Press Release

The European Union Delegation to the Republic of Korea and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Seoul to mark International Human Rights Day with an event on the 2025 campaign theme “Human Rights: Our Everyday Essentials”

15 December 2025, Seoul – Today, the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Korea (EU Delegation) will host a human rights day event in Seoul, with the support of the Office of the United Nations Human Rights Office in Seoul (OHCHR Seoul). This year’s human rights theme, “Human Rights: Our Everyday Essentials,” emphasizes the fundamental role that human rights play in our daily life and in sustaining peaceful and inclusive societies.

The event will bring together around 150 participants, including civil society representatives, youth activists, academics, policymakers, EU Member State diplomats, journalists, and human rights defenders. It aims to strengthen dialogue, highlight current challenges, and encourage deeper public engagement on equality, inclusion, and democratic participation.

The program will open with welcome remarks from representatives of the EU, OHCHR, and the Government of the Republic of Korea. This will be followed by a panel discussion on “Equality and Inclusion in the Republic of Korea”.

A dedicated youth engagement session will showcase selected submissions from the EU’s and OHCHR’s ongoing “Human Rights: Our Everyday Essentials” social media campaign, highlighting how young people perceive human rights and why these rights are important in their daily lives.

The second panel session will focus on the human rights situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). Civil society representatives and former citizens of the DPRK will share perspectives on human rights as our everyday essentials, including access to food, freedom of expression, and freedom of movement, which need to be guaranteed for realizing the rights of the people in the DPRK.

Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Korea, emphasized the significance of this year’s commemoration: “Human rights are not abstract ideals — they are the foundations of peaceful and resilient societies, which must be protected and nurtured every day. As we mark International Human Rights Day, the European Union stands with its Korean partners in reaffirming our shared commitment to equality, dignity, and freedom for all.”

James Heenan, Representative of the OHCHR Seoul recalled ”Reading the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it becomes clear that the everyday essentials of our lives all depend on the fulfilment of our fundamental rights. The rights that many of us consider a given are, in reality, not enjoyed by everyone around the world. On International Human Rights Day and every day, let’s stand up for our rights as well as the rights of others—not only friends and family who may look, talk, worship, or love like us, but also people whom we may never meet—just like the people in the DPRK.”

The event is organized within the framework of the EU Public and Cultural Diplomacy in the Republic of Korea (EUPCD) project, which works to enhance understanding of EU values and strengthen partnerships with Korean stakeholders.

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