

Compte Rendu:
**“EU-Korea Convergences and partnerships 10 years after the EU-Korea FTA, in the post
Covid era and within the US-China trade war”**

Conference organized by Asia Centre

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Summary written by Hadrien Saperstein.

Keynote speaker:

- Lukas Mandl (chairman of the European Parliament’s Delegation for Relations with the Korean Peninsula)

Chairs:

- André de Bussy (former French diplomat, former Head of the G20 and G7 protocol, Boulogne municipal councilor, territorial advisor, and member of Asia Centre)
- Jean-François Di Meglio (President of Asia Centre)

Speakers :

Panel 1 : The points of convergence within the analysis of post Covid international relations

- Maximilian Mayer (University of Bonn, CASSIS project)
- Antoine Bondaz (Foundation for Strategic Research, SciencesPo)
- Nicola Casarini (Senior Fellow, Istituto Affari Internazionali)
- Paul André (Adjunct Faculty, Collège universitaire, SciencesPo; Associate Research Fellow, EU-Asia institute, ESSCA)
- Jean-François Di Meglio (President of Asia Centre)

Transition : Elisabeth Suh (Visiting fellow at SWP)

Panel 2 : Future opportunities of EU-ROK cooperation in specific areas of competence and excellence

- Ramon Pacheco Pardo (KF-VUB Korea Chair, Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Reader in International Relations, King’s College London)
- Tereza Novotna (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow, Free University Berlin & Senior Associate Research Fellow, EUROPEUM Prague)
- Brigitte Dekker (Clingendael Institute), paper co-written with Maaïke Okano-Heijmans (Clingendael Institute)
- Eriks Varpahovskis (NRU, Higher School of Economics), paper co-written with Rafal Smoczynski (Polish Academy of Science)

Jean-François Di Meglio (President, Asia Centre): Webinar Introduction Remarks.

The world is presently full of many noises and topics, still, not only because it has been 10 years since the European Union-Republic of Korea signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), but, also, because Asia Centre considers that at this juncture geographical areas like the European Union (EU) and East Asia, and more specifically, the Republic of Korea (ROK/SK), which displayed a tremendous attitude during the pandemic, should know each other much better.

I would like to thank first of all, the academics that contributed to the project. We received tremendous papers of excellent quality. The participants (almost one hundred people today from many countries around Europe) should have read the paper, therefore, I will now explain the methodology for today's webinar.

There will be two panels with a question and answer period later. In between the two panels there will be a guest speaker: Elisabeth Suh, on cyberspace and North Korea. I would also ask the speakers to only speak for seven minutes as we only have two hours available today.

MEP Lukas Mandl (Chairman, EU's DKOR): Keynote Speaker.

Thank you for the invitation. I look forward to all the contributions to all the experts because it will help us in the parliamentary work: parliamentary diplomacy, which is so important not only for the normalization between the two countries in the peninsula but even more than that but for strengthening the ties with South Korea. The latter is one of only ten strategic partners of the EU and only ones with agreements in the field of security, economics and politics, which is exception. The FTA has achieved a lot in terms of rising numbers on both sides in mutual trade relations by creating jobs. This must be discussed further especially during a pandemic that creates a global economic crisis. Partners for the EU, like South Korea, that share our common values – democracy, human rights, individual freedom, economic freedom – are extremely important now; more than ever before the current crises. South Korea is also an example on how to handle the pandemic. This is why we should do to our utmost to share information for the health of our people in both the EU and Korea, and all over the Europe.

We also face security threats in Europe, but, also, in other parts of the world, and this is why I really appreciate that ROK is a partner in terms of security. SK is in a position to participate in the EU peace keeping position. As you may know, Austria (my home country) just faced a terrible terrorist attack last week, and that is why in these days, SK is a partner in this field. And, when we talk about economic crises we should not forget that not everyone shares our aforesaid values, but it is intervening in terms of the economy and business, which is why we share our values and connect, and cooperate in as many areas of business.

Since our societies are based on those values. This is why I will closely listen to the experts, and I look forward to it. And, I will include it in my parliamentary work as the chair to the delegation with the Korean peninsula in the European Parliament.

Thanks again to Asia Centre for organizing this webinar.

André de Bussy (French Diplomat, G20 Meeting 2011): First Panel Introduction Remarks

Good morning. The next panel will be introduced by our first speaker Dr. Maximilian Mayer from the University of Bonn. As you have been instructed, you have seven minutes for the talk. I would like to open the talk with the following question to Dr. Mayer: According to you, what are the major political trends for EU and SK to take into account and what kind of convergence exist between the two actors?

Maximilian Mayer (University of Bonn, CASSIS project): First Speaker, First Panel.

Good morning and for some, those in Asia, good afternoon. Thank you the Asia Centre team for the timely discussion.

For the first panel, I want to contemplate a couple points on convergence. I want to emphasize especially four overarching trends in order to clarify the common interests between SK, EU and its respective member states. The goal is also to understand the potentials for better working towards common solutions and the need for becoming closer partners.

The first global tendency that is highly relevant for both sides: China's continued rise and its political admonishments, especially with countries that are highly interdependent with China. Its foreign policies have become more assertive, while its internal policies (e.g. Hong Kong) have become more contested internationally. Territorial claims have led recently to territorial conflict and military standoffs with India, Nepal and, also, ongoing in the South China Sea (SCS). The powerful president Xi Jinping follows grandeur and more ambitious schemes. Some in China began openly to articulate a claim of superiority of the socialist political system and Chinese propaganda during the pandemic has a very triumphalist sound in comparison to EU and United States's (US) response to the pandemic. China, along with South Korea, has had a huge success in controlling the pandemic. And yet despite an energized health diplomacy – provision of materials, tests, and other needed items towards many countries in Europe, like Serbia and Italy -- China's public image globally turns increasingly negative.

Meanwhile, the US's strategy for quite some time with broad partisan support aims to engineer an economic decoupling and deny market access to the respective countries. The problem is that many countries are so deeply interconnected economically with China that the price of decoupling is impossible to pay leading to a clash of realities between the economic and political realms, which is particularly strong for SK and the EU. This split, I argued, between the two realm will only grow larger over the coming years as China's assertiveness grows. The strategic dilemma is traditionally what comes with international world order reconstruction. Unsettling process of regrouping not only regional but world order. The partial retreat of the US leads to a waning of the liberal hegemonic order and produces an anxiety in the west. The transformation of order is especially rapid in both East Asia and Middle East, but also visible in the EU's diplomacy and its member states: Germany's Indo-Pacific Strategy document and the EU's commission on strategic autonomy are fresh expressions of this world order reconstruction, including as well, Japan's strategic position to diversify its foreign direct investments away from China, re-formulation of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) by membered-countries, and bi-lateralization of trade negotiations making the World Trade Organization (WTO) less relevant. All this indicates a rising insecurity. That insecurity springs from lack of road map for stabilization of those institutions on a global and regional level.

A third trend is digitalization and datafication. The radical impact of this global transformation are already visible and we might only be at the beginning of the algorithmic revolution. South Korea, here again, may be in leading position in compared to most European states. Both its positive and negative experience are notably illuminating and should be learned from on the European side. The design and application of new tools ranging from social media, artificial intelligence, digital nanotech and gene editing pose a fundamental challenge. It creates great difficulty especially for democratic societies. But we have yet to find a sustainable balance between civic values, democratic processes and evolving technological possibilities.

Finally, the rapid evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic shows the importance of non-traditional security challenges. The reaction by most states was against the suggestions from the World Health Organization (WHO) was slow and deeply nationalistic. The level of international cooperation remains insufficient. And, the world has failed to harness thus far the power of international coordination and collaboration for global public health policy. One can only hope that the contribution of the vaccine will be organized in a more responsible manner. Even amongst EU member states, cooperation on pandemic containment, testing, border control and so forth at certain point has decreased dramatically. Clearly, Europeans can learn much from South Koreans on handling the crisis, as many of the papers point out in more detail. The need for mutual learning and consistent monitoring of what the other side is doing goes far beyond the current pandemic. In the age of the Anthropocene, nature is merged with society just as politics and technology are more and more inseparable. To develop the proper set of global ethics, and a stable political practice for coping through such non-traditional security threats that are both effective and democratically legitimate is perhaps the most fundamental challenge converging for the governance of democratic societies in the east and west in a post-pandemic world. And that post-pandemic world to be sure is also a world in which climate change catastrophes are looming and other large scale dangers are looming and constantly present.

These four trends showcase a convergence that are not just of academic interest but, also, current ongoing debates in SK and the EU's member states. What is sometimes missing in this regard is the mutual knowledge and understanding about those issues: how to respond and what policy alignment should follow. In this sense, I believe that the following discussions and analyses will be very helpful in answer those two questions.

André De Bussy: Thank you, Dr Mayer. Dr Bondaz, as your paper is focusing on some areas of cooperation between the EU and South Korea within this pandemic and beyond, what are the implications of Chinese foreign policy on EU-South Korea relations?

Antoine Bondaz (Sciences Po, Fondation Recherche Stratégie): Second Speaker, First Panel.

As I argued in the paper, the Covid-19 pandemic occurs in a context of multi-dimensional confrontation and systematic rivalry between the United States and China, and that the pandemic is a catalyst for preexisting trends in China's foreign policy and European awakening on the challenges that China poses. In that context, there is a unique opportunity to increase cooperation and collaboration between EU member states and South Korea.

First, the Sino-American confrontation is neither only about security nor politics. Even before Trump administration a bi-partisan consensus was emerging in the United States. A Biden administration is indeed very unlikely to reverse that course. It is a long-term confrontation that is both multi-dimensional and systemic rivalry. The former can be divided into four separate, but overlapping

domains: geostrategic, technological, economic, and environmental. This is also a competition between sets of values and morals, going much further than just competition between a democratic and authoritarian system. Europeans do share in the assessment to show China, since 2019, as a cooperation, negotiating, economic competitor, and, also, a systematic rival. In this light, a loose-coalition and not anti-China front is likely in the European context across the four aforementioned groups. Even if a Trump administration proposed such a move, both South Korean and Europeans would not approve such a move. There will be no alliance of democracies that covers the four areas because separate, issue-based coalitions are likely to emerge.

Second, China's behaviour has created international concern and deteriorated the image of the country to an all-time low in most European countries. China's implemented a clear strategy at the onset of the pandemic that was not merely about the use of the media but also political in an effort to highlight the superiority of the Chinese model of governance and, therefore, the Communist party over the western model of governance. China has been very proactive in imposing its own narrative in the "global battle of narratives," as stated by a foreign affairs specialist. As the Chinese president stated in August 2013, "we must methodologically conduct external propaganda work to better tell China's story and make China's voice heard." Chinese diplomats are not only more vocal but more aggressive. In France, there has been many baseless accusations against journalists. Last year, the French ambassador to China was called back home in response. China's health diplomacy is not only a tool of influence but also a means to promote Chinese companies abroad. It left a strong first impression in Europe, when, in mid-March, it was the first country to send protective equipment to the continent. The diplomacy showed the shortfalls and opened the eyes of many European decision makers on the need to increase the EU's resilience, diversify important partners on essential goods, and reduce dependency on China. Even though Korea was less visible, it offered hundreds of thousands of masks. Korea is also a country with great capacities in the field of health, and the use of new technologies has played a key role in the management of the pandemic.

Third, and more importantly, in the context of increased cooperation between Europe and Korea, it is not only more likely but also wishful. In the issue-based coalition, it is essential to complement the "three D's" -- defense, diplomacy, development -- with what I call the additional "three T's" -- trade, technology, and thoughts. Regarding China, there is no playful optimism. There is either careful optimism or careful pessimism. Outside of the Sino-American competition, the "rest of us" represent more than 90% of the votes in the United Nations. Therefore, the rest of the world needs to develop a comprehensive, positive agenda with concrete recommendations.

I also offer four sets of recommendations. The first recommendation is to deepen track 1 and 2 dialogue to learn the best practices to deal with an emerging China that is using political leverages for its own political ends. The second recommendation is to strengthen the focus on promotion of multilateralism in and outside international organizations, including democracies that are big *and* small. This means also promoting concepts like human security that ROK President Moon Jae-in presented in a television appearance. The third recommendation is to expand the EU-SK framework agreement through non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, fight against terrorism, energy security and climate change assistance. SK's should be more associated to key policy issues and projects like the EU consortium on non-proliferation and disarmament, the EU P2P on export controls or the "Mind Before Act" program against violent extremism. The last recommendation is to strengthen the technological sovereignty while increasing scientific cooperation to promote global norms and standards around various themes including nano-safety. In the end, if neither the EU and SK want to

be forced to choose between China or the United States, then it must provide an alternative to the international community by being less reactive and more active in its dealings.

André de Bussy: Thank you Dr Bondaz. Dr Casarini, could you elaborate on some areas of cooperation between the EU and South Korea within this pandemic crisis and in the middle of exacerbated tensions between the US and China?

Nicola Casarini (Istituto Affari Internazionali): Third Speaker, First Panel.

The presentation focuses on two cooperation areas: health issues (medical supplies) and EU-Korea global supply chain issues amid mounting Sino-American tensions. As noted by previous speakers, the EU-Korea FTA provides the bed-rock platform for future cooperation between the two countries.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a rising awareness of the overreliance of medical supplies on China. In this context, the Europeans and Koreans are agreeing on cooperation on two levels. First, information sharing in the South Korean example on how to take hold of the pandemic without strict lockdowns in contrast to the European case, which shows a makeable lack of coordination. In the European context, the ROK model of public health management is somewhere in between Southern Europe with its stricter forms of lockdowns, like in Italy and Spain, and Northern Europe with its looser forms of lockdown, like in Sweden. In short, the ROK model is closest to the German model, which has adopted a hybrid version. Information sharing is very important between the EU and ROK because human rights dominate in both countries. And, we can witness some of the dangers to the traditional liberties enjoyed because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Alongside informational sharing, there has been a lot of cooperation in medical supplies on three levels that have been mostly proposed by SK experts. First, at the bilateral level between Europe and Korea, medical equipment called “swap lines” something akin to banking swap lines, where the equipment is transferred back and forth between the countries without much restrictions. This can also be done at the regional level. Moreover, this can also be translated at the multilateral level like at the WTO and WHO because there are not just health issues but socio-economic implications that the pandemic has inflicted. Here again, there is a similar approach taken by both EU and SK.

The problem with global supply chains is also a related on over-reliance on China and mounting US-China tensions, forcing both the EU and SK to pick a side. In my paper, you will find data demonstrating the difficulties on EU and SK companies in trying to find other export markets other than China or trying to move the manufacturing base away from China. It is a common problem, which is pushing the two partners (EU and SK) in trying to find a *modus operanti* amid the Sino-American conflict. In the trade and technological war, the EU and ROK cannot chose sides for many reasons, but especially economic reasons. It is difficult for companies to reduce reliance on China.

We are witnessing the EU and ROK trying to come up with some ways in order to stay good allies with the US but at the same time without creating problems with China who remains a great economic partner, especially in the essential export market. In the EU there is this idea of “strategic autonomy” which could help Europeans navigate the issues between China and the US, while in SK context there is a “strategic ambiguity” concept, which has been far elaborated elsewhere.

In the end, I expect a Biden presidency not to change that much for this particular trend, except for the fact that it will provide a larger space for maneuvering as it may not impose its allies choosing a

particular side in the Sino-American tensions. As a result, we will see in the future SK and the EU a closer relationship in order to find their own character amid the contested US-China relationship.

André de Bussy: Thank you Dr Casarini. On May 31st, 2020, former US president Donald Trump unexpectedly announced the willingness to invite South Korea as well as Australia, India and Russia to the next G7 summit. Professor André, from the South Korean point of view does that make sense or is a risky bet? The other aspect, does it make sense for the other G7 members to be very enthusiastic about welcoming new members into the fold? And with Biden elected as the new president of the US, is this option still on the table?

Paul André (Sciences Po, ESSCA): Fourth Speaker, First Panel.

I am very modest on these prospectives. These invitations could make sense in a way but it could also be quite risky. I would like to return to a comment made by Antoine Bondaz, whereas G7 countries and South Korea decide their diplomatic steps according to a cost-benefits equilibrium. This equilibrium is evolutive. More importantly the G7 can be seen as a club. Any new membership into this club induces a decrease of marginal benefits for members. As a result, countries like France are not enthusiastic about seeing a new member joining the G7 because it would jeopardize their interest. However, because of the evolutionary nature of the situation, cooperation is not to be excluded. South Korea still has thus many cards it can play.

André de Bussy: Thank you Professor André. Mr Di Meglio, what is the state of play of European sanctions against North Korea and is it still a useful tool? Is the EU a meaningful actor regarding the Korean's peninsula situation? And what are the future stances of EU countries and EU institutions vis-à-vis DPRK beyond the sanctions?

Jean-Francois Di Meglio (President, Asia Centre): We have now a very specific situation as we speak as this webinar takes place seeing that the United States (US) election was last weekend and, in some sense, is still ongoing, the role of the US has been key the last three to four years. What will be the role of the US in the coming three to four years? We do not know yet. We can say now that without some of the US action the current situation whereby the direct threats from North Korea (DPRK/NK) have been momentarily halted. Yet, the threats are still around and the EU's role, as far it may look, from the Korean peninsula can be key to not only in the months to come but also in the years to come towards defining the position vis-à-vis the Korean peninsula situation.

We must remember that most of the European Union (EU) members have diplomatic relations with the DPRK. Only two members of the EU – Estonia and France – do not enjoy diplomatic relations with the country. The latter has diplomatic visitation vis-à-vis the EU. We may call it a funny situation, because this representation is now based in London. So we shall wait to see what happens.

The EU is part of the United Nations (UN), of course. The sanctions against NK first took place in 2006, making it 15 years of attempts from the UN and EU to cooperate on some level with the country. The sanctions from the EU are aligned with the UN. And, after the first two resolutions by the UN, the EU took their own resolutions against the DPRK. The sanctions have been renewed and kept onwards under the chairmanship currently of Germany. It is quite interesting that on top of the situation that prevails between various western countries and the Korean situation, the EU has this very specific item in its history: one of the members of the EU has gone through a situation, which is now the same as the Korean peninsula without saying that the outcome should be the same in the

future for the Korean peninsula as it has been for Germany. It is interesting to see that Germany is sharing the committee after the sanctions.

Currently, what have the sanctions achieved? The sanctions have harmed the North Koreans situation – economy. It has harmed the attempt by NK to alter trade with some countries. They have also attempted and managed to have a softer approach by NK or, perhaps even, a softer NK more generally. For that matter, the EU sanctions have complemented the UN sanctions. They show that not only they have complimented the UN sanctions against the NK but also there is an additional and focused approach by the EU. A kind of double watch with NK can achieve

The latest development in the framework of the coronavirus crisis have been that the situation has been worsening in terms of the presentations of European diplomats in the country. They even have left after an episode, whereby they were quarantined and prevented from coming back on the basis of the request by the various European countries to want to have their diplomats to enjoy a normal situation with dealing with the North Korean authorities. Expecting that EU citizens enjoy a certain degree of safety and protection in the country, and failing the guarantees presented by NK to European countries, there is now a deadlock situation.

What can be the outcome of the current situation? Of course, the EU is willing to help in the process. Within the remaining countries in the 27 membered countries, France is the one able to speak as a nuclear power in the frame of discussions around the nuclear situation in the Korean peninsula. And without direct involvement because of its geographical situation, and also because of its particular alliances, EU is very willing to be a helpful partner in the negotiations. The EU has a very degree of awareness of the importance of SK in the diplomatic dialogue worldwide. And, that can be a leverage for SK to help, whereby the latter at some point of time was feeling left aside in the direct NK-US discussions throughout 2019. This is why in this very important crisis in the world safety situation. It is very important moment where we are now as we will have a new US presidency. The EU probably is willing to raise its profile in the Korean situation and has many elements whereby it can help make progress in this situation.

André de Bussy: Thank you, Jean-François, merci. There will be a transition between the two panels. This transition will be conducted by Elisabeth Suh. As your paper is dealing with the cyber challenge posed by Pyongyang, could you elaborate more on the cyber threats coming from Pyongyang and on the potential areas of cooperation between the EU and South Korea within cyberspace ?

Elisabeth Suh (German Institute for International and Security Affairs): Break Speaker.

The DPRK poses a major challenge to the ROK and its European partners on several different fronts. While media and policy attention dominantly focuses on Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program, the regime's activities in cyberspace pose direct threats to the ROK and Europe. Cyberspace is an intricate operational domain; conventional conceptions of deterrence, proportional or reciprocal response, of defense and offense are not directly applicable. The DPRK's digital operations have increased in range, scope and proficiency. These security threats and challenges posed by Pyongyang's cyber activities have surged continuously since 2009 in quantity and quality along with technical sophistication in global reach targeting both the private and public sectors. Three examples: (1) Denial of services in 2009, (2) DarkSeoul malware in 2013 (Banks), and (3) WannaCry ransomware encryption in 2017 (200,000 computers in 150 countries with ransom payments).

The strategic calculus for the DPRK is a basic cost-benefit ratio, which is presently to its benefit. Meaning, a high degree software availability, low degree of operational risks (difficulty in attribution and high-degree of deniability), synergy effect, and symmetric advantage (greater vulnerabilities of target). This leads to a prognostic that the DPRK operations in cyber space will continue to increase in quantity, reach and technical sophistication. It was already reported that during the Covid-19 pandemic cyber operations have increased in quantity at least.

This challenge provides opportunities for South Korea and the EU to collaborate together. The EU and ROK can join forces and pursue different approaches to facilitate preventive and defensive means. First and foremost, strengthening cyber security is at the top of the agenda. In order to improve prevention of intrusion and consequent damage from cyber activities, stakeholders in the public and private sector in the EU and ROK both need to identify potential entry points and software vulnerabilities. Secondly, techniques to improve attribution and intelligence are key. Instead of opting for offensive or semi-offensive means, cooperating to improve cyber security, attribution and strategic foresight of the DPRK's cyber operations is a better strategy for the EU and ROK. Sharing information, seeking to identify actors and collaborators, appealing to countries that support or tolerate groups acting on behalf of the regime are essential in increasing the effectiveness of cyber sanctions.

Ramon Pacheco Pardo (King's College, London, KF-VUB Korea Chair): First Speaker, Second Panel.

Ten years after the signature of the bilateral FTA between the EU and the ROK, the overall outcomes in the light of the deal's initial expected benefits have become clearer. Embedded in both stakeholders' contemporary international trade strategy - the "Global Europe" strategy for the EU (2006), and the "FTA Roadmap" for South Korea (2003) – this new generation FTA, first of its kind, intended to serve common economic as well as separate political and geostrategic purposes.

In the summary, the EU-ROK FTA partially or perhaps fully fulfilled the objectives set in the first place. Even though there are still minor issues to resolve, the FTA substantially enhanced EU-South Korea bilateral relations and strengthened both players' positions in multilateral fora.

The the key point to be made here is that the bilateral trade agreement between the two actors is not only a bilateral affair but a multi-lateral affair. It has supported both of them a greater engagement in other part of the world. In the case of the EU it holds greats engagement in Asia and particularly northeast Asia. In the case of SK, greater engagement with the EU and diversification away from other partners the United States. Also, it shows the long term thinking on both sides. When it was signed, it was part of the global Europe trade strategy. South Korea held the first FTA signed under that strategy. In the case for South Korea, the FTA was signed as part of an FTA roadmap in 2003 that has carried on to this day. What were the goals then? Initially, to boost bilateral trade. And, also, to diversify trade partners.

Tereza Novotna (Free University Berlin, EUROPEUM Prague): Fourth Speaker, Second Panel.

The EU and South Korea can cope with the conflict between the US and China both as the result of a shorter-term Corona crisis and of previous underlying long-term trends. The EU should intensify cooperation with the ROK as the key country in North East Asia which is in a similar situation of

“being caught between the US and China.”

The EU and ROK should, firstly, strengthen their Strategic Partnership, especially in the areas of common interest such as health, trade, digitalization, climate change and multilateralism. Secondly, Brussels and Seoul should try to identify areas where they can pre-empt, or at least manage, the rivalry between Beijing and Washington from escalating (such as in the case of North Korea). Last but not least, however, the EU and ROK should explore whether there are any other like-minded partners, especially around Asia-Pacific, who would be reluctant siding with either the US or with China but would prefer teaming up and building alliances with the EU and South Korea.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) countries comes quickly to mind: the EU has become a “networked” power through its numerous (negotiations on concluding) FTAs with ASEAN members across Asia and has been a large contributor for the (post)-pandemics aid and recovery in the region. Similarly, President Moon’s New Southern Policy serves an analogous purpose of joining up with ASEAN to create a network of friends supporting the reconciliation on the Korean peninsula. A good case could also be made for an enhanced collaboration with Australia and New Zealand. Should such a strategy work, the EU could upgrade and expand its standing in Asia and beyond, while South Korea might get a better shot at solving the inter-Korean issues. Brussels and Seoul may soon discover that finding together like-minded allies happy to join up forces can prove to be the most effective counterweight against any forced choice between Beijing or Washington. Most of all, such an enhanced cooperation can help reviving multilateralism and rules-based order across the globe. Such a policy will benefit us all.

Brigitte Dekker (Clingendael Institute): Third speaker, Second Panel.

The ambition and intentions of the Made in China 2025 (MiC2025), the Digital Silk Road (DSR) and China Standards 2035 prompted developed countries to reconsider their own industrial policies – both defensive and offensive – and regulatory policies, with an eye to maintaining the technological advantage they still hold over Chinese companies. The COVID-19 outbreak only confirmed the dependence of citizens on technological solutions and prompted a global discussion on data, privacy and the dependence of countries in supply chains. The EU and the ROK adopted a human-centered approach that puts privacy central in their policies. If the EU adopts an adequacy decision in respect of the ROK, this will enable their companies to transfer and process data on equal terms. That in turn will not only enhance business between the partners, but also strengthen the ability of both sides to nurture tech companies and increase research and development cooperation between companies creating economic leverage to withstand the Chinese (and the US) prowess. In addition to this ongoing cooperation, the EU and ROK can enhance their cooperation on the commercialization of innovation and digital Official Development Assistance (ODA). Both efforts will help to strengthen the EU’s and ROK’s global digital position, reduce the digital divide and offer countries an alternative to the DSR. Overwhelmed by the technical opportunities and challenges that the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the digital era present, like-minded countries need to bind forces, aligning their policies to (co)create international leverage towards China and the US. Amid the US–China tech rivalry, the EU and the ROK need to be more assertive in defending their own economic and strategic interests and promoting shared norms. The two sides are already connected through strong economic, political and diplomatic ties. Now, a broader agenda for cooperation in the digital field must be devised, and institutionalized in the agreed High-Level Dialogue on the digital economy. The commercialization of innovation and digital ODA are two subfields that offer great opportunities to further cooperation. Only united, can the EU and ROK, together with like-minded partners, help to deliver inclusive and

sustainable growth in third countries, while also serving their own economic and strategic interests.

Eriks Varpahovskis (NRU Higher School of Economics): Fourth Speaker, Second Panel – *Edited from Conclusion*

There are no explicitly made statements regarding the attitude of the EU toward Korean Public Diplomacy (PD) though we can distinguish two major attitudes towards Korean PD in the EU. First, the EU actively cooperates with the ROK in a list of PD activities where they mutually benefit. Hence, by participating in these activities and being initiator, the EU, on the one hand, recognizes the dissemination of various Korean PD strategies towards the EU, on the other hand, it gives strong support to this cooperation and both partners are seeking expansion of the PD cooperation in other spheres. Second, the EU does not mind ongoing Korean Wave trends and directly and indirectly supports this spread by having FTA with the ROK and having cultural events that feature Korean cultural products. This attitude is somewhat synonymous to the all-EU level and member-state-level. Perhaps, such a relaxed attitude towards Korean media products from the EU member states and European Commission can be explained by the fact that the amount of Korea-made media products is quite modest and does not threaten local producers. The EU does not employ nationalist rhetoric in its arsenal per se while at the national level the consumption of Korean cultural products is very limited so it has not been perceived as a threat by local governments.

So far, the analysed cooperation between the EU and ROK in the realm of PD is an excellent example of how PD can be jointly beneficial. Nonetheless, the depth of cooperation is small and the results from cooperative PD activities are yet to be seen, thus further research on the results of EU-ROK PD activities is strongly recommended. Both the EU and ROK should not overdo in regulating mutual public diplomacy activities because there is a possibility that excessive involvement and control from the state might intimidate non-state actors from participation in the collaboration. Korea pays great attention to the Korean Wave as an instrument of public diplomacy and is using cultural diplomacy to improve the country's global image. Korean government should be careful with capitalizing on South Korean artists success because some of them accidentally may be involved in political scandals (like Tzuyu from TWICE band who waved a Taiwanese flag at the Korean TV), drug abuse, sexual and corruption scandals (like Seungri from Big Bang, he publicly runs a night club where criminal acts were reported), or commit suicide like Kim Jong-hyun of SHINee and Sulli. All these occurrences might cause disappointment and mistrust affecting the country's positive image. Taking into account the unprecedented success of some South Korean artists (e.g., BTS) once they get into a scandalous situation the overall damage to the country image might correlate with the popularity of an artist. Korea and the EU at multilateral and bilateral levels have established significant business relations. Nevertheless, the public in Korea and in the EU remains largely unaware of the detailed progress in economic and especially security and political relationship between parties. Hence, greater scrutiny and representation of the EU-ROK relationship can bring better mutual understanding and mutual perception as allies since there is a strong cooperation in the security sector.

M. Jean-François Di Meglio (President, Asia Centre): Concluding Remarks.

Thank you to all the participants and listeners. We will now move to our question and answer period, but only have time for one or two questions.

Maëlle Lefèvre (Researcher, Asia Centre): Question and Answer Period.

Q1: **David Camroux** (Sciences Po, CERI): What is the potential impact of Biden administration towards the triangular interplays between the United States, European Union and two Koreas.

R1: **Dr. Nicola Casarini:** Like I mentioned earlier, the Biden administration will not change that much in the general trend which is the EU and the two Koreas will find new way to navigate the Sino-American relations. EU will have a role to play and should not wait for the US to allow such moves. With the Biden administration there is room to play for multilateral initiatives like the Six Party Talks. The election of Biden is a positive step in the right direction, but I also believe that Trumpism is here to stay. America first will remain with Biden. So Europe and SK should be mentally ready to do things without the United States.

R1: **Dr. Antoine Bondaz:** I do not see much change with the Biden presidency for, although the trade dispute between the US and China may be less acute and there is hope for multilateralism in international organizations creating de-facto coalitions, I am not sure that it is a key factor in the EU-SK relations. On EU-DPRK, there is a lot of maneuvering that the EU can do, it can be much more proactive there. I do believe that the EU should not wait for either the US or SK to make a move and re-engage various NK issues: nuclearization, implementation of sanctions, political engagement, and promoting the notion of human security and disaster relieving mechanisms.

R1: **Paul André:** The answer can be found in the difference between the purpose of the G7 and G20. First off, the good news is that international cooperation is still viable, but it is changing especially in terms of economics. SK is already part of G20 and so is China, therefore, its purpose is different than the G7. For SK, being part of the G7 is especially crucial, agreeing with the comments made earlier about soft power being more than just about culture but, also, economic governance. Since one is witnessing a change in the framework we have no guarantees that any international organizations will survive in the long run.

Q2: **Maëlle Lefèvre:** In your [Dr. Tereza Novotna] article, you mention the visit of the Czech delegation to Taiwan which has provoked Chinese anger and threats, do you think that trilateral cooperation between Taiwan, South Korea, and the European Union could be fostered in various fields, also, like minded partners? What other Asian actors who could associate with the EU to raise a voice with Taiwan's de-fact independence?

R2: **Tereza Novotna:** I think that what the EU has been appreciating more and more is not just SK's handling of the pandemic but also Taiwan, as one of the few good examples on how to manage the pandemic. Also in terms of relationship with China, we heard the EU's stance is hardening in the face of Chinese politics. In one of the ways that the EU could also deal with the Chinese issues is to look at ways it could work with Taiwan a little bit more. The Czech trip to Taiwan is a good example. Although it has created this sort of stark reaction from the foreign minister, it should nevertheless be understood as a purely business oriented trip. So, the Czech speaker did make it clear that it does not undermine the one-china policy. This is perhaps the way the EU could expand its collaboration with Taiwan by saying it is okay to increase collaboration in areas such as health or trade, which do not at the same time undermine the one china policy. Moreover, South Korea can obviously do the same.

Q3: **David Camroux:** South Korea is a major investor in Southeast Asia (SEA) like for example Samsung in Vietnam, do these investments and companies looking to enact soft power diplomatic activity have the same thrust as they do for China namely helping Southeast Asia countries balance against the PRC? If so, where does Europe come in?

R3: **Maximillian Mayer:** I would not character the shifting investments of South Koreans but also Japanese companies to SEA as mainly driven by the need or wish to support the SEA countries in an effort to balance against China. It is their own investment opportunity but rather Korean and Japanese companies on their own that have decided very early on (two to three years ago) and are moving clearly on that. There is no longer a Samsung factory in China in large scale, so they have moved on to other places and this represents a long-term trend for the re-composition of trade networks and supply chains. The effect of that might be that SEA is becoming a little bit less dependent on China, but this also depends on Chinese companies as they invest a lot there. I do not see a balancing effect that is visible at the moment.

Q4: **Wolf Pape:** There is little mention of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS) in Seoul. Can the EU integration serve to improve the often contentions of the free neighbours in East Asia with their paradox of success in trade and foreign direct investments with few exchanges at the political levels?

R4: **Dr. Nicola Casarini:** As I wrote in my paper on the TCS, in essence, I mentioned the idea of medical equipment swap lines. We have here an opportunity for EU-Korea cooperation because the idea of regionalizing the medical equipment, making it available to Japan, China and South Korea, the latter taking the lead as it was in the past to create momentum for regional integration and trust-building amongst the three Northeast (NE) Asian nations. The opportunity is present from a European point of view, who could utilise its long historical focus on trilateral approaches in the sub-region but it is also the right moment to show that the EU can be a political actor in NE Asia. Typically, the criticism of the EU in which it is a trade and investment giant but a political dwarf. This is a rare opportunity made available for the EU towards the regional composition and not only in the bilateral composition. It will take considerable courage from the European side to put aside possible American criticism, because we know the moment the Europeans support trilateral cooperation it will impinge upon the US system of alliances in Asia. As we have known well in Europe, sometimes regional integration holds some benefits, therefore, I think we should also be less cautious and bolder bringing forward this trilateral cooperation especially when it comes to the Asian context.

R4: **Paul André:** Although I completely agree with the previous characterization, I would also like to go further as this point is really important. One role the EU can play in this situation is to avoid that the trilateral secretariat in Seoul turns into a competitive space rather than a cooperative one. So, it means that the region is stuck as a result of diverging ambitions and distrust among the players. Unless the European Union can play this role, otherwise there is fear that the TCS is an empty body locked from the present diverging ambitions and mutual distrust. The EU can definitely play an active role and is of prime importance on this matters.

Q5: **Maëlle Lefèvre:** As you [Brigitte Dekker] mentioned in the digital connectivity between the EU and South Korea, don't you think that the political and cultural differences between the two actors prevent the European member states to be as innovative as SK within the digital field (e.g. France's concern about impact of 5G on the environment)?

[Interrupted]

Q6: **Maëlle Lefèvre:** In relations to normative values, are there some aspects of the South Korea's democracy that elicit to the declining democracies? What could be the different ways for the EU to

associate more deeply with the arch of Asian democracies in the coming years?

R6: **Tereza Novotna:** I will just mention something that I find striking. The European view is quite often tainted by the experience with the Chinese approach. Europeans will say, “China is an authoritative state and imposed severe restrictions.” But Europeans quite often forget how well SK and Taiwan along with Hong Kong dealt with the pandemic still having an emphasis on transparency on democracy. South Korea did not forget to hold national elections during the crisis with the highest turnout since twenty years. So it is not that the sort of idea that Asia can deal with the pandemic better because they have this hierarchal Confucianism society, but because these countries have trust in their leaders and management in the way the government responded. That response is based on democratic measures. So we could possibly have something about data privacy but I think we should also look at the normative values in East Asia for ways to deal with the pandemic.

The papers of the 10 authors are available on the event’s page: <https://centreasia.eu/evenement/eu-korea-convergence-and-partnerships-10-years-after-the-eu-korea-fta-in-the-post-covid-era-and-within-the-us-china-trade-war/>