



## Toespraak

van de Voorzitter van de Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, prof.dr. J.A. Bruijn,  
ter gelegenheid van de viering van de Nationale Feestdag van de Republiek Korea

*datum 2 oktober 2019*

귀하의 존경하는 대사 [gwihaui jongyeonghaneun daesa]

Honourable Ambassador,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to be invited to speak on the occasion of the National Foundation Day - Gaecheonjeol - of the Republic of Korea.

Tomorrow Korea celebrates its National Foundation Day also known as Opening of the Sky Day. On this day - over 4000 years ago - the sky opened and Hwanung, son of the Lord of Heaven, descended to earth, and founded Sinsi, the 'City of God'. His son Dangun formed the first Kingdom of Gojoseon.

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



datum 2 oktober 2019

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Netherlands have been officially established in 1961 and were intensified in 2016 with the 'Comprehensive and Future-oriented Partnership'. The trade relations between our countries include areas such as nuclear energy, smart farming, new and renewable energy and the creative industry.

Let me give just one example of the latter: right at this moment the Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism is taking place. Earlier this year, the organising team paid a visit to the Netherlands as part of the International Visitors' Programme offered by Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam. Het Nieuwe Instituut is specialized in architecture, design and digital culture. Many of the Dutch participation in the Seoul biennale builds upon this International Visitors' Programme.

Honourable Ambassador,

I congratulate the Republic of Korea and all Koreans with this National Foundation Day. In the Netherlands we cherish the excellent bond between our two countries. We do hope and trust that this bond will remain close for many years to come.

It is an honour to celebrate this important day with you.

축하해 [chughahae]

Congratulations.