

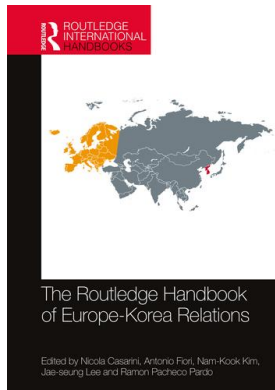
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Introduction

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Introduction

A multi-faceted and multi-layered relationship

Ramon Pacheco Pardo, Nicola Casarini and Antonio Fiori

Relations between Europe and Korea have dramatically changed in recent decades. The change has come in the context of Europe's growing interest in economic, political, and security developments in Asia, together with the Koreans' push to diversify relations, including with Europe. As of the third decade of the 21st century, relations between the European Union (EU) and South Korea are underpinned by their bilateral strategic partnership. With regard to EU-North Korea relations, they are defined by the 'critical engagement' policy adopted by Brussels since the early 2000s. At the trilateral level, relations are marked by the EU's support for inter-Korean rapprochement and South Korean initiatives towards reconciliation and trust-building in Northeast Asia.

In the case of EU-South Korea relations, both partners share the same commitment to democracy, human rights, and a market economy despite their cultural differences and geographical distance. These shared values underscore their deepening relationship. Indeed, relations between the EU and South Korea have evolved considerably over the last years. In 2010, Seoul and Brussels signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the first between the EU and an Asian country, aimed at encouraging trade and investment exchanges. As of 2020, the EU was South Korea's third-largest trade partner, while South Korea was the ninth largest for the EU. Alongside the trade dimension, the two sides have also fostered political relations thanks to a new Framework Agreement (FA) signed at their October 2010 summit. That same year, they also decided to upgrade their relationship to a strategic partnership, thus launching a high-level political dialogue.

South Korea is also the first Asian nation to have signed a Framework Participation Agreement (FPA), aimed at facilitating Seoul's participation in EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations. Signed in 2014 and ratified by Seoul in 2016, the FPA has allowed, for example, South Korean navy officers to join the EUNAVFOR counterpiracy mission in the Gulf of Aden. Another example of strong cooperation was represented by the EU ratification of an agreement for the joint development of Galileo (the EU-led global navigation-satellite-system alternative to the US's GPS) with South Korea in 2006. South Korea is the only East Asian country besides China to be part of the project.

The EU has also developed relations with South Korea in a regional context, in particular by supporting inter-Korean dialogue and initiatives towards security cooperation and trust-building

in Northeast Asia. For instance, the EU fully supported former Korea President Park Geun-hye's Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI) and the 'Korean Peninsula trust process'—or *Trustpolitik*—whose aim was to promote greater exchanges and cooperation between the two Koreas with a view to building confidence and reducing tensions in the area. NAPCI actually took inspiration from Europe's experience, making explicit reference to the history of European integration and Franco-German reconciliation, while *Trustpolitik* was inspired by Germany's *Ostpolitik* and the process leading up to German reunification.

Similarly, the EU then supported Korea President Moon Jae-in's Northeast Asia Plus Community of Responsibility (NAPCR). This initiative also aimed to build trust among Northeast Asian countries, as well as to promote inter-Korean reconciliation. Likewise, the EU also supported inter-Korean engagement during the Moon administration years—including the three summits between the two Koreas of 2018. The initiatives pursued by the Moon administration were also partially inspired by Europe's reconciliation experiences, including the Helsinki Process and East-West rapprochement more broadly.

The European Union and North Korea, after a long hiatus of an almost complete absence of contacts, interrupted only by Pyongyang's request for EU assistance to tackle the famine in the mid-90s, established diplomatic relations in May 2001. It must be highlighted, however, that mutual relations had grown since the end of the Cold War, to the point that in the mid-90s, the EU had become North Korea's third-largest trading partner. From 2003 and considering both Pyongyang's then-incipient opening up but also its development of a nuclear programme, the EU launched a policy of 'critical engagement' towards North Korea. Its goals are to support a lasting diminution of tensions on the Korean peninsula and in the region, to uphold the international non-proliferation regime, and to improve the situation of human rights in North Korea. This policy, which continues to be in place as of 2021, combines pressure through sanctions and other measures while keeping communication and dialogue with Pyongyang's regime open.

Even before the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations, the EU was already involved in dealing with North Korea's nuclear programme. In September 1997, the EU—through the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or EURATOM)—became a member of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), established to give implementation to the process of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Until 2006, the EU—through the European Commission—was a member of the executive board of KEDO, whose goal was to construct two light-water reactors to replace the North Korean graphite-moderated reactor and reprocessing plant at Yongbyon, which had been producing large amounts of plutonium. The aim of the KEDO project was clear: to deter further nuclear proliferation and to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. From 1997 to 2006, the total amount invested by the EU in the KEDO project reached almost €120 million. The EU's experience in KEDO contributed to the development of Brussels' North Korea policy.

In addition to the EU, most EU member states entertain official ties with North Korea. Commercial exchanges are almost non-existent as of 2021, though, with the bulk of economic relations being represented by development aid and humanitarian assistance. Since 1995, EU agencies have provided over €370 million in aid, in the form of food aid; medical, water, and sanitation assistance; and agricultural support. The EU has also occasionally provided emergency aid following from flooding and other natural disasters in North Korea.

In recent years, the EU has also adopted sanctions against Pyongyang following the country's 2003 decision to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2016, and 2017. In addition, the EU imposed cyber sanctions on North Korea in 2020, as well as human rights sanctions in 2021. Along with pressure, however, the

EU—including member states such as Finland, Poland, and Sweden—has left the door open for negotiations with the North Korean regime as a way to address its concerns.

The relationship between the EU and South Korea on the one hand and the EU and North Korea on the other is therefore diametrically different. South Korea is one of the EU's closest partners at the global level. Arguably, Seoul is Brussels's strongest partner in Asia as the only country in the region with the three agreements covering politics, economics, and security signed and in effect. In contrast, North Korea is seen as a threat not only to the EU but also the international community, unwilling to trade its nuclear programme in exchange for economic prosperity. In spite of these differences, relations between Europe and the two Koreas are equally fascinating and full of complexities.

Objectives of this Handbook

This Handbook is the first to provide a comprehensive, multi-faceted, and multi-layered analysis of the relationship between Europe and the Koreas. Our overarching aim is to offer readers a coherent and comprehensive assessment of contemporary Europe–Korea relations, albeit building on the history of their relationship. The focus will be mainly on the EU, though it will also take into consideration the perspective of different European countries with a strong relationship with both or either of the two Koreas.

A primary objective of this volume is to explain why Europe–Korea relations can be studied—and better understood—by analysing various levels, that is, both the bilateral level with the two Koreas (EU–South Korea and EU–North Korea) as well as the regional level (inter-Korean dialogue and Northeast Asia's security environment). Against this backdrop, the Handbook includes chapters dealing with a wide range of scholarly and policy areas (economics, politics, security, societal) and issues pertaining to EU–South Korea and EU–North Korea relations specifically, as well as the inter-Korean dialogue and the regional context. Through this approach, the Handbook will help readers increase their awareness about the extent and intensity of the multi-faceted and multi-layered connections between Europe and Korea.

Another objective of this Handbook is to bring together, for the first time, scattered and fragmented knowledge and ongoing research about Europe–Korea relations in a structured and coherent manner. Throughout the years, the study of EU–South Korea economic relations, the transposition of Europe's integration experience in a Northeast Asian context, and the EU's polity towards North Korea's nuclear weapons programme—among many other topics—have grown exponentially. Scholars from Europe, South Korea, and elsewhere have examined these different aspects of Europe–Korea relations both from an academic and a policy perspective. This Handbook will help the reader gain knowledge about the state-of-the-art research on Europe–Korea relations in a single volume.

Structure

The Handbook is structured in seven different sections. The first section analyses the *historical evolution* of the Europe–Korea relationship. In Chapter 1, Yongmin Kim examines historical relations between Europe and Korea, from the time of the first recorded contact in the early seventeenth century to the partition of the country in 1948 and the onset of the Korean War in 1950. In Chapter 2, Yoo-Joung Kim focuses on relations between Europe and the two Koreas during the Cold War, covering the distinct relationships between South Korea and Western Europe and between North Korea and Central and Eastern Europe—as well as the North's incipient relations with Western Europe. In Chapter 3, Ramon Pacheco Pardo analyses the

contemporary relationship between the EU and the two Koreas, starting with the post-Cold War years all the way to the EU-South Korea strategic partnership and the EU's 'critical engagement' policy towards North Korea.

The second section analyses *social and cultural relations* between Europe and the Koreas. In Chapter 4, Joohyun Go focuses on intellectual and cultural exchanges between Europe and South Korea, showing the growth in this type of interactions in recent years. In Chapter 5, Kim Saemee zooms in on the Korean Wave, its impact globally and in Europe, and its role in strengthening Europe-South Korea relations. In Chapter 6, Oh Changrhyong takes a deep dive into EU-South Korea education cooperation, analysing how and why educational links—particularly at the university level—have increased in the context of the growing internationalization of the sector. In Chapter 7, Sung Eun Shim analyses migration patterns between Europe and South Korea and their cultural implications, with particular emphasis on South Korean migrants settling in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. In Chapter 8, Yoon Sung-Won and Chung Sae Won examine representations of the EU in South Korea and their implications for relations between the two of them.

The third section analyses *economic relations* between Europe and the Koreas. In Chapter 9, Virginie Grzelczyk presents an analysis of the evolution of EU-North Korea economic relations, with a focus on trade and investment links and the reasons behind their decline over time. In Chapter 10, Heungchong Kim analyses the negotiation process and early post-entry into force years of the EU-South Korea bilateral FTA, explaining what drove the two partners to sign the agreement. In Chapter 11, Yoo-Duk Kang analyses the implementation of the FTA in the decade between 2011–20, looking into how it affected economic relations between the EU and South Korea. In Chapter 12, Françoise Nicolas analyses investment relations between the EU and South Korea, placing them in the context of broader international investment flows. In Chapter 13, Axel Marx explores development cooperation between the EU and South Korea as the latter has successfully graduated from aid recipient to aid donor. In Chapter 14, Chae-Bok Park provides a comparative analysis of the social market economy and welfare state in Europe and South Korea, explaining their similarities, differences, and influences from the former on the latter.

The fourth section analyses *bilateral cooperation* between the EU and South Korea. In Chapter 15, Jae-Seung Lee analyses the EU-South Korea partnership on energy and climate change as both of them transition towards a low-carbon economy, signalling the venues for cooperation in the context of the similarities and differences between their policies. In Chapter 16, Oh-Suk Yang focuses on scientific innovation in the context of the fourth industrial revolution and R&D links, showing how the EU and South Korea have both similarities and differences in their approaches but also how bilateral cooperation takes place in practice.

The fifth section analyses the Europe-Korea relationship in relation to *politics and global governance*. In Chapter 17, Moosung Lee looks into the strategic partnership between the EU and South Korea, with particular emphasis on its political dimension. In Chapter 18, Sunhee Park dives into EU-South Korea cooperation as part of their position in the international community, with specific reference to the United Nations, the G20, and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). In Chapter 19, Nam-Kook Kim and Sebastian Harnisch evaluate EU-South Korea cooperation as part of the international community's efforts to promote human security at the global level. In Chapter 20, Zsuzsa-Anna Ferenczy analyses EU-North Korea relations in the context of the shifting global discourse about human rights and the international community's efforts to uphold them. In Chapter 21, Nicola Casarini explores EU-South Korea relations in the age of COVID and mounting US-China tensions. In Chapter 22, Hyungbok Chae explores EU-South Korea agreements from the perspective of their legal obligations and commitments

to international law. In Chapter 23, Michael Reiterer investigates the role of the EU in regional integration processes in Northeast Asia from the perspective of multilateralism as a guiding principle.

The sixth section analyses *bilateral relations* between three European countries and Korea. In Chapter 24, Eric J. Ballbach examines the historical evolution of Germany–Korea relations all the way to the contemporary links between Western Europe’s largest country and the two Koreas. In Chapter 25, Antoine Bondaz focuses on the history and current state of France–Korea relations, looking into their evolution over time. In Chapter 26, Si Hong Kim analyses how Italy–Korea relations have evolved from their onset all the way to the contemporary relationship between the European country and the two Koreas.

The seventh section analyses *security relations* between Europe and Korea. In Chapter 27, Jina Kim investigates EU–South Korea cooperation in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament, both globally and in relation to North Korea. In Chapter 28, Mario Esteban and Clara Portela focus on the evolution of and rationale behind EU economic sanctions on North Korea. In Chapter 29, Seungkeun Lee analyses EU–South Korea relations in the context of past multilateral efforts to curb North Korea’s nuclear programme, especially the Six-Party Talks, but also KEDO. In Chapter 30, Hae-Won Jun analyses the crisis management dimension of the security relationship between the EU and South Korea, explaining its evolution and rationale. In Chapter 31, Antonio Fiori and Marco Milani focus on the role of Europe in inter-Korean relations, analysing how it has evolved and why.

Finally, a concluding chapter by Nam-Kook Kim and Jae-Seung Lee presents the emerging challenges to the Europe–Korea relationship, as well as future avenues for research on this topic. The authors show that the evolution of Europe–Korea relations in recent years suggests their complexity is only going to increase in the future. This Handbook provides the necessary starting point not only to understand the Europe–Korea relationship today but also to analyse how it will evolve.