-kyung and Pyeon Hye-young (short story category); and Park Sang-woo, Kwon Ji-ye and Yoon Seong-hee (essay category).

List of winners of 27th Overseas Koreans Literary Awards

No.	Category	Award Details	Name	Country	Title of Piece
1	Poetry	Grand Prize	Park Tae-in	Canada	Work that Bends the Border
2		Excellence Prize	Choi Jae-joon	U.S.	Mongdol Beach
3		Honorable Mention	Cheon Bo-rin	Djibouti	Salt Snow
4			Li Yong	China	Apple Pear
5	Short Story	Grand Prize	Kim Hye-jin	Australia	Crocodile
6		Excellence Prize	Jo Hye-kyung	U.S.	Book Hunter
7		Honorable Mention	Im Ok-hee	Australia	Daylight Savings Time
8			Kim Yong-ju	U.S.	Spare Tire
9	Essay	Grand Prize	Kim Ji-hyun	U.S.	Gosari
10		Excellence Prize	Kang Seon-ae	Germany	Identity, and Me
11		Honorable Mention	Kim Myeong-jung	U.S.	Outing in LA
12			Kim Seon-ju	U.S.	A World That People Live In
13			Kang Min-ah	Russia	The Story of a Special Buffalo

"This year's literary awards featured works that captured the diverse lives, conflicts, losses and aspirations of Koreans living abroad around the world," the judges said in a joint statement. "The works fulfilled their original intentions through fully realized aesthetics and showed us a unique level of perfection."

The Overseas Koreans Literary Awards has established itself as a gateway for overseas Korean literary scholars, producing numerous writers, including Park Mikhail, a Koryo-saram author who has won the Kataev Literature Award and the Kuprin Literature Award.

"The Overseas Koreans Literary Award has served as a bridge between our motherland and the compatriot community through literary works," OKA Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup said. "We will continue to develop this award as a platform for our compatriots to preserve their Korean identity and share their literary talents." 장



Author Cho Seong-guk, who won the grand prize in the short story category of the 26th Overseas Koreans Literary Awards at the 18th World Korean Day ceremony last year, gives his acceptance speech.

Work that Bends the Border

Park Tae-in (Canada)

Every day, my father butchered a cow.
Sharpening knives,
separating bones,
wiping off blood.
Everything proceeded quietly.
Fingers frozen to the joints,
dark streaks of blood trickling down the walls,
until the ripened smell wafted through the warehouse.

The wind that touched the dock
finally pushed my back.
My mother not looking back,
my father walking silently.
The border
was a threshold of light that could only be crossed by bending down,
and what was dismantled was
breath, flesh, language, and even names.

Along with the debt
that flowed down people's backs,
the boundaries collapsed.



We lived.
The debts were alive,
the balance was also alive,
and all that survival
dripped like blood.

But the immigration officer
didn't ask us what "family" meant.
We didn't answer,
and the red stamp
spoke for us on the paper.
That stamp was the only red thing we carried here with us.
The ink of our homeland didn't dry when we crossed the border.

Crossing a border was said to be
the opening of a new door.
But for me
it wasn't a door
it was time disintegrating like a lump of meat,
outside the outskirts of the city,
in a place thick with the stench of beasts
a crevice of frozen labor.

I remember.
The flesh where my father's knife had cut,
the bloodshot spots on my mother's bundle,
the slight fever my younger brother left
and the remains of a dismantled name
that was left behind. 장

Visitors to Korea surge amid 'KPop Demon Hunters' popularity; every corner becomes a 'hot spot'

Increase surpasses pre-COVID levels; K-culture like 'KPop Demon Hunters' playing a major role



Interest in Korea has surged significantly following the global popularity of the American animated film "KPop Demon Hunters," released on Netflix. According to Google Search Trends on Aug. 20, the global search volume for "Korea" is currently at its highest level in two years and eight months since late 2022. Searches for "Korean food" also hit an all-time high, increasing by 75 percent since the show's release. Pictured is a dessert specialty shop in the popular shopping district of Myeongdong in Seoul.

"Tonight at midnight, at Namsan Tower... Don't miss it."

This is how the idol group Saja Boys from the global phenomenon "KPop Demon Hunters" introduced their live performance. It vividly imprinted Korea's tourist attractions on the minds of over 200 million viewers of the animation worldwide.

The film also features locations across Korea as key backdrops: Jamsil Olympic Stadium, the Samsung Station electronic display, Bukchon Hanok Village, Cheongdam Bridge, Jayang Station and the Seoul Naksan Fortress Wall Trail.

While these are familiar places that Seoul citizens might pass by without a second thought, they have become famous locations for foreigners, sparking themed tours and photo challenges. The film also radiates Korea's charm by capturing the essence of K-culture

by featuring bathhouses, hot dog stands, photo booths, traditional Korean medicine clinics, instant "ramen" and "kimbap."

Era of 20 million annual visitors has arrived; exceeds pre-COVID-19 levels

The number of foreign visitors to Korea has recently shown an upward trend, surpassing pre-pandemic levels.

According to the Korea Tourism Organization, 1,733,199 visitors came to Korea last month, a 23.1 percent increase compared with the same period last year. This represents 119.7 percent of the level seen in July 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating further growth. From January to July this year, the number of visitors reached 10.56 million, a 15.9 percent increase compared with the

same period last year. This also represents a recovery to 106.8 percent of the same period in 2019, before COVID-19.

Experts analyze that the increase in visitors to Korea was significantly influenced by Korean cultural products, such as K-culture, including K-pop, K-beauty and K-food. In particular, there has been a rise in tourists seeking to enjoy K-pop in its country of origin or visit filming locations for movies and dramas.

According to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism's "2023 Survey on the Status of Hallyu Overseas," the global number of members of "hallyu," or Korean Wave, fan clubs was estimated at 225 million. The top reason cited by foreign visitors for traveling to Korea was "after experiencing hallyu content" at 32.1 percent.

Government expands tourism promotion to 25 countries, launches 'K-Tourism Pass'

While the end of COVID-19 and structural changes, including the expansion of low-cost carriers (LCCs) played a role, Korea's rise as a desirable tourist destination was driven by its soft power centered on hallyu culture.

The government has established a goal of attracting 18.5 million foreign tourists this year. With foreign tourist arrivals already surpassing 10 million in the first seven months and the global K-culture craze continuing, the target is expected to be reached.

The Hyundai Research Institute projected in a June report that foreign tourist arrivals this year could reach a record high of 20.9

million. This would generate approximately US\$20.25 billion in tourism revenue, equivalent to 29.4 trillion won. This represents about 2.5 percent of last year's nominal domestic consumption (1,167.8 trillion won).

The government is pursuing a strategy to create new demand and enhance profitability by diversifying the inbound tourism market, products and itineraries. Key detailed tasks include ▲ Segmenting key markets, such as China and Japan, ▲ Promoting global K-tourism marketing, ▲ Leveraging the popularity of K-content, ▲ Encouraging visits during international events like APEC and the Osaka Expo, ▲ Targeting special-purpose markets, such as hobby clubs, education and marine tourism, and ▲ Improving regional tourism accessibility. Concurrently, efforts are being made to promote Korea and attract tourists by hosting roadshows directly overseas.

The government is expanding the target countries for tourism promotion from 20 to 25 and will newly issue the K Tourism Pass, which foreign tourists can use for transportation and admission fees.

The government has also allocated budgets for K-food and K-beauty linked to the Korean Wave. In the food sector, it will strengthen customized support at all stages before exporting the products. For the beauty sector, it will support the localization of manufacturing raw materials and establish two joint logistics bases in the United States. 🇺🇸

Yonhap News Agency reporters Ahn Yong-soo and Kang Ae-ran



A K-food specialty shop in Myeongdong, Seoul

Trying out 'gat' hats from 'KPop Demon Hunters'; foreigners fall for Korea

Gat popular at 'hanbok' rental shops near Gyeongbok Palace; tourists visiting 'KPop Demon Hunter' locations

Also wearing hats with 'Umma' written in Hangeul; 'Jjimjilbang' and 'bibimbap' cited as attractions

"Korean cowboy hat!"

Cody, a Canadian I met recently in an alley near Gyeongbok Palace in Seoul, where "hanbok" rental shops line the streets, pointed to the "gat" on his head and said this.

The gat is one of the costume props worn by the male idol group Saja Boys in the Netflix animation "KPop Demon Hunters," which is set in Korea. While it's an unfamiliar prop to foreigners, Cody said many people in Canada also know about the gat from watching "K-Pop Demon Hunters."

KTO unveils 'Style of Joseon, gatjan'

Considering this response, the Korea Tourism Organization also recently unveiled K-souvenirs selected through a contest, including "Come over here, the scenery of gat" and "Style of Joseon, gatjan," featuring the gat motif.

"We've had many customers seeking the gat from Saja Boys since a month ago," an employee at a hanbok rental shop said. "Although the heat wave has slightly reduced foot traffic, the 'KPop Demon Hunters' effect has indeed been noticeable."

Google Trends search interest from countries like the United States, Japan and France since the animated film's release indicates heightened interest in traveling to Korea.

Looking at the top 52.4 percent of related search terms for "KPop Demon Hunters," searches for specific Korean locations like Bukchon (11.8 percent), Naksan Park (9.6 percent) and the Olympic Main Stadium (9.6 percent) -- actual locations depicted in the film -- showed a high proportion.

Ann Katrin, who traveled to Korea with her husband Max from Germany, remarked, "'KPop Demon Hunters' aired after we booked our flights, which heightened our anticipation for Korea."



Foreign tourists visiting Gamcheon Village in Saha-gu, Busan, pose for a commemorative photo wearing hanbok. Gamcheon Village has been named to the "Top 100 Korean Tourist Attractions" list, selected every two years by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and the Korea Tourism Organization, six consecutive times.



Tourists cool off at the royal pharmacy within Changdeok Palace in Jongno-gu, Seoul. According to the Palace and Royal Tomb Heritage Headquarters of the Cultural Heritage Administration, visitors can sample traditional herbal teas like "jeho-tang" and "omija" berry drinks while resting in the medical facility.

Among the places we visited, the rainbow fountain at Banpo Bridge was the most fantastic," referring to the location that appeared in the film.

Bukchon (11.8 pct) is most popular location in Korea

They also showed interest in hanbok, Korea's traditional attire. Ann Katrin pointed to the hanbok her husband wore, featuring a dragon design, and introduced it as "the king's robe."

Perhaps due to their fondness for Korean culture, tourists accompanied by professional photographers were noticeable along the stone wall path of Gyeongbok Palace, having their pictures taken in hanbok.

Foreign tourists found not only traditional culture like hanbok and ancient palaces fascinating but also everyday experiences, such as Korean food and play culture.

Cody, who was wandering the alleys of Bukchon wearing a traditional hat, said: "I went to a jjimjilbang, and it wasn't just a place to bathe. There were areas to eat food and even sleep, which was fascinating," highlighting the public sauna as one of the charms of traveling in Korea.

Marie Bon, from France, said: "My daughter has been studying in Korea for two years, so this is my first time visiting. I enjoyed eating bibimbap and kimbap." When asked if she had tried Buldak Bokkeummyun she laughed and said, "I knew about it even before coming to Korea, but it's too spicy for me to eat."

Foreign tourists cited K-pop and K-dramas as reasons for visiting Korea

On Aug. 28, foreign tourists wearing hats with "Umma" written in large Hangeul letters were spotted at Seoul's landmark Lotte World Tower. They appeared to be traveling with family members.

Foreign tourists encountered that day cited K-pop and K-dramas as one of the reasons for visiting Korea.

Richard, a British national currently traveling through five countries, including Korea for a month, explained: "One reason I chose Korea was K-pop. I like the singer HyunA, and I got hooked on the music a colleague was listening to at work."

Positive influence of favorable attitudes to K-content

A friend traveling with Richard also mentioned knowing Korean singers, saying he liked the song "Apt." by BLACKPINK's Rose and pop star Bruno Mars.

The positive influence of K-content seemed not just a fleeting trend but one with lasting impact.

When asked why she had traveled to Korea, Annika, visiting from Germany for her summer vacation, answered, "Because of K-dramas." She explained that watching the 2009 drama "Boys Over Flowers" sparked her fondness for Korea.

"After seeing that drama, I always wanted to visit Korea," she said with a smile. 🇰🇷

Yonhap News Agency reporter Kang Ae-ran

Dr. Seo Se-mo, ‘eternal family doctor of Koreans in Hawaii’

Selected for his 37 years of dedicated medical service to Hawaii’s Korean community
Conducted medical research and academic activities while nurturing next generation,
also contributed to advancement of medicine in Korea



Dr. Seo Se-mo, September’s Overseas Korean of the Month

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup) has selected Dr. Seo Se-mo (1930-2019) as the Overseas Korean of the Month for September. Seo provided medical services to Koreans in Hawaii for 37 years and contributed to the advancement of Korean medicine through active medical research.

Seo was born in Dongnae, Busan, in 1930. After graduating from Seoul Gyeonggi Public Middle School, he entered Severance Medical College in 1948, the predecessor of Yonsei University Hospital. After graduating from Severance Medical College in 1954, he trained in the United States and Canada. He returned to Korea in 1963 and served as an assistant professor of pediatrics at the

Yonsei University College of Medicine before moving to The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada, in 1966, where he earned his Ph.D. in physiology.

Practicing medicine to elevate status of Koreans

He later moved to Hawaii in 1972 and served as a professor of pediatrics at the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii. After establishing the Seo Se-mo Clinic in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1986, he provided medical services for 37 years, serving as the primary physician for Koreans in Hawaii and elevating their status through his medical practice.

Upon returning to Korea from the United States in 1963 to serve as an assistant professor of pediatrics at Yonsei University College of Medicine, he emphasized the necessity of patient-centered bedside education and basic medical science in clinical disease treatment. He spearheaded changes in medical education methods, alongside young professors who had completed training in the U.S. and returned home to Korea.

He also pioneered the invitation of renowned pediatric professors to host the first International Pediatric Symposium, providing an opportunity to broaden global horizons. He devoted significant efforts to advancing pediatric endocrinology, which was then an underdeveloped field. For these contributions, he received the Korean Pediatric Society Academic Award in 1966.

‘He cared for Koreans with nowhere to turn to until the very end’

While working at Shriners Children’s Hospital in Hawaii from 1977 to 1985, he provided medical volunteer services for first-generation Korean immigrants who struggled with English communication. He also personally visited underserved rural areas in Korea, bringing over 100 physically disabled children at his own expense to Hawaii so they could receive free treatment at Shriners Hospital.

The Seo Se-mo Clinic provided specialized care exclusively for Koreans every Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning, offering free treatment to Koreans without insurance. He also held free health seminars and health classes to improve the health and quality of life for Koreans.



The Seo Se-mo Clinic in Honolulu, Hawaii, is pictured on the left. On the right is a presentation of the Peony Medal to Dr. Seo at the 2020 14th World Korean Day Meritorious Service Awards.

Donated body to medical education and gave over 1,500 medical books collected throughout his lifetime

Dr. Seo also devoted himself to medical research and nurturing the next generation. Starting in 1966, he researched “The correlation between various hormones related to calcium and magnesium metabolism” at the Research Institute of the University of Toronto’s Hospital for Sick Children, earning his Ph.D. in physiology from the University of Toronto in 1972.

While serving as a professor at the John A. Barnes School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii, he established the Bone Mineral Research Laboratory at Shriners Hospital for Children, researching the causes and treatments for “hormones associated with calcium and magnesium metabolism and various bone metabolic disorders.” Many renowned physicians active in Korea, including Professor Emeritus Jang Joon-seop of the Yonsei University College of Medicine, a pioneer in osteoporosis treatment in Korean orthopedics, and Professor Emeritus Kim Deok-hee of Yonsei University College of Medicine, who contributed to the development of pediatric endocrinology in Korea, studied under Seo.

Seo donated over 1,500 medical books collected throughout his lifetime to Pocheon Jungmun Medical College and contributed a significant sum to Severance Hospital at Yonsei University, his alma mater, thereby supporting the cultivation of future scholars.

He participated in preserving the history of Korean immigration by overseeing the publication of books as part of the preparatory committee for the 90th anniversary of the Korean Christian Church. In 2013, he established the nonprofit Healthforce Foundation to raise medical funds, which were utilized for volunteer Korean medical services.

Through his will, he provided a noble sacrifice for medical education, including donating his body to the University of Hawaii’s medical school for medical research after his death.

Furthermore, he was dispatched to Okinawa, Japan, from 1972 to

1974 to impart American clinical medicine to Japanese medical students. He also contributed to the East-West medical exchange by becoming the first Korean physician to lecture at the general assembly of the Japan Pediatric Society.

In the 1970s, when Kawasaki disease -- an acute vasculitis affecting children -- emerged in Japan, he invited Dr. Kawasaki to Hawaii for joint studies, laying the groundwork for Hawaii to become the U.S. hub for Kawasaki disease research. The disease’s name originates from the Japanese physician who first reported it to the global medical community in 1967.

In recognition of Seo’s achievements, the Korean government posthumously awarded him the Order of Civil Merit, Peony Medal, in 2020.

Commissioner Kim: ‘eternal family doctor of Koreans in Hawaii’

“Dr. Seo Se-mo is the eternal family doctor of Koreans in Hawaii, having devoted his life to medical research and medical service for them,” OKA Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup said. “He is selected as the Overseas Korean of the Month for September so that his dedication and spirit of sacrifice for overseas Koreans may be remembered forever by future generations.”

The OKA identifies compatriots who have contributed to the development of the Republic of Korea or enhanced the status of Koreans in their countries of residence, selecting and announcing them as the Overseas Korean of the Month each month. The previous honorees include March, Kim Pyeong-jin (1926-2007), former president of the Jeju Development Association in Japan; April, Hong Myeong-gi (1934-2021), former chairman of the M&L Hong Foundation; May, Im Cheon-taek (1903-1985), an independence activist; June, Park Byeong-heon (1928-2011), former head of the Korean Residents Union in Japan; July, Park No-hak, former president of the Return of Detained Sakhalin Koreans Association; and August, independence activist Lee Ui-gyeong. [\[장\]](#)

51 politicians from 10 countries gather to discuss global leadership roles

Hosting organization World Korean Politicians Council elects Melissa Lee, New Zealand MP, as next chairperson

The 11th World Korean Politicians Forum, aimed at fostering exchanges and cooperation among Korean politicians worldwide, concluded Sept. 5 after a three-night, four-day schedule.

Hosted by the World Korean Politicians Council (Chairperson Cindy Ryu, Washington state representative, U.S.) and sponsored by the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center (Director Kim Young-geun), the forum took place at The Plaza Hotel in Seoul starting Sept. 2, with the participation of 51 Korean politicians from 10 countries.

Sharing the outcomes discussed at the forum, participants agreed to: ▲ Embrace diversity, ▲ Implement cultural diplomacy initiatives, ▲ Enhance capabilities through continuous education and ▲ Expand the network of Korean politicians as a global platform that contributes not only to Korean communities but also to the development of the countries where they reside.

Participants in the Russia and CIS subcommittee emphasized intergenerational experience sharing and supporting the growth of young politicians, proposing strategies for sustainable development in local communities and the Korean diaspora.

The global subcommittee shared approaches for positively embracing “dual identity” and expanding political influence through multiethnic solidarity and increased civic participation.

The North American regional session agreed to promote unity within the Korean community and expand its global influence by leveraging the role and potential of Korean American politicians, addressing language barriers and identifying establishment challenges, mentoring the next generation of politicians, expanding cultural and language programs, and strengthening policy support and solidarity.

‘We will serve as development platform for both our homeland and countries of residence’

Participants visited the National Museum of Korea and the Integrated Transportation Control Center on the third day, Sept. 4, experiencing Korea’s history, culture and advanced systems. They also witnessed Korea’s potential as a cultural diplomacy asset firsthand through a night tour of Changgyeong Palace and traditional costume experiences.



The 51 Korean politicians from 10 countries participating in the 11th World Korean Politicians Forum pose for a commemorative photo in front of Myeongjeong Gate while wearing “hanbok” during their visit to Changgyeong Palace on Sept. 4.

On the morning of Sept. 5, the final day of the forum, at an internal meeting of the World Korean Politicians Council, the following members were newly elected as regional representatives: Virginia House Rep. Shin Jae-yeon (U.S.), Mukilteo Councilor Moon Tae-won (Washington, U.S.), British Columbia Rep. Choi Byeong-ha (Canada), former Canadian Northwest Territories Health Minister Lee Seung-shin, U.K. London Borough of Hammersmith Council Member Kwon Bo-ra, People’s Representative Council of Yakkasaray District Member Lee Igor (Tashkent, Uzbekistan), Almaty Council Member Yelena Zhelayeva (Kazakhstan), Veliky Novgorod Duma Council Member Yevgeny Kim (Russia) and New Zealand MP Melissa Lee.

Among the nine regional representatives, Melissa Lee was elected as chairperson of the World Korean Politicians Council through a vote.

‘I will take lead in advancing rights and interests of Korean communities worldwide’

“We will strive to become a council that truly lives up to the elevated status of our homeland and our overseas compatriots, taking the lead in enhancing Korean political power and advancing the rights and interests of Korean communities in each country,” Lee said after her appointment.

Kim Young-geun, director of the Overseas Koreans Cooperation



Participants pose for a commemorative photo at the closing ceremony of the 11th World Korean Politicians Forum held by the World Korean Politicians Council and the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center at The Plaza Hotel Seoul on Sept. 5.

Center, remarked: "In this global era, the network of Korean politicians and the enhancement of Korean political power are becoming increasingly important. We will support the World Korean Politicians Forum so that it can continue to grow as a global community encompassing both the motherland, the Republic of Korea and Korean politicians worldwide."

The opening ceremony, held earlier on Sept. 2, was attended by global politicians of Korean descent, as well as officials from the Korean National Assembly and the government.

National Assembly Speaker Woo: 'Your dedication and passion have greatly elevated our nation's international standing'

Domestic attendees included Foreign Minister Cho Hyun, Democratic Party lawmaker Kim Sang-wook, OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk, Parliamentarian's Society of the Republic of Korea Chairman Chung Dae-chul, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Korea Alisher Abdusalomov, Seoul Metropolitan Council Chairman Choi Ho-jeong, Seoul Metropolitan Council Member Kim Won-tae and World Federation of Overseas Korean Traders Associations (World-OKTA) Vice President Hwang Sun-yang.

This year's forum featured the participation of the next generation of politicians and a high proportion of politicians from Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region. Young politicians from various countries participated, creating a forum for exchange that transcended generations and regions, including ▲ Lee Igor, member of the Tashkent City Council, Uzbekistan (born 1982), ▲ Kim Yevgeny, member of the Veliky Novgorod City Duma, Russia (born 1985), ▲ Shim Dmitri, member of the Temirtau City Council, Kazakhstan (born 1985), ▲ Choi Byeong-ha, member of the Legislative Assembly of British

Columbia, Canada (born 1986), ▲ Shin Jae-yeon, member of the Virginia House of Representatives, U.S. (born 1987), ▲ Mario Benavente, Fayetteville city council member, North Carolina, U.S. (born 1990), ▲ Lee Su-jeong, Monash city council member, Victoria, Australia (born 1993, youngest participant).

"I hope this will be an opportunity to share the expertise, influence and practical capabilities demanded by today's international community from Korean politicians, based on the spirit of the era of K-leadership that the world is watching, and to explore ways to enhance the political power of our compatriot community," Chairperson Cindy Ryu said in her opening remarks.

National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik said in a video congratulatory address: "Your dedication and passion are boosting the pride of the Korean community and greatly elevating the international standing of the Republic of Korea. I hope that, based on the K-spirit, you will be a source of strength for each other and open paths to cooperation with the wider world."

Kim Young-geun, director of the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center, welcomed participants, saying: "The achievements and dedication of Korean politicians worldwide, made under difficult conditions in various countries, are a great source of pride for us all. We will steadfastly support the exchange and cooperation taking place over the four-day schedule and do our utmost to ensure the mutual development of both the countries of residence and the homeland."

Following the opening ceremony, a welcome dinner hosted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs was held. At the event, Minister Cho Hyun praised the attendees, stating, "Korean politicians are leaders who serve the citizens of their countries of residence and are a valuable bridge connecting the Republic of Korea and the world." 장

Exemplifies K-spirit of rising like a phoenix from homelessness to caring for children

'Measure of success lies not in money or flashy titles but in contributing to community'

"K-pop is a powerful cultural bridge connecting the world. Behind it lies the K-spirit -- a history of diligence, overcoming adversity and revival. It is the Korean spirit that rises like a phoenix from hardship."

Patricia Lee (50), a justice on the Nevada Supreme Court in the United States, who visited Korea to attend the 11th World Korean Politicians Forum organized by the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center (Director Kim Young-geun), spoke about the K-spirit spreading globally via the bridge laid by K-pop during an interview with Yonhap News Agency at Seoul's Daeil Foreign Language High School on the afternoon of Sept. 9.

Born in Jeonju, North Jeolla Province, to an African American father serving in the U.S. military in Korea and a Korean mother, Justice Lee is Nevada's first Asian African American Supreme Court justice. She is an iconic figure of the K-spirit, having risen to the highest judicial position after enduring a long tunnel of hardship, including being a child head of household, homelessness and abuse.

'I studied fiercely to avoid living like my parents'

Justice Lee's childhood, after moving to the U.S. at age 4, was a series of hardships. Around age 8, her parents divorced due to her father's alcoholism. Afterwards, she cared for her two younger siblings in place of her mother, who struggled with English, and first encountered the law through a basic livelihood security application form. They were evicted for unpaid rent and moved between shelters for abused women. At 15, unable to endure her stepfather's abuse, she ran away from home and survived by moving between friends' houses.

Despite these hardships, she served as both student body president and cheerleading captain in high school, graduating at the top of her class. She went on to double major in psychology and communication at the University of Southern California (USC), then pursued law at George Washington University Law School, embarking on a career in the legal profession.

"I studied fiercely, afraid I might end up like my parents or



Nevada Supreme Court Justice Patricia Lee delivers a special lecture at Daeil Foreign Language High School in Seoul on Sept. 9.

disappoint the adults who helped me," she said.

She credited as her lifeline both her friends who generously offered help and the federal Upward Bound Program, designed for low-income youth. The program provided subject-specific tutoring, advanced learning during vacations and college entrance exam preparation.

"This is why I could go to college without my parents' help," she said. "One person's compassion and society's institutional support can change someone's life."

'Wearing 'hanbok' on Changgyeong Palace night tour was unforgettable memory'

As a practicing lawyer, she cited providing free legal services through pro bono work to help those in need as her greatest source of fulfillment. She won a lawsuit challenging a military regulation that automatically handed over the remains of an unmarried soldier killed in Afghanistan to the older parent among divorced parents. As a result, the military regulation was amended so that the remains of unmarried soldiers are now handed over to the parent whom the soldier designates.

"Since that day, pro bono has been my lifelong mission," she said.



Justice Patricia Lee of the Nevada Supreme Court is interviewed by Yonhap News Agency.



Patricia Lee wears "hanbok" during her childhood.

Her primary clients were vulnerable individuals: children suffering domestic violence, low-income families on the brink of bankruptcy and those needing to sue large corporations. For this work, she became the inaugural recipient of the American Bar Association's Pro Bono Award in 2013.

Regarding the World Korean Politicians Forum, she expressed gratitude to the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center for the invitation.

"A forum connecting overseas Korean politicians and youth from diverse backgrounds is truly a platform for change," she said. "Visiting cultural heritage sites like the Gyeongbok and Changgyeong palaces and experiencing wearing hanbok are unforgettable memories and deeply moving. I hope more Korean politicians will participate in this forum going forward."

Importance of embracing perspectives different from one's own

Regarding Korea's political situation, she said: "The resilience of Koreans is historically unparalleled. They have successfully overcome recent political and social difficulties and will continue to do so."

What is the standard of success for the accomplished Justice Lee?

"It's not about money or flashy titles. It depends on contributing to the community." She elaborated that how society treats the vulnerable defines its character. "Making the world a slightly better place, upholding integrity and sincerity in one's work, and passing those values on to the next generation -- that is true success."

She also addressed the future in the age of artificial intelligence (AI).

"Unverified reliance on AI is dangerous because it can fabricate fiction as fact," she warned. "Persuading jurors ultimately requires human empathy. AI should be a complement, not a substitute."

Lee concluded the interview with one final remark: "Be nice. We must be kinder to one another."

She delivered a special lecture at Seoul Daeil Foreign Language High School prior to the interview that day.

Her message to the students was summarized in five words: resilience, tenacity, passion, compassion and integrity.

"It takes a lifetime to build a reputation, but it can be destroyed in a second," she said. "Maintain honesty and transparency, and cherish your reputation."

Journaling is support when things get tough

In explaining her principles around communication, she said she always speaks with colleagues in this way: "This is my perspective. What do you think? Don't try to give me the answer I want to hear -- just share your honest opinion."

She added, "It's crucial to have an attitude that accepts perspectives different from mine, humbly listens to critical opinions and acknowledges that my own thoughts might be wrong."

She also shared that her main source of support during tough times is journaling. Putting negative emotions down on paper helps release them. She then emphasized, "The worst thing is making excessive promises you can't keep," stressing the importance of keeping commitments.

She concluded her lecture by quoting Helen Keller's famous words: "The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision. Life gains meaning when you establish a vision for your future and move forward." 장

‘Even though I was called ‘Mrs. Meddler,’ I did it with sense of duty’

OKA-sponsored 17th Peace Concert, themed ‘Path of Light,’ was held at UNESCO headquarters.

70 Korean musicians, French cellist, Spanish pianist performed together on same stage

“I’ve been promoting Korean culture to the world for 22 years as a civilian diplomat. Raising the status of the Republic of Korea is my life.”

Lee Mi-ah (57), president of the Korea-France Cultural Exchange Association and known as a “civilian diplomat” for promoting Korean culture in France, recently visited Korea to attend the Korean Women’s International Network (KOWIN) conference hosted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. She made these remarks in an interview with Yonhap News on Sept. 2.

Lee founded the nonprofit organization Echoes of Korea (Echos de la Coree) in 2003 and has dedicated 22 years of her life to promoting Korean culture to the world. In recognition of her contributions to Korea-France cultural exchanges, she received the French government’s highest medal of arts and culture and the Korean government’s presidential citation in 2013.

The 17th Peace Concert, sponsored by the OKA and held Sept. 26 at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, is her signature event.

“This festival, held annually for 17 years, promotes Korean culture and prays for peace on the Korean Peninsula. Masters like Jo Sumi and Baek Kun-woo collaborate with emerging artists, nurturing promising talent.”

This year’s theme was “Path of Light.” A 70-piece Frankfurt-based orchestra and choir, primarily comprised of Koreans, a gifted French cellist and a Spanish pianist participated.

“Last year, singer Sohyang performed with La Musique de l’Air. We invited diplomatic envoys from 193 countries, and 40 to 80 ambassadors and diplomatic delegations attended.”

She emphasized her network with high-ranking French officials, saying, “Because of the scale of the event -- with current ministers and chiefs of staff giving congratulatory addresses and ambassadors from various countries in attendance -- some people



Chairwoman Lee Mi-ah (R) receives the Order of Arts and Letters from the French government in July 2013. Former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing presented the medal to her.

mistakenly believe it's hosted by the Korean Embassy or the Korean Cultural Center.”

22 years as civilian diplomat; French Nat'l Medal of Merit

The inspiration for Lee’s journey to become a “Korea promoter” stemmed from a shock she experienced while working as a Korean language instructor at the state university of Evry in 2001.

“When I assigned my students a report on Korea, most of the 50 or so students submitted reports on topics like the dire human rights situation in North Korea. I was shocked to discover that South Korea was less well-known in France than North Korea. That’s why I decided to properly promote Korean culture,” she said.

In 2003, Lee founded the Korea-France Cultural Exchange Association (Echos de la Coree, Echoes of Korea), which organizes and hosts various cultural performances and exhibitions.

It began with small-scale events for Korean language students,



Lee Mi-ah, president of the Korea-France Cultural Exchange Association



A poster for the 17th Peace Concert, sponsored by the Overseas Koreans Agency

such as making “kimbap,” experiencing “hanbok” and teaching the song “Spring in My Hometown.”

“I borrowed hanbok from pastors and expatriates in Paris, had students wear it and had them practice the ‘sebae,’” she said, referring to the traditional Korean bow. “That was the seed of the organization.”

As her first project, she hosted the Korean opera “Chunhyangjeon” at the Theatre Mogador in Paris. “After 1 1/2 years of preparation, all 2,400 seats were sold out for two consecutive days. French broadcasters like Figaro and Radio Classics were abuzz, proclaiming, ‘Western opera exists in Korea, too.’”

Following Jo Sumi and Baek Kun-woo, Lee leads the way in discovering new talent

At the time, before any other Korean singers, including Jo Sumi, gained international attention, Lee captivated locals by live broadcasting a Korean soprano’s aria (“Sarangga”). Since then, she has bid for and hosted major events, including the Hanji Festival in collaboration with the city of Paris, the ballet “Simcheong” and a large-scale sculpture exhibition commemorating the 120th anniversary of Korea-France diplomatic relations in 2006.

“The works of Korean sculptors were permanently exhibited in the squares of the new city of La Defense in France and aired as a primetime special on French national television,” she said. “We also created a bibimbap performance at the UNESCO headquarters at the request of the Korean delegation.”

Lee’s activities were not limited to culture. She served as a waymaker in various fields, including signing an MOU between the

Daegu-Gyeongbuk Robot Cluster and the French Robotics Association, serving as an honorary ambassador for the Yeosu Expo, supporting the Busan Expo bid and assisting in the relocation of the Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation to Paris.


“Everyone becomes a patriot when they go abroad,” she said.

For the past four years, as the president of the Korean Women’s Association in France, she and her members have made 700 to 800 kilograms of kimchi each year and distributed it to international students and the elderly, with the total amount of kimchi exceeding 3 tons.

140th anniversary of Korea-France diplomatic relations next year; preparing for 18th concert

Ahead of the 140th anniversary of Korea-France diplomatic relations next year, she expressed her concerns.

“As someone who successfully led the 120th and 130th anniversaries, both countries should have announced an agenda for sector-specific diplomatic events by now,” she said. “We are also preparing for the 18th Peace Concert next year, which will be held in conjunction with the 140th anniversary.”

She also spoke candidly about the challenges she faces during her activities. When her French husband, demanding an end to her activities, cut off his annual support, equivalent to the price of a Mercedes-Benz every year, she found a job at a company to finance her work and has been operating independently for four years. “I’m called ‘Mrs. Meddler,’” she said. “But it’s because of my sense of duty.” 

‘Role and authority of OKA must be strengthened for the good of overseas compatriots in Korea’

Co-hosted with offices of Democratic Party lawmakers Lee Yong-sun, Lee Jae-gang, Park Hae-chul

‘Fundamental solution to legal status issue of Koryo-saram is restoration of citizenship, not residency status’



Participants in the “Policy dialogue for supporting the settlement of overseas compatriots in Korea,” held in Seminar Room 3 of the National Assembly Members’ Hall in Yeouido, Seoul, pose for a commemorative photo on Aug. 29.

To address the issues facing overseas compatriots residing in Korea, voices have emerged calling for the role and authority of the Overseas Koreans Agency as a control tower for overseas Koreans policy to be strengthened.

To mark the 80th anniversary of Korean independence, the “policy dialogue for supporting the settlement of overseas compatriots in Korea,” co-hosted by Democratic Party lawmakers Lee Yong-sun, Lee Jae-gang and Park Hae-chul, and the OKA, was held on the afternoon of Aug. 29 in Seminar Room 3 of the National Assembly Members’ Hall in Yeouido, Seoul.

“As we commemorate the 80th anniversary of Korean independence, it is our historical responsibility to not forget our Koryo compatriots’ dedication and love for our homeland but to warmly embrace them,” OKA Deputy Commissioner Byeon Cheol-hwan said in his opening remarks. “The OKA is committed to developing tailored, comprehensive support measures not only for our compatriots overseas but also for the approximately 100,000

Koryo compatriots who have settled in Korea dreaming of a new life in search of better conditions.”

In his welcoming address, Rep. Lee Jae-kang emphasized: “The right of Koryo-saram to work safely and with respect, even in demanding workplaces, is fundamental. To improve the reality of Koryo-saram being forced into unstable and poor jobs in the early stages of their return, we must strengthen employment stability, job training and industrial accident prevention systems.”

“We are exploring various measures to address visa and employment issues for multicultural individuals residing in Korea, as well as blind spots in health insurance coverage,” Rep. Park Hae-chul also stated in his welcoming address.

Policies to attract immigrants that do not take systematic approach may fail

The policy dialogue featured three presentations: ▲ The current status of Koryoin in Korea and ongoing issues around settlement in

communities (Jeong Young-soon, president of the Association of Koryo-Saram), ▲ Stabilizing Koryoin residency and improving domestic working environments (Kim Young-sook, director of the Ansan Koryoin Cultural Center) and ▲ The current status of education and career paths for Koryoin youth and pathways for development (Cho Nam-cheol, executive director of the Asia Development Foundation).

“Koryoin can become a new growth engine in depopulating regions,” President Jeong Young-soon said in her presentation. “(However,) immigrant attraction policies that lack a systematic approach and consideration for the essential conditions for long-term family settlement, such as quality jobs, housing and education, are likely to fail.”

She emphasized that shifting from a model, where Koryoin must unilaterally adapt to Korean society, to a partnership model, where they collaborate with the existing population, is the shortcut to shared growth for both Koryoin and Korean society.

‘Integrated’ policy is needed to address issues spanning employment, health care, education

“The integration of residency status and the easing of employment restrictions for Koreans residing in Korea have lagged behind the pace of demographic and social change and the rapidly shifting industrial structure,” Director Kim said. “An integrated policy is needed that takes into account the children of Koryoin who obtained residency status after the Enforcement Decree of the Overseas Koreans Act. Furthermore, the employment restrictions for overseas compatriots’ family members should be redesigned from an inclusive perspective, a key demand of compatriots.”

Cho identified five key challenges facing young Koryoin living in Korea: a lack of Korean language skills, difficulties adapting to society, limited employment opportunities, discrimination and prejudice, and a lack of educational opportunities. To address these challenges, Cho emphasized, “We need to expand customized Korean language education support, strengthen social




OKA Deputy Commissioner Byun Cheol-hwan delivers a welcoming address at the policy dialogue on Aug. 29.

adaptation programs, provide job placement and vocational training, and implement campaigns to address discrimination and raise awareness.”

In the ensuing discussion, Professor Emeritus Lim Chae-wan of Chonnam National University, who moderated the discussion, said: “There are eight government departments related to overseas Koreans, and if you include the OKA, there are a total of twelve. The OKA, which handles overseas Korean issues, should see increased budget and personnel as a control tower, while its role and authority should be further strengthened.”

OKA Policy Director Lee Ki-seong said: “The president has instructed the OKA to address discrimination and residency status issues from the perspective of overseas compatriots living in Korea. The presidential office is paying significant attention to overseas Korean issues, and along with the OKA, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Employment and Labor, it is jointly reviewing the issues of compatriots residing in Korea. We will quickly establish a policy direction that reflects the voices of our compatriots.”

Furthermore, the discussion also raised the opinion that the fundamental solution to the legal status of Koryo-saram is now the “restoration of citizenship,” not “residence status.” 



Panel members answer questions from on-site participants at the policy dialogue on Aug. 29.

‘Let’s make integrity a daily practice’; OKA staff strengthen resolve

Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center also participates in ‘Integrity Live’

Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup: ‘We are now in our third year since launching, now is golden time to establish foundation for integrity’

The Overseas Koreans Agency held a session for all employees to reaffirm their commitment to “making integrity a daily practice.”

OKA Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup participated in the “Integrity Live” training event focusing on anti-corruption and integrity policies on Sept. 18. The event, Kim’s first with all staff since taking office, was held in the main auditorium on the 36th floor of the OKA headquarters in Songdo, Incheon.

Conducted in collaboration with the Integrity Training Institute of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, the training also included staff from the Overseas Koreans Cooperation Center, an affiliate of the OKA. Staff unable to attend in person participated online.

This training was designed to help all staff reaffirm the value of integrity, establish a healthy organizational culture grounded in integrity and seek ways to strengthen public service discipline.

Moving beyond a one-way lecture format, the session featured a participatory program integrating diverse cultural content. This included a communication forum with the commissioner, the integrity play “Break the Power Abuser,” the integrity pansori “The New Tale of the Tortoise and the Hare” (Byeoljubujeon), a special integrity lecture and a quiz.

The program opened with participatory activities incorporating cultural content.

“This is a meaningful time to deeply contemplate the organizational culture and values we will build together at the OKA, going beyond simple anti-corruption education,” Kim said at the Communication forum. “Integrity isn’t achieved through words alone; it requires actual systems and operations to support it so that members themselves can be confident that ‘our organization is an

honest one.”

He further emphasized, “As a new organization entering its third year since our launch, now is the golden time for the OKA to establish the foundation for clean administration. All policies and projects must foster a transparent and consistent culture through communication based on mutual understanding and respect for each department’s roles.”

At the event, the OKA staff members pledged, “We will strive to make integrity a daily practice and put it into action through this training.”



Overseas Koreans Agency Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup speaks with his staff during “Integrity Live” at the OKA’s main auditorium in Songdo, Incheon, on Sept. 18.

OKA Commissioner Kim states, 'We will go beyond connecting overseas Korean communities to strengthening solidarity'

'We will foster overseas Koreans' identity and expand tailored support, among other initiatives'



OKA Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup delivers his inaugural address at his inauguration ceremony at the main office in Songdo, Incheon, on Sept. 10.

OKA Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup said on Sept. 10, "Going beyond mere connection, we will strengthen solidarity with the overseas Korean community."

Speaking at his inauguration ceremony held in the main auditorium of the headquarters in Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, Kim said: "We will actively connect the experience, knowledge and global networks possessed by our overseas compatriots with our society in Korea. The government will support the private diplomacy activities of our compatriots and establish a solidarity platform enabling experts in various fields to collaborate with their homeland."

Kim further declared his commitment to actively nurture the identity of overseas Koreans, emphasizing, "We will significantly expand support for Hangeul schools to systematize Korean language education programs for the next generation of overseas Koreans."

Emphasis on systematizing Korean language education programs for next generation of compatriots

"We will expand tailored support for overseas compatriots commensurate with our national stature while also meticulously preparing policies to ensure individuals from diverse backgrounds, such as children from multicultural families, adopted compatriots and those with unique historical circumstances, can feel a sense of

belonging as members of the Korean nation," Kim said.

Furthermore, he expressed his commitment to strengthening support for the increasing number of compatriots residing domestically while also attracting young overseas compatriots to Korea and supporting their settlement. This aims to actively utilize the capabilities of compatriots worldwide to contribute to securing future growth engines for the Republic of Korea.

Newly appointed Commissioner Kim served as a member of the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee, the Intelligence Committee and the Special Committee on Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation during the 19th, 20th and 21st National Assemblies. He currently chairs the Democratic Party of Korea's Special Committee on the Economy of the Korean Peninsula.

The presidential office has previously talked about the background of Commissioner Kim's appointment on Sept. 9, stating: "He is a foreign affairs and security expert with diverse political experience gained through his service as a three-term lawmaker and his activities on the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee, Intelligence Committee and Special Committee on Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation. Notably, while serving as a lawmaker, he proposed the Framework Act on Overseas Koreans, which included the establishment of the Overseas Koreans Agency."

OKA establishes cooperation with Kazakhstan's dedicated body for overseas Koreans

Joint seminar discusses Korea-Central Asia Development Plan with overseas compatriots

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Minister Kim Kyung-hyup) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Sept. 11 to establish a cooperative relationship with Otandastar Qory, an organization under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, dedicated to overseas Koreans.

This marks the first official agreement signed by the OKA with a foreign institution.

It was pursued to enhance the rights and interests of the Korean community in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region and to establish an official cooperative relationship between the two countries' agencies managing overseas Koreans policy.

Under the MOU, the two agencies agreed to pursue: ▲ Exchanges of overseas Korean policies and programs, ▲ Promotion of mutual cultural exchanges, ▲ Cooperation in supporting overseas Koreans in both countries and ▲ Joint research on overseas Koreans.



Officials from the Overseas Koreans Agency and Otandastar Qory pose for a commemorative photo after signing a memorandum of understanding.

Through its ongoing partnership with Otandastar Qory, the OKA has decided to promote the development of the Korean community in Kazakhstan, including Koryoin compatriots, and to foster friendly cooperation between Korea and Kazakhstan.

Following the signing ceremony held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, the two institutions also

held a joint seminar titled "Measures to strengthen Korea-Central Asia relations together with overseas Koreans."

At the seminar, professor Myung Seung-hwan of Inha University, chairman of the K-Community Policy Special Committee, presented on "Policy strategies for overseas Korean cooperation and economic activity support," while Janil Karzakhbayev, project manager of Otandastar Qory, presented on "Cooperation measures between the OKA and Otandastar Qory to strengthen Korea-Central Asia cooperation."

Companies can now obtain apostille for Certificate of Authenticity of Trade Secrets without notarization process

OKA and KIPO resolve point of contention in order to support overseas expansion, also enhance position in responding to international litigation

Korean companies can now obtain an apostille for their Certificate of Authenticity of Trade Secrets without separate notarization procedures. The apostille is a system where the government verifies the authenticity of official documents issued domestically, ensuring their legal validity is recognized overseas.

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup) announced that, in cooperation with the Korean Intellectual Property Office (Commissioner Kim Wan-ki), it will simplify the apostille issuance procedure for Certificates of Authenticity for Trade Secrets starting Sept. 15.

The Certificate of Authenticity of Trade Secrets is a document issued by an original certification agency designated by KIPO for trade secrets held by a company. It serves as supporting evidence

to prove the possession date and originality of trade secrets in the event of disputes between companies.

The current original document certification authorities are the Korea Intellectual Property Protection Agency, LG CNS, Redwit and the Onnuri International Trade Secrets Protection Center. Previously, to have this certificate recognized as an official document, notarization was mandatory. This led to criticism that the notarization date, often later than the actual possession date, was applied as the standard, potentially placing companies at a disadvantage.

Accordingly, the OKA and KIPO have improved the system, recognizing the original trade secret certificate itself as an official document and enabling immediate issuance of an apostille.

Overseas Koreans 365 Call Center: connecting hearts across borders

Over 100,000 cumulative consultations in just two years; steadfast companion for overseas Koreans

"Wherever you are in the world, just one phone call can open the way."

The Overseas Koreans 365 Call Center (webcall.g4k.go.kr), launched by the Overseas Koreans Agency in June 2023, has surpassed 100,000 cumulative consultations in just two years. This figure is more than a mere statistic. It is a testament to the time spent listening to the urgent voices of compatriots worldwide and finding solutions, and evidence of trust.

Living abroad always brings unexpected challenges. When a single supporting document or procedural step gets stuck, the barrier of the "border" grows even higher. To address this, the OKA dispatches specialized personnel from relevant ministries to provide integrated administrative support services.

The call center consultation covers all aspects of overseas Koreans' lives, including: ▲ Apostille (consular certification), ▲ Overseas migration and permanent return reporting, ▲ Overseas citizen registration, ▲ Nationality, ▲ Military service, ▲ Family relations registration, ▲ Driver's licenses, ▲ National pension, ▲ Health insurance, ▲ National and customs taxes, ▲ Veterans' affairs, ▲ Employment, ▲ Education and ▲ Adopted compatriots. It is designed to resolve what used to be complex and inconvenient civil services in a single consultation.

Surpassing 100,000 cases within just two years of operation demonstrates that the Overseas Koreans 365 Call Center has deeply embedded itself in the lives of compatriots worldwide, transcending physical borders.

The strength of the Overseas Koreans 365 Call Center lies in its "anytime, anywhere" service. Consultation is available 24/7, 365 days a year, not only in Korean but also in English, Japanese, Chinese and Russian. Whether it's late night in New York, early morning in Germany or a public holiday in Australia, as long as you can connect, the path opens.

The connection methods have also evolved. Starting with phone calls, KakaoTalk counseling was launched in January 2024, followed by the introduction of web calls in May of the same year, eliminating international call charges. Then, in September 2025, web chat

국제전화로 부담없이, 언제 어디서나

재외동포 365 민원콜센터

365 Civil Service Call Center
for Overseas Koreans

02-6747-0404 / +82 2-6747-0404

QR을 스캔하여 전화·카톡·웹챗·웹콜 중 원하는 방식으로 상담하세요!

365 Civil Service Call Center for Overseas Koreans

운영시간 연중무휴 24시간 (주말·공휴일 포함)
상담언어 한국어·영어·일본어·중국어·러시아어
상담분야
국적/ 병무/ 출생/ 혼인/ 운전면허/ 건강보험/ 국민연금/
국세/ 관세/ 보훈/ 고용/ 교육/ 입양동포/ 해외이주/
재외국민등록/ 아포스티유·영사확인

A promotional image for the Overseas Koreans 365 Call Center

services began, dramatically expanding accessibility. These changes have led to an increase in consultation cases, creating an environment where compatriots can more easily seek help.

The core values pursued by the call center are empathy and people. It does not merely process complaints from overseas Koreans around the world; it listens to their voices, considers their situations together and communicates with relevant agencies. While each individual's circumstances differ, the process of bridging the gap between systems and reality is helping the center discover its true meaning as a "window that stands by you."

"The Overseas Koreans 365 Call Center is not merely a window providing answers; it is a companion that guides you in the right direction on some days and helps you breathe easier on others," an OKA official said. "We will continue to stand by our compatriots worldwide through faster, more convenient services and kinder, more accurate guidance."

The Overseas Koreans 365 Call Center operates under the motto "Hearts Together Beyond Borders." This service, enabling easy consultation anytime, anywhere overseas, has established itself as a reliable lifeline and companion for overseas Koreans, going beyond the mere resolution of civil issues.



- Sept. 10: Inauguration ceremony for Kim Kyung-hyup, third commissioner for the Overseas Koreans Agency
- 11: Signing of memorandum of understanding with Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs-affiliated Otandastar Qory
- 15: OKA and Korea Intellectual Property Office begin issuing apostilles without notarization procedure
- September's Overseas Korean of the Month: Dr. Seo Se-mo, 'eternal family doctor of Koreans in Hawaii' selected
- 18: 'Integrity Live' online and offline training conducted
- 25: Awards ceremony for Global Next Generation Summit appointment certificates
- 29: Opening ceremony of World Korean Association Conference

OKA Announcements

Open call for 2026 Regional Overseas Compatriot Settlement Support Program

Targeting local governments, with support for tailored living, safety, integration for compatriots residing domestically

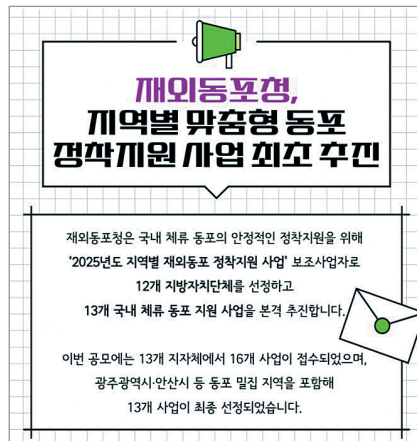
The Overseas Koreans Agency announced a call for proposals for the 2026 Regional Overseas Compatriot Settlement Support Program targeting metropolitan and local governments nationwide.

This call aims to develop tailored support programs enabling overseas Koreans residing in Korea to settle stably within local communities.

The application period closes at 6:00 p.m. on Oct. 2. Metropolitan and basic local governments under the Local Autonomy Act may participate individually or jointly. Selected local governments may freely propose projects in the following areas targeting overseas Koreans residing within their jurisdiction (F-4/H-2 visa holders, etc.): establishing a foundation for daily life (employment linkage, medical support, settlement counseling, etc.), improving resident awareness (integration events, etc.) and basic safety (public safety, industrial safety).

The total project budget is 686 million won, with national funding covering up to 50 percent of the costs. Local governments must submit official documents, including the project application letter, application form, plan and relevant supporting documents. If necessary, they may also solicit proposals from potential contractors to delegate the project.

The OKA plans to form a selection evaluation committee to



This image introduces the results of the 2025 Regional Overseas Compatriot Settlement Support Program's open call.

comprehensively review project feasibility, expected outcomes, budget appropriateness and performance management plans. Projects receiving duplicate subsidies for identical or similar initiatives, projects targeting broader multicultural foreigner populations and projects with for-profit, religious or political objectives are excluded from support.

The subsidy will be disbursed in two installments: 70 percent in the first phase and 30 percent in the second phase. Disbursement and settlement will be conducted through the e-Nara Help system. A progress report and settlement report must also be submitted

within two months after the completion of a project.

"We expect participation from various local governments to help domestic compatriots settle stably and strengthen mutual growth with local communities," an OKA official said.

For further details, contact the Domestic Compatriot Support Task Force Team at the OKA. (032-585-3283)

Meanwhile, in the open call for the 2025 Regional Overseas Compatriot Settlement Support Program, 16 projects were submitted by 13 local governments. Twelve local governments, including areas with high concentrations of compatriots, such as Gwangju and Ansan, were selected. Additionally, 13 support projects for compatriots residing domestically were promoted.

태풍 예보가 있으면 준비하세요



거주지역에 태풍이
영향을 주는 때를 파악



비상시 대피 방법 파악과
비상용품을 구비



외출은 자제하고
주변에 기상정보를 공유



집안팎 하수구, 배수로,
축대, 옹벽 등 점검



지붕, 간판 등이
날아가지 않게 고정



선박, 시설하우스 등
시설물 정비

태풍 특보 시에는 꼭 지켜주세요



내가 있는 곳의
태풍 정보를 수시로 확인



가족, 지인, 이웃과 연락해
위험정보 공유



비·바람 위험으로부터
안전한 곳에 머물기

*외출 자제

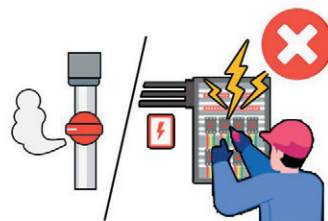


침수·산사태 위험지역에서
안전한 곳으로 대피



각종 시설물 정비를 위한
야외활동 금지

*논둑이나 물꼬, 지붕 수리 등



가스를 미리 차단하고
전기시설 점검 금지

더 큰 대한민국, 재외동포와 함께 만들어 가겠습니다

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