

Joint Statement on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership Between the Republic of Korea and the Slovak Republic

At the invitation of His Excellency Yoon Suk Yeol, President of the Republic of Korea (hereinafter referred to as the ROK), His Excellency Robert Fico, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter referred to as Slovakia), paid an official visit to the ROK from September 29 to October 1, 2024.

Building upon over 30 years of bilateral relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1993,

Noting the significant progress made in various fields of bilateral cooperation, including trade and investment, security and defense, energy security, culture, and people-to-people exchanges,

Reaffirming the importance of shared values such as freedom, human rights and the rule of law that form the foundation of our partnership,

Sharing a common interest in revitalizing and working closer together on bilateral, regional, multilateral, and global issues,

Marking the mutually beneficial relations and desire to further strengthen and deepen our cooperation as the two countries enter a new era of partnership,

During the Summit Meeting between the ROK and Slovakia, both sides agreed to elevate our bilateral relations by establishing a Strategic Partnership encompassing the most significant areas of present and future cooperation as follows:

Political, Security, and Defense Cooperation

Considering the Protocol on Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea signed in Seoul on August 27, 2001 and to maintain the momentum of regular high-level exchanges, both sides agreed to strengthen political dialogue and to conduct a regular political consultation between the two Foreign Ministries including at the Ministerial level to discuss bilateral, international and other issues of mutual interest. Both sides agreed to hold consultations among other inter-Ministerial bodies on subjects of common interest and encourage exchanges and dialogue between the National Assembly of the ROK and the National Council of Slovakia and other institutions.

Both sides will fully support a fair, just, and rules-based international order, with the United Nations (UN) playing the central role in addressing global issues and bringing political solutions to international disputes through consultations and negotiations. Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in the UN, ASEM, ROK-EU relations, ROK-NATO relations, and other multilateral mechanisms, including close dialogue about the possibilities to address shared security threats and challenges.

Within the framework of defense cooperation, the Memorandum of Understanding between the ROK and Slovakia was signed on September 21, 2022, at the level of the Ministries of Defense, and it covers the development of defense and security cooperation. It provides the basis for cooperation in defense policy consultation, military education and training, defense industry cooperation, and much more.

Based on shared security interests and reliable, accountable, visible, and mutually beneficial partnership, both sides will promote mutually beneficial cooperation in the area of defense, including but not limited to sharing lessons learned in building robust, well-prepared, equipped, trained, and highly motivated Armed Forces; cooperation in the field of acquisition policy, introduction of military supplies, defense industry, including research and technology (R&T), countering hybrid and cyber threats, and strengthening the resilience of the state and society.

Economic and Trade Cooperation

Considering the existing robust economic and commercial relations, including a number of significant investment projects of the ROK in Slovakia, and the Agreement on Economic Cooperation between the Government of the ROK and the Government of Slovakia signed in Bratislava on February 28, 2017, both sides agreed to further reinforce the bilateral economic relations between the ROK and Slovakia. The Korean strategic investments in Slovakia established a unique basis for strengthening bilateral cooperation in the fields of innovation, modern technologies, and start-ups.

Both sides recognized their shared commitment to free, fair, and rules-based trade and acknowledged the enormous potential for further expansion of trade and investment between the ROK and Slovakia. To deepen and expand mutually beneficial economic and trade cooperation, both sides agreed to make full use of the ROK-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which entered into force in July 2011.

In terms of technology cooperation, both sides will aim to facilitate collaboration between private sectors in various fields such as artificial intelligence (AI), e-sectors, green technology, robotics, autonomous systems, defense industry, and carbon-free energy industries, including hydrogen, nuclear, and renewable energy technologies. Both sides will also seek to cooperate in the development and application of hydropower and biotechnology.

Both sides will aim to support and promote cooperation in the defense industry and in other sectors, recognizing the potential of a higher value-oriented investment for mutual growth and development. Slovakia will provide various forms of support for incoming investors, including regional investment incentives and a preferential tax regime for companies with R&D operations.

Scientific, Medical, Social and Cultural Cooperation

Considering the Agreement between the Government of the ROK and the Government of Slovakia on Scientific and Technological Cooperation signed in 2013 and existing cooperation between universities, institutes, and researchers, both sides agreed to identify opportunities for joint research and collaboration in mutually agreed areas.

Both sides acknowledged the importance of international cooperation in the field of healthcare and global health challenges, and agreed to endeavor to explore areas of cooperation in relevant fields of mutual interest.

Referring to the Agreement between the Government of the ROK and the Government of Slovakia on cooperation in the field of culture, education, and tourism, signed in Seoul on October 30, 2007, both sides emphasized the importance of enhancing the exchange of knowledge, experience, culture, and tourism between their peoples.

Both sides agreed to endeavor to conclude an Agreement between the ROK and Slovakia concerning a Working Holiday Program and boost further exchanges between young generations.

Both sides underlined their willingness to further develop and support cultural activities, promote the mobility of researchers and academics in relevant areas, and encourage student exchanges and university cooperation to strengthen the bond between the two countries. Both sides also agreed to lay support for cooperation on provincial and regional levels and through various twinning projects in mutually agreed areas.

International Cooperation

Acknowledging their common interests and priorities in a range of global issues, such as the preservation of the rules-based international order, the global financial architecture, climate change negotiations, non-proliferation, nuclear safety and security, piracy, and sustainable development, both sides agreed to further strengthen cooperation in these areas and confirmed their continued willingness to be actively engaged in these areas.

To this end, both sides agreed to promote further cooperation within the Visegrad Group plus the ROK format, including through high level meetings, political consultations as well as other joint projects. Slovakia appreciated the ROK's contribution to the International Visegrad Fund (IVF) and agreed to continue identifying projects that align with the mutual interests of both sides in the future.

Both sides shared the belief that there is much to be gained from a closer relationship between Europe and the Indo-Pacific and have agreed to work together toward this end, in close cooperation with other partners. Both sides agreed that future possibilities for closer dialogue and cooperation within new areas, both thematically and geographically, could be explored in the years ahead.

Situation on the Korean Peninsula

Slovakia has expressed its continued support for the efforts to establish peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula through meaningful developments in inter-Korean relations, on the basis of sincere and substantial dialogue. Furthermore, Both sides agreed to continue consultations to achieve this goal. In this regard, Slovakia supported the ROK's Audacious Initiative as well as the "August 15 Unification Doctrine" for a unified Korean Peninsula that is free, peaceful, and prosperous.

Both sides have called for the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and rendered its consistent support in this regard. Both sides have condemned nuclear tests by the DPRK and the unprecedented number of missile launches, which pose a serious threat to regional and international peace and security and to the global non-proliferation regime.

Both sides expressed strong concern over the increasing military cooperation between the DPRK and the Russian Federation, including the DPRK's export and Russia's procurement of ballistic missiles in violation of multiple UNSC resolutions.

Both sides remain deeply concerned with the human rights situation in the DPRK, with the on-going, systematic, widespread, and gross human rights violations, some of which may amount to crimes against humanity.

Both sides also committed to strengthening cooperation to promote human rights in the DPRK and called for the immediate resolution of the issues of abductees, detainees and unrepatriated prisoners of war.

Closing remarks

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned commitments and seeking to support effective implementation of this Joint Statement, both sides will review the implementation of the Joint Statement at mutually acceptable intervals.