



Welkom

van de Voorzitter van de Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, prof.dr. J.A. Bruijn,
ter gelegenheid van de ontvangst van Yoon Suk-yeol, president van de Republiek Korea

datum 13 december 2023

Honourable President,

환영 (*welcome*)

I am honored to welcome you in the Dutch Senate. It is a privilege for us to receive you here today.

Mr President,

The relationship between our countries goes back for centuries. Your visit is one in a long tradition of meetings between your country and ours, albeit the first time a Korean President visits our country. A unique occasion which we find of great importance and value highly.

A few years ago, I had the great honour to be invited to speak on the occasion of the National Foundation Day – Gaecheonjeol - of the Republic of Korea. On October 3, Korea celebrates its National Foundation Day or 'Opening of the Sky Day'. This day - over 4000 years ago - the sky opened and Hwanung, son of the Lord of Heaven, descended to earth, landed near a sandalwood tree on Baekdu Mountain and founded Sinsi, the 'City of God'. His son Dangun formed the first Kingdom of Gojoseon in 2333 BC. This foundation myth is at the heart of the yearly celebrations.

As the myth illustrates, Korea has a very long and rich history. In the Netherlands and the rest of the Western world little was known about the country though, until the early 17th century. The first known Dutch record for trade relations was in 1610 when Prince Maurits approved a request from the Dutch East India Company to start trading with Korea.

In recent times the bond between Korea and the Netherlands was forged during what we in the Netherlands call 'the Korean war' that started in 1950. Dutch soldiers fought for the freedom of the Koreans. Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands have been officially established in 1961 and were intensified 55 years later in 2016 with the 'Comprehensive and Future-oriented Partnership'.

And last year, you and the Dutch Prime Minister, Mr Mark Rutte, gave a joint statement on the realization of a Strategic Partnership between Korea and the Netherlands. The trade relations between our countries include areas such as nuclear energy, smart farming, new and renewable energy and the creative industry.



datum 13 december 2023

blad 2

Recently, delegations of the Korean parliament paid visits to the Senate and met with members of the Committees on Economic Affairs and Climate, on Foreign Affairs, on Public Health, Welfare and Sports and on Finances. In the Senate, we cherish these meetings.

Before I give the floor to my colleague from the House of Representatives, allow me to introduce my colleagues Mrs Saskia Kluit, chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Climate, and Mr Koen Petersen, chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the Senate of the Netherlands.

Thank you.

감사합니다. (*Thank you*)