

## 'We must end era of hatred and misunderstanding' Unified call to improve perceptions of Chinese compatriots

OKA holds 'Policy Dialogue to Improve Domestic Perceptions of Chinese Compatriots'

To improve domestic perceptions of Chinese compatriots, experts and leaders of Chinese compatriot organizations urged fundamental policy shifts across residency status, nationality, budget and education, stating, "Improving perceptions must start with changing systems and policies, not just campaigns."

The Overseas Koreans Agency (Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup), in collaboration with National Assembly members Chae Hyun-il and Lee Jae-gang, held the "Policy Dialogue for Improving Domestic Perceptions of Chinese Compatriots" at the National Assembly members' office building in Yeouido, Seoul, on Nov. 24.

"The Republic of Korea faces a crisis of national sustainability due to population decline and the disappearance of local communities," Kim said. "The return of overseas compatriots is the most effective and realistic solution."

"Uniting the 7 million-strong compatriot community and connecting their experience, knowledge and global networks with our nation is essential for establishing the Republic of Korea's international standing and securing future growth engines."

He argued that the foremost practical step toward this goal is supporting the stable settlement of compatriots returning to Korea.

He pledged to swiftly complete or achieve tangible progress on the following: ▲ integrating residency statuses for compatriots in Korea (H-2 and F-4), ▲ enacting anti-hate legislation and ordinances in local governments with large compatriot populations, and ▲ easing requirements for permanent residency acquisition and nationality restoration.

"It is the national duty to ensure our compatriots can settle stably, and that the next generation can carry forward their hopes," Chae said in his welcoming remarks.

"The repeated anti-China and anti-Chinese sentiment protests, along with hate speech directed at compatriots in Korea, reveal another challenge our society must address," Lee said in his opening remarks.

Kwak Jae-seok, director of the Migration Research & Training Center, who delivered the first presentation, emphasized, "Resolving the issue of discrimination against Chinese compatriots is a national task that can no longer be ignored," stressing that the OKA must take a central role.



Key participants in the policy dialogue aimed at improving domestic perceptions of Chinese compatriots pose for a photo. Fifth from left is OKA Commissioner Kim Kyung-hyup, and sixth from left is co-host National Assembly Rep. Chae Hyun-il.

The second presenter, Park Dong-chan, director of "The 3rd Voice," suggested: "For awareness-raising activities to take root deeply in Korean society rather than ending as temporary campaigns, institutional consolidation by the government is essential. This can be achieved through the establishment of legal mechanisms that directly regulate discriminatory and hateful expressions."

In the subsequent plenary discussion chaired by professor Jeon Chun-hwa of Hongik University, government, academic and field representatives, including Kwak Sam-ju, senior adviser at the OKA; Kim Jung-ryong, representative of the Da-Gachi Forum; and Kim Dong-hoon, director of the Seoul Foreign Residents Center, presented diverse opinions.

"The OKA, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Employment and Labor have reached a consensus on integrating the H2 Visitor Employment Visa and F4 Overseas Korean Visa after multiple meetings," Kwak said. "However, there are differences between ministries regarding the scope of permitted industries post-integration, which are currently being adjusted. The goal is to announce the final plan in December and implement the new system next year."

Chinese compatriots and on-the-ground activists expressed agreement with the direction of the government policy while pointing out limitations in the budget and implementation structure. 장