

The Foreign Policy Team of Candidate Yoon Suk-yeol Answers Our Questions about Relations with Europe

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The KF-VUB Korea Chair invited the foreign policy teams of the leading candidates to the March 2022 ROK presidential election to answer questions about relations between South Korea and Europe. These are the answers exactly as they were received.

What is your policy towards Korea-EU relations?

Korea is the only Asian country that has forged a strategic partnership, trade agreements, and security cooperation with the EU. Candidate Yoon plans to advance Korea's relations with EU countries to deeper strategic partnerships across all areas, from politics and the economy to security.

First, Korea and the EU can broaden the scope of cooperation on advanced technologies and the economy, which constitute future growth engines. We believe there is great potential for expanding bilateral cooperation to areas of mutual interest, such as semiconductor technology, green technology, and space.

Second, we will strengthen cooperation in the field of international politics. In particular, the EU's high level of interest in and new strategy toward the Indo-Pacific region suggest that there is now more space for substantial cooperation between Korea and the EU. Since the two sides agree on the need to maintain the current international order, which

has hitherto ensured prosperity and stability, we will be able to strengthen cooperation to that end.

Third, there is much room for South Korea-EU cooperation on North Korea. Not only has the EU faithfully implemented UN sanctions, it has also called out North Korea's nuclear development and human rights issues through autonomous sanctions since 2016. At the same time, EU member states have established diplomatic relations with and provided humanitarian assistance to North Korea. This two-pronged approach of maintaining sanctions for the denuclearization of North Korea while at the same time providing humanitarian aid for the vulnerable is consistent with candidate Yoon's North Korea policy. Candidate Yoon will strengthen international solidarity for the improvement of North Korea's human rights situation. Accordingly, there are many areas for South Korea and the EU to cooperate on in terms of policy on North Korea's denuclearization and human rights issues.



What is your policy towards Korea-NATO relations?

Candidate Yoon believes that we can step up bilateral cooperation in the following areas:

Maritime security: Korea and the EU are both deeply concerned about violations of the freedom of navigation and the consequent economic and security threats. Stable and safe maritime transport connections are inevitably the key to maritime security for Korea and the EU. Korea has cooperated on maritime security with EU countries by taking part in Operation Atlanta, and we believe that by strengthening our participation in this operation, Korea can contribute to the freedom of navigation in the

region, as well as joint responses to maritime terrorism, human trafficking, illegal fishing, environmental damage, and natural disasters.

Cyber and space security: Korea and the EU are both major targets of cyber attacks, and in that sense, Korea and NATO can broaden and advance cooperation on cybersecurity and space security.

Crisis response: The recent trend is that a crisis in one region does not remain in that region but spills over, and in that vein, Korea and the EU should deepen bilateral cooperation in response to crisis situations by cooperating on planning and exercises.

What is your policy towards Korea-Europe cooperation in the Indo-Pacific?

Despite the great potential for cooperation between Korea and the EU in the Indo-Pacific region, the two sides have not defined the concept of a national vision or strategy on the Indo-Pacific, nor have they coordinated policies on this region. Candidate Yoon will promote cooperation in each field if he takes power.

Korea and the EU could start by cooperating on digital trade. In particular, we look forward to bilateral cooperation in the areas of data protection, technical cooperation, and technical standard setting.

Joint research and technological cooperation on 6G, cloud-based computing technology, Internet of things (IoT), and information and communications technology (ICT) are possible. Korea and the EU are one of the few partners for technological cooperation capable of making practical progress with advanced

technology based on international standards.

Climate change is an existential threat to us all. Korea and Europe must continue to cooperate through participation in bilateral, multilateral, regional or global cooperation mechanisms (e.g. COP Glasgow).

Korea and the EU can respond jointly to cyber attacks by formulating legal and institutional mechanisms and exchanging cyber attack response technologies. In particular, we can strengthen bilateral cybersecurity cooperation by quickly joining the Budapest Convention.

We expect to be able to respond jointly to the prevention of infectious diseases and their spread in the region, and to cooperate on the exchange of infectious disease vaccines and treatment technologies.

What is your policy towards Korea-Europe cooperation with like-minded partners in mini-lateral and multilateral forums?

Should Candidate Yoon win the presidency, he will establish “value diplomacy partnerships” with European countries to establish international norms

and promote human rights. In so doing, he plans to broaden cooperation on new industries, climate change, and advanced science and technology.

The evolving security environment shows us that it is very difficult for a single country to weather a crisis alone. Furthermore, there are a number of issues that cannot be resolved through bilateral relations alone. We can, therefore, maximize the synergy effect in our resolutions of and responses to global issues by joining hands with democratic nations that share common interests and values.

In that context, we need to make efforts to participate in and revitalize the various multilateral mechanisms that exist in each field of cooperation.

Strengthened cooperation between Korea and the EU, which respect liberal democracy, the market economy, free trade, human rights, and the rule of law, will be a good momentum for advancing cooperation with other countries. In addition, as Korea and the EU have very similar positions on the nonproliferation of WMD, unilateral and multilateral cooperation on export control and related issues is always welcome. Above all, Korea will increase its contributions and role in major multilateral economic forums such as the G20, APEC, and OECD, and we will cooperate closely with Europe in the process.

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