

Newsletter of Hanns Seidel Foundation, Korea Office – June 2004

English version

Seoul, June 2004

Dear Readers,

the last months saw the continuation of six party talks and a number of North-South exchanges, even in the realm of the military. All these were small steps in direction of a solution of the nuclear standoff and a peaceful development of the Korean peninsula. Also in North Korea, there are more small signs for a careful opening process. Hanns Seidel Foundation together with KETES and the economic institute of the cabinet of the North Korean government organizes end of June a seminar on “International Finance” aiming at a better understanding of international economic relations in North Korea. Political foundations have been explicitly invited by the North Korean government, as recently Kim Yong-Nam during a meeting of a German parliamentary delegation under inclusion of Hanns Seidel Foundation stated.

Besides the North-South issue, there have been numerous other activities of Hanns Seidel Foundation, among them a publication of a book on economic integration in East Asia in the “ASEAN plus three (China, Japan, Korea)” framework, seminars and study travels.

We are happy about your interest in our newsletter and always welcome feed-back. We hope we can meet you again at one of our foundation’s events in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Bernhard Seliger
Resident Representative

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1. Past Activiies

Study trip for local politicians

End of April 2004 a group of 8 members of the district assembly and 3 civil servants of Nam-Dong-Gu (district) in Incheon city were on a one-week study trip to Austria and Germany. The delegation was especially interested in the German model of local autonomy and in solutions for local environmental problems. Modern environmental technology (for waste water and waste management) of Munich city impressed the delegation as well as the organization of social responsibility in local communities in Germany, which could be experienced by a trip to the Bavarian town of Deggendorf, including a reception of mayor Mrs. Anna Eder. Also, talks with Dr. Rainer Gepperth, director of the Institute for International Contact and Cooperation at Hanns Seidel Foundation, were included.

Study trip of the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF)

The cooperation of Hanns Seidel Foundation Seoul and the South Korean National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF) is one of the oldest projects in Korea. In May 2004 a group of 15 heads of primary cooperatives visited Bavaria to get first-hand information on “The future of rural areas – agriculture, ecological agricultural production and eco-tourism”. The reform of agriculture, environmental aspects and new sources of income for farmers, like in farm-stay programmes, were discussed with ministries, Bavarian cooperatives and ecologically-oriented farms. The visit of a farm-stay programme brought a meeting with Mrs. Off, president of the German farm-stay association and a former guest in Korea. Talks with Dr. Rainer Gepperth, director of the Institute for International Contact and Cooperation at Hanns Seidel Foundation, renewed the old partnership of NACF and Hanns Seidel Foundation.

Study trip of the Center of Korean Women and Politics

The Center of Korean Women and Politics (CKWP) under the direction of Dr. Sohn Boc-Scuk, member of the National Assembly of Korea, is the partner of Hanns Seidel Foundation in the aim to promote women in politics and society. In May 2004 a 12-member group of the CKWP under the direction of general-secretary Kim Eun-Ju came to Bavaria. Talks with the Vice Chairwoman of Hanns Seidel Foundation, Prof. Ursula Männle, the vice president of the Bavarian Parliament, Barbara Stamm, the state secretary in the ministry of environment, Emilia Müller and the mayor of Regensburg, Petra Betz, were part of the programme. The delegation was especially impressed by the tour of social institutions in the district of Tutzing as well as the seminar organized by the German-Korean Dr. Beckers-Kim Young-Ja at Regensburg University.

Seminar with the Association for research into unification and economy

End of April a small seminar with the Association for research into unification and economy took place in Seoul. The topic were “Economic developments in North Korea and the experience of Eastern Europe -Reforms in socialism or reform of socialism?”. Dr. Seliger compared in his speech the economic reform of North Korea with those in Eastern Europe before 1989. The Association for research into unification and economy is a relatively small group of influential decision-makers of economy, administration and science, meeting regularly on economic questions of Korean unification.

Seminar for Koreans living Abroad in Cheju-Do

Million Koreans live outside of Korea, especially in the USA, in Japan, in China and Russia. With their manifold historical relations they can build a bridge between North and South Korea. Therefore, Hanns Seidel Foundation together with the Institute of Peace Affairs fosters relations of Koreans living abroad with the motherland. These seminars became an important event for Koreans living abroad, especially regarding the politics of unification. A sign for the importance of these seminars is the speech by unification minister Jeong Se-Hyun this year, despite other important political events, as well as the participation of important scientists like Kim German from Kazhakstan. Also locally the interest of media and audience with overwhelming, confirming the role of Cheju-Do as the “peace Island” of Korea.

2. Conference announcements

Conference on „International Finance“ in Pyongyang – first seminar of Hanns Seidel Foundation in North Korea

After an information visit in October 2003 and a visit with a German Parliamentary delegation in early June 2004 in the end of the month there will be the first seminar of Hanns Seidel Foundation in Pyongyang in North Korea. It is organized together with Korea Europe Foundation and KETES (Korea-Europe Technology and Economy Services) as well as the economic institute of the cabinet of North Korea, dealing with “International Finance”. Further pilot projects in agriculture as well as economic systems questions are currently under preparation.

3. Internship opportunities

Hanns Seidel Foundation in Korea offers a limited number of internship places for Korean graduate students of social sciences. Their task is to support the general administrative work as well as research of Hanns Seidel Foundation in the fields of reconciliation on the Korean peninsula, promotion of local autonomy and promotion of women in politics and society. Precondition is fluency in English or German language. Applications should be send by e-mail to info@hss.or.kr.

4. New Publication – ASEAN plus Three (China, Japan, Korea)

In May 2004 the book „ASEAN plus three (China, Japan, Korea) - towards an economic community in East Asia?”, edited by Karl-Peter Schönfisch and Dr. Bernhard Seliger, was published (ISBN: 89-954964). Economic integration has come to the forefront of economic policy making in East Asia, finally. After lagging behind in forming a comprehensive regional integration area for various historical, political, cultural and economic reasons, today the discussion ranges from the introduction of bilateral Free Trade Agreements through currency and financial market cooperation to a full fledged economic community. Heterogeneity of East Asian states and divergences in economic size and economic development are not longer seen purely as obstacles to integration, but also as potential complementarities. The book is based on two conferences organized by Hanns Seidel Foundation Seoul and Singapore office in December 2003 in Seoul. A limited number of books is still available, if you send in a sufficiently postage-free envelope.