



## RELATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND THE ASSOCIATION OF STATES OF SOUTH EAST ASIA (ASEAN)

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to study the development process of relations between the Republic of Korea and ASEAN. In addition, the purpose is to determine the types of cooperation between the two parties in different areas. The content of the study is as follows. First, to clarify the history and current state of relations between ASEAN and the Republic of Korea. Second, show statistics of cooperation between them. Third, find out the main contacts in different areas of life.*

### Introduction:

The Republic of Korea has good diplomatic relations with all 10 ASEAN member States and the ACE-AN organization itself. High-level meetings and ministerial conferences are actively held between them on the occasion of bilateral visits and multi-party meetings.

### Political sphere:

ASEAN and the Republic of Korea established industry dialogue relations for the first time in November 1989. The Republic of Korea was granted the status of a full-fledged dialogue partner by ASEAN at the 24th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 1991 in Kuala Lumpur.

During the 13th ASEAN-ROK Summit in 2010 in Hanoi, the leaders agreed to change the ASEAN-ROK dialogic relations from comprehensive cooperation to strategic partnership. It was a big step in the development of cooperation between the two sides.

Since 1997, the Republic of Korea has been a member of the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Program (APT), which aims to strengthen and deepen cooperation in East Asia at various levels and fields, especially in economic, social, political, and other fields.

In addition, in order to develop relations between ASEAN and the Republic of Korea and deepen their cooperation, a Mission of the Republic of Korea to ASEAN was established in October 2012 in Jakarta, where the ASEAN Secretariat is located. This mission actively participates in regional mechanisms led by ASEAN, such as the Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC), Asean Plus Three (APT), the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the ASEAN Plus Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM+). President Moon Jae-in unveiled the New Southern Policy in 2017 during his State visit to Indonesia (He became the first President to visit ten ASEAN member States during his tenure). The new South Policy is aimed at improving relations between ASEAN and the Republic of Kazakhstan in accordance with the principles of 3P "People, Prosperity, and Peace", "People, prosperity, and peace".



With this new policy, the Republic of Korea has diversified its diplomatic attention and efforts towards ASEAN and the countries of the Southern Hemisphere, where there are all opportunities for economic prosperity.

In 2019, ASEAN and the Republic of Korea celebrated the 30th anniversary of the ASEAN-ROK dialogue relations with a commemorative summit held in Busan on November 25-26, 2019. The anniversary Summit adopted a Joint Statement on the vision of peace, Prosperity and Partnership between ASEAN and the Republic of Kazakhstan.

To achieve these goals, several bodies and dialogue mechanisms were created, including: the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund (AKCF), the ASEAN-ROK Summit (ASEAN-ROK Summit), the Meeting of Ministers of Kazakhstan and ASEAN (The ASEAN-ROK Ministerial Meeting), Consultations of the Ministers of Economy of ASEAN and Korea (ASEAN Economic Ministers-Korea Consultation), ASEAN-ROK Dialogue (ASEAN-ROK Dialogue), ASEAN-ROK Joint Cooperation Committee (ASEAN-ROK Joint Cooperation Committee), Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Mekong Countries and the Republic of Korea (Mekong-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting).

### **Economic sphere:**

The Free Trade Agreement between ASEAN and the Republic of Korea was signed in 2009.

The total volume of trade between ASEAN and the Republic of Korea has grown steadily since the global financial crisis in 2009. In 2015-2016, it temporarily showed signs of stagnation, but since 2017 it has returned to recovery.

ASEAN is a very important trading partner of the Republic of Korea, as can be seen from the data below:

Trade: \$149.07 billion (Ex-port from Korea \$95.25 billion, imports \$53.82 billion, surplus \$41.43 billion) (2nd largest trading partner);

Investments: \$6.2 billion (3rd largest investment partner);

Construction: \$8.8 billion (2nd largest foreign construction market, 2016);

Tourism: Visitors from Korea to ASEAN countries about 7.64 million (the most popular tourist destination), and from ASEAN countries to Korea about 2.14 million;

Foreign direct investment (FDI): FDI from Korea to ASEAN grew approximately 1.3 times from \$3.79 billion in 2008 to \$4.84 billion in 2017.

On Sunday, November 15, 2020, after eight years of difficult negotiations, 15 countries, including 10 ASEAN members and the Republic of Korea, agreed to form the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest free trade bloc.

RCEP will eventually reduce the already low tariffs on trade between member countries. It will account for 30% of the global economy, 30% of the world's population, and 2.2 billion consumers. It will also help to reduce or cancel tariffs for industrial and rural areas-agricultural goods and establish data transmission rules.

### **Humanitarian sphere:**

In 2009, when the 20th anniversary of the ASEAN-Republic of Korea dialogue partnership was celebrated, the ASEAN-Korea Center was established in Seoul. It was founded in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed by 10 ASEAN member States and the Republic of Korea at the 11th Summit of the Republic of Korea and ASEAN in 2007. And in 2017, the ASEAN House of Culture was founded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the



Republic of Korea as a follow-up project after the ASEAN-ROK anniversary summit in 2014. It is currently managed by the Korean Foundation for the popularization of ASEAN cultures and societies among Koreans.

Every year, the Government of the Republic of Korea grants the Global Korea Scholarship to 20 undergraduate students in science and technology from 10 ASEAN countries.

ASEAN and the Republic of Korea pay special attention to the exchange of people in order to deepen friendship and understanding between their peoples. Various projects and activities have been undertaken to increase the exchange of people between the two sides, including annual programs such as the ASEAN-RK Media Exchange Program, the ASEAN-RK Film Leaders Incubator (FLY), which have been implemented since 2012, seven youth projects since 1998, including the Youth Exchange program between ASEAN and the ROK, and the creation of a cultural community.

In addition, there are also several important projects, including: training projects for children's librarians of ASEAN countries since 2010, the Agreement on the Establishment of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO), the Project on Restoration of Degraded Ecosystems and Biodiversity Conservation in the ASEAN Region (AKECOP), and the project on increasing the detection potential of COVID-19 in ASEAN member States with a total budget of \$5 million. The Republic of Korea has also committed to contribute US\$ 1 million to the ASEAN Fund to Respond to COVID-19.

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