




# Annex 4 – Seoul Field Study Research Report

Emils Rode, MBA

University of Latvia

December 2012

<b>Project Number</b> CB55
<b>Project Title</b> Expat-project: Innovate Services for International Talents – Easier Access to the Central Baltic Sea Region
<b>Title of Deliverable</b> Seoul Field Study Research Report
<b>Work-package contributing to the Deliverable</b> WP3 Soft Departure
<b>Author(s)</b> Emils Rode
<b>Abstract</b> The objectives of this study have been to identify the already existing exchange of people and knowledge between the Nordic/Baltic region and South Korea, and the opportunities for developing them in the future. Two “reconnaissance” interviews and 20 interviews involving 33 persons were conducted in Seoul and Daejeon, South Korea. The findings of the research shows that neither Estonia nor Latvia is represented on the ground in South Korea and even Finland and Sweden are still in the process of building their full presence. Therefore it is a recommendation for Estonian and Latvian organizations to utilize the existing networks and cooperation platforms established by their Nordic colleagues and focus on international cooperation on university students, professors and researchers in order to produce “spill-over” effects into economic and cultural relations.
<b>Keywords</b> Soft departure, Central Baltic Sea Region, talent retention



## Table of contents

Introduction .....	3
Study methodology .....	4
1. Finding Expat partners' interests .....	4
2. Reconnaissance interviews .....	5
3. Selecting the interviewees .....	6
4. Scheduling interviews .....	6
5. Carrying out interviews .....	8
6. Reporting.....	8
Interview guide.....	9
Main findings and recommendations.....	11
Background .....	11
Korean opinions of the Nordic/Baltic region .....	11
Existing cooperation between South Korea and Nordic/Baltic region.....	12
Available information on Central Baltic Region in Korea .....	12
On the possibility of a Nordic/Baltic region brand.....	13
We need platforms .....	13
Towards Nordic/Baltic cooperation in South Korea.....	14
Interview notes.....	15
About the Expat-project.....	51

## Introduction

This study was conducted by Mr. Emils Rode, MBA (further referred to as the Researcher) on commission of Riga Planning Region, as part of the Interreg IV A Central Baltic programme-supported project Expat: Innovative Services for International Talents in the Central Baltic Sea Region.

Expat project aims to share knowledge and best practice among project partners on the development of services for attracting and retaining highly-skilled immigrants in the Central Baltic Sea Region. Within this broader objective, project partners decided to conduct field studies in three regions which could be the sources of skilled immigrants for CBSR in the future. These target regions were identified as Shanghai, China; Seoul, South Korea; and Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The present study was conducted from June to November 2012, with field interviews made between 25 September and 15 October 2012.

The objectives of this study have been to identify the already existing exchange of people and knowledge between the Nordic/Baltic region and South Korea, and the opportunities for developing them in the future.

Expat-project includes partners from four Central Baltic nations Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Sweden; they have been the focus of the study. However, throughout the study a broader term 'Nordic/Baltic region' has been used, which by definition includes five Nordic and three Baltic states. The reason for applying this term rather than 'Central Baltic' is simply its better recognition by counterparts in both South Korea and Nordic/Baltic region itself. In any event, the focus in choice of interviewees and of interview topics has been almost entirely on the Central Baltic nations.

## Study methodology

The study was carried out in six steps:

1. Finding Expat partners' interests
2. Reconnaissance interviews
3. Selecting the interviewees
4. Scheduling interviews
5. Carrying out interviews
6. Reporting

We shall now detail each of the steps.

### 1. Finding Expat partners' interests

As the study was conducted for the benefit of Expat-project partners, they were asked to suggest any particular areas or persons/organisations of interest. Two emails with this purpose were sent out to Expat partners in Spring/Summer 2012, resulting in the list shown in table A below.

**Table A. Summary of Expat partners' interests in South Korea**

	Partner Name	Expressed area of interest	Suggested contact persons or organisations
LP	Uusimaa Regional Council	Inventory of existing promotional/information materials on Uusimaa Region	1. Matti Heimonen (matti.heimonen@formin.fi) 2. Finpro, Seoul
P2	Laurea University of Applied Sciences	n/a	n/a
P3	Culminatum Innovation Oy Ltd	n/a	n/a
P4	Regional Council of Southwest Finland	Partners to invest in R&D in CBSR (in particular, in ex-Nokia town of Salo, Finland): electronics, renewable energy, health care technology, food processing sectors	1. Samsung 2. LG 3. other big corporations
P5	Turku Science Park Oy Ltd	Samsung and LG corporations, their interest and criteria for investment in CBSR	1. Samsung 2. LG
P6	Riga Planning Region	Finding cooperation partners in South Korea, e.g. regional development / planning organizations	Government organizations in South Korea dealing with European relations, e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
P7	University of Latvia	Academic cooperation with South Korea. Establishment of Korea studies programme at the University of Latvia.	Distinguished Prof. Uchang Kim <sup>1</sup> , Academy of Advanced Studies, Ewha Womans University
P8	City of Uppsala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambassador</li> <li>• Investment Agency</li> </ul>	Incoming Ambassador of Finland to South Korea, Mr. Matti Heimonen

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the report, Korean names are written as given name(s) followed by family name.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade Council</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce from Sweden, Finland, Latvia and Estonia</li> </ul>	
P9	Institute of Baltic Studies	n/a	n/a
P10	eGovernance Academy Foundation	n/a	n/a

While the Researcher tried his best to accommodate project partners' requests, this was not always practical or realistic within the given timeframe and budget of the study.

## 2. Reconnaissance interviews

To gain a perspective on the topic, the Researcher saw it useful to conduct 'reconnaissance' interviews with persons and organisations already involved in the Nordic/Baltic – South Korea dialogue.

From a logistical standpoint, it was practical to conduct those interviews in the Researcher's home base, Riga.

The Researcher conducted two reconnaissance interviews: with Ms. **Dace Liberte**, Deputy Head of the Republic of Latvia Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Asia, Africa and Oceania Division, who at the time of the interview was responsible for Latvian-South Korean relations, and with Ms. **Baiba Bērziņa**, Project Manager at Latvian Investment and Development Agency, Foreign Trade Promotion Department, Export Promotion Division, who at the time of the interview was involved in organising a Latvian trade mission to Seoul in December 2012.

A request was made by email to meet with the Stockholm-based Ambassador of Republic of Korea to Latvia and Sweden Mr. **Seock-Jeong Eom**, but it was denied due to the Ambassador's busy schedule on the suggested day.

The Researcher also contacted the regional headquarters of two South Korean corporations based in Riga, Samsung and LG, by email and by telephone, seeking to interview their respective Presidents: Mr. **Jeongwoo (Joseph) Kim** of Samsung Baltics, and Mr. **Dong Heyon Kim** of LG Electronics Latvia. However, regardless of repeated requests, neither contact resulted in an interview.

### 3. Selecting the interviewees

Based on the Expat partners' suggestions and on insights gained in the reconnaissance interviews, the Researcher proceeded to compile a list of interviewees.

An initial list of South Korean organisations and Nordic/Baltic representations in South Korea was compiled and the relevant persons contacted by email. The Researcher tried to make a list that takes into consideration the Expat partners' interests and presents a balanced picture in terms of the organisations contacted. As academic cooperation with South Korea was seen as a priority area, many of the South Korean organisations contacted were academic. However, care was taken to also include business associations, national and municipal government organisations, and the press.

### 4. Scheduling interviews

Whenever possible, the Researcher sought to be introduced by a mutually respected figure before directly contacting the interviewee. This approach proved successful, ensuring a high response rate from the persons contacted.

The Researcher sent a brief email describing the goals of Expat-project and of the Seoul field study to each of the potential interviewees. Interview dates and times were then agreed, taking into account logistics considerations. A total of 20 interviews involving 33 persons were scheduled in South Korea. The final list of interviewees is presented in table B below.

Table B. List of interviewees in South Korea.

#	Title	Last name	First name	Position	Organisation
1	Dr.	Lee	Nam Sik	President	aSSIST Seoul School of Integrated Sciences and Technologies
2	Mr.	Persson	Henrik	Minister Counsellor	Embassy of Sweden to the Republic of Korea
3	Mr.	Lee	Herbert (Hwijae)	Managing Director of International Relations Office	Korea Importers Association KOIMA
	Ms.	Lee	Joohyun	Assistant Manager, International Relations Office	Korea Importers Association KOIMA
4	Mr.	Kim	Bosup	PhD candidate in Design	College of Fine Arts, Seoul National University
	Mr.	Lee	Kyurak	PhD candidate in Design	College of Fine Arts, Seoul National University
	Ms.	Jung	Haena	Lecturer	College of Fine Arts, Seoul National University
5	Ms.	Park	Yoonjoe	Director Arts	British Council Korea
6	Prof.	Kim	Tony (Wontaik)	Chair of Design Management, leader of Future Design Lab	International Design School for Advanced Studies IDAS, Hongik University
	Prof.	Lee	Keun	Dean, Professor of Industrial Design Department	International Design School for Advanced Studies IDAS, Hongik University

7	Dr.	<b>Oh</b>	<b>Dong Yoon</b>	Research Fellow	Korea Small Business Institute KOSBI
8	Mr.	<b>Carlberg</b>	<b>Peter</b>	Chairman;  Managing Director	Swedish Chamber of Commerce in South Korea;  Alfa Laval Korea Ltd.
9	Mr.	<b>Heimonen</b>	<b>Matti</b>	Ambassador	Embassy of Finland to the Republic of Korea
	Ms.	<b>Leidy</b>	<b>Kaisa</b>	First Secretary, Deputy Head of Mission	Embassy of Finland to the Republic of Korea
10	Prof.	<b>Lee</b>	<b>Soonjong</b>	Dean, Professor;  Executive Director;  Chairman	College of Fine Arts, Seoul National University;  Korea Design Research Institute KDRI;  Korean Federation of Design Associations
11	Prof.	<b>Kim</b>	<b>Uchang</b>	Distinguished Professor	Academy for Advanced Studies, Ewha Womans University
	Prof.	<b>Kim</b>	<b>Mi Hyun</b>	Professor of Korean Language and Literature; Associate Vice President for Communications	The College of Liberal Arts
12	Ms.	<b>Yoon</b>	<b>Jae Sook</b>	Managing Director	Office of Global Affairs, Ewha Womans University
	Ms.	<b>Anna</b>	<b>Suh</b>	Program Manager	Office of Global Affairs, Ewha Womans University
13	Mr.	<b>Rhee</b>	<b>Sang Mook</b>	Communications Officer	Seoul Design Foundation
14	Mr.	<b>Kim</b>	<b>J. August</b>	Secretary	Honorary Consul General of Latvia in the Republic of Korea
15	Dr. Prof.	<b>Lee</b>	<b>Kun-Pyo</b>	Executive Vice President, Head of Corporate Design Center;  Professor	LG Electronics  Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology KAIST
16	Prof.	<b>Chung</b>	<b>Kyung-won</b>	Professor, Chairman	Department of Industrial Design, KAIST
	Dr.	<b>Nam</b>	<b>Ki-Young</b>	Associate Professor, Director Design IS Lab	Department of Industrial Design, KAIST
	Dr.	<b>Nam</b>	<b>Tek-Jin</b>	Associate Professor; Director, Co.design Inter.action Design Research Lab	Department of Industrial Design, KAIST
	Dr.	<b>Lee</b>	<b>Woohun</b>	Associate Professor; Director, Design Media Lab	Department of Industrial Design, KAIST
	Ms.	<b>Song</b>	<b>Ji-Won</b>	Visiting Professor	Department of Industrial



					Design, KAIST
17	Prof.	<b>Cho</b>	<b>Kyu-hyung</b>	Director	Institute of Foreign Language Studies, Korea University
18	Mr.	<b>Han</b>	<b>Jaeho</b>	Deputy Director, KF Cultural Centre Programme Team, Culture & Arts Department	Korea Foundation
	Ms.	<b>Choi</b>	<b>Yoon Jung</b>	Program Officer, Culture & Arts Department	Korea Foundation
19	Ms.	<b>Maing</b>	<b>Eunjoo</b>	Head of International Affairs Division	Korea Institute for Design Promotion
	Mr.	<b>Park</b>	<b>Eric</b>	Deputy Manager of International Cooperation Team, International Affairs Division	Korea Institute for Design Promotion
20	Ms.	<b>Moon</b>	<b>Ji Yeon (Jennifer)</b>	Speaker Director; Reporter	World Knowledge Forum Maeil Business Newspaper

In addition to these, the Researcher had an exchange of emails with the incoming Swedish Trade Commissioner to Korea, Mr. **Johan Chun**, as well as contacting Mr. **Ari Virtanen**, Head of Finland Trade Centre/FinPro in Korea. Neither of these contacts resulted in an interview.

## 5. Carrying out interviews

The interviews were conducted between 25 September and 15 October on location in Seoul and Daejeon, South Korea, according to the schedule.

(Although the interviews had been planned at least a month in advance, there was only one case of rescheduling, when the Dean of the Seoul National University College of Fine Arts and Design could not meet the Researcher on the day appointed. Instead, the Researcher was given a tour of the College by its teachers, and met Professor **Soonjong Lee** on a separate occasion.)

## 6. Reporting

The Researcher introduced the programme of interviews and his overall field study plan to Expat-project partners at a Partners' Meeting in Uppsala, 20 September 2012. The plan was approved by project partners.

The interviews in South Korea were transcribed immediately after they were made. This report was written between September and November 2012.

Upon the conclusion of the field study and return to Riga, the Researcher had a meeting to share his insights and preliminary conclusions with Ms. **Baiba Bērziņa** and with her supervisor, Ms. **Aija Jaunzeme**, Director of the Foreign Trade Promotion Department at Latvian Investment and

Development Agency. At the time of writing, a similar meeting is planned with the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## Interview guide

In preparation for the field study, the Researcher produced the following list of research questions.

**“How are target groups (students and young professionals) in South Korea informed about opportunities in the Central Baltic Sea Region?”**

How are the target groups defined?

What are our objectives vis-a-vis the target groups?

What national and regional Central Baltic Sea Region organisations in South Korea provide what information and advice?

Is there a Central Baltic Sea Region story? What is it?  
(Or are there several, perhaps competing national stories?)

How can the 'junior' Central Baltic Sea Region players (Estonia and Latvia) be integrated in the Scandinavian/Nordic story?

How can the Central Baltic Sea Region story be told cost-efficiently?

With the insight gained during reconnaissance interviews, and through research preceding the field study, the Researcher established the following:

- Target groups and CBSR partners' objectives relating to them are not yet clearly defined; therefore, a more general approach needs to be taken and the focus of interviews needs to be broadened.
- In contrast to Finland and Sweden, which both have embassies in Seoul, neither Estonia nor Latvia is represented on the ground in Korea (except by the nominal institution of Honorary Consul General). Even Finland and Sweden, however, are still in the process of building their full presence: e.g. the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Korea was established as recently as January 2012, and there is no equivalent association of Finnish businesses. In summary, the main information providers on the part of CBSR in Korea are the two aforementioned embassies.
- There is at the moment no CBSR story (apart from the Expat-project itself); therefore, the Nordic/Baltic region concept is introduced in interviews, which may be more understandable to both Korean and Nordic/Baltic partners.

Two sets of interview guides were produced: one for Korean organisations, the other for Nordic/Baltic representations in South Korea. These are provided below.

### **Interview guide for Korean organisations**

1. What are your organisation's mission and goals?
2. What is your experience in cooperating with Nordic/Baltic counterparts?
3. What would you describe as Nordic/Baltic 'brand values'? What comes to mind when you think of Nordic/Baltic region?
4. What kind of cooperation would you like to develop with Nordic/Baltic counterparts: in the next year? in the next ten years?
5. How do you see 'people exchange' between South Korea and Nordic/Baltic region in the future? What do you see as the main target groups for this exchange (age, education, professional focus)?
6. What kind of information and/or service support do you think Nordic/Baltic organisations should provide to facilitate such exchange?

### **Interview guide for CBSR (Nordic/Baltic) organisations' representations in South Korea**

1. What are your organisation's mission and goals?
2. What would you describe as Nordic/Baltic 'brand values'?
3. What is the story you are telling?
4. What are your target audiences?
5. What are the channels you use to reach your audiences?
6. Would you consider promoting a united Nordic/Baltic story in South Korea?  
On what conditions?

Before proceeding further, we should stress the fact that the interview guides should be seen as guiding the discussion rather than anticipating precise answers.

Looking back on the interviews, in many cases the interviewees did not have a sufficient basis of information or experience to provide definitive answers to the questions posed. Therefore, the interviews conducted should be seen primarily as establishing a discursive field for further inquiries and discussions.

## Main findings and recommendations

### Background

The Republic of Korea today is one of the most dynamic economies of the world. It is the world's 13<sup>th</sup> largest economy by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) size, and the 9<sup>th</sup> largest exporter<sup>2</sup>. With its GDP per capita at \$20,759 (2010)<sup>3</sup>, South Korea ranks among medium-developed countries, a remarkable achievement given that the devastating Korean War ended less than 60 years ago.

In addition to its economic weight, South Korea's global influence is growing in more 'soft' ways as well, as evidenced by the popularity of K-pop (Hallyu) not only in East Asia but worldwide. The United Nations Secretary General is a former South Korean Foreign Minister, and the World Bank President is a Korean-American.

While its companies have taken leadership positions in many industries, such as electronics, automobiles and shipbuilding, South Korea's economy is in the process of maturing to the next level, to take its place among the developed countries. In the last decade or so, South Korea has emerged not only as an exports powerhouse but a hotbed of innovation, with industrial design playing an increasing role in its economy and society.

In their 2007 study 'The Atlas of Ideas: How Asian innovation can benefit us all' (Demos, [www.demos.co.uk](http://www.demos.co.uk)) the British visionaries **Charles Leadbeater** and **James Wilsdon** draw this conclusion: "Britain needs to ready itself for a world of global innovation networks, in which ideas and technologies will come from many more places."

This statement is probably just as true for Nordic/Baltic nations. If anything, in the last five years of the unfolding global financial crisis it has only gained in relevance and even urgency.

We cannot avoid globalisation. Even if we could find a model of profitable self-isolation, we would still be part of a global competition for such models. Thus, in relation to the present study, the real question is not 'if' we have to develop cooperation with South Korea, but 'how' best to proceed with it.

### Korean opinions of the Nordic/Baltic region


Some of the interviewees who are involved in one or another kind of collaboration with the Nordic countries indicated that Koreans have at least some knowledge of them. However, others indicated that in general there is not much awareness or knowledge of the Nordic region in Korea.

The few Korean interviewees who have been to Estonia and/or Latvia described them rather favourably as 'interesting' and 'different' countries; several referred to Latvia as a 'calm' country and

---

<sup>2</sup> Source: Facts about Korea, Korean Culture and Information Service, 2010

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



praised its natural beauty. Some of these interviewees also indicated their own prior beliefs that Baltic States are influenced by Russia, which they found disproven in reality – beliefs which could be widespread in South Korea.

(This is not a positive association, given that one interviewee described Russia as a country that Koreans like to visit “only once”, and others indicated as a difficult country to do business with.)

## Existing cooperation between South Korea and Nordic/Baltic region

Sweden especially has long-established presence in Korea, through its peacekeeping role in the aftermath of the Korean War. Recently this presence has been strengthened by the establishment of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Korea.

Finland has been quite active in South Korea since 1990s, with particularly notable involvement in the development of higher education in business and design. Finnish universities, particularly those that are now part of Aalto University, have been active in organising student exchanges and collaborations with their Korean partners.

## Available information on Central Baltic Region in Korea

Information on Finland and Sweden is available on their Embassies’ web sites, which have full versions in the Korean language. Judging from their English versions, both sites provide extensive general information and Korea-specific news highlights, as well as addressing more specific pre-departure interests.

Neither Estonia nor Latvia has a permanent representation in South Korea. Estonian visas can be obtained at the Embassy of Poland in Seoul<sup>4</sup>. Latvian visas can be obtained at the Embassy of Slovakia in Seoul<sup>5</sup>. (However, as there is a visa-free regime between EU and Republic of Korea, this is not relevant for most travellers.)

Estonian Embassy in Beijing, which also covers Korea, has a well-designed website <http://www.peking.vm.ee/>, available in Estonian, English and Chinese, but no specific information targeted at Korea.

Latvian Embassy in Tokyo, which also covers Korea, has a recently updated web site <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/japan/>, available in Latvian, English and Japanese (although the Japanese version is rather limited). It has no reference to Korea either.

There exist the official websites [estonia.eu](http://estonia.eu) (well-designed and in English) and the recently launched [latvia.eu](http://latvia.eu) (in English, with some features in other languages including Chinese). Both provide general information and news updates on Estonia and Latvia, respectively, as well as links to websites of

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.vm.ee/?q=en/node/15496>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/service/missions-copy/>

government agencies providing more specific information on travel, investment, and studying in either country (in English and other languages, but not in Korean).

### On the possibility of a Nordic/Baltic region brand

“Baltic Sea Region does not have a shared identity and a recognized image, nor has the marketing of the region developed in a structured and systematic way.”<sup>6</sup>

The apparent lack of common branding is the premise of the Baltic Sea Region Programme-financed two-year project ONE BSR, which was launched very recently, in September 2012. The focus of the project is on four areas: Branding, Investment, Talent, and Tourism.

“One of the objectives of ONE BSR is to market the whole region and its different parts by developing joint promotional services [...] and to test them in practice. The other objective is to make positive publicity of the BSR lifestyles and to encourage the “we-feeling” of the BSR.”<sup>7</sup>

We need to keep in mind, however, that Baltic Sea Region is a broader concept than Nordic/Baltic, as it also comprises eastern and southern Baltic Sea areas: St. Petersburg, Germany, Kaliningrad and Poland.

The ‘predecessor’ of this project, BaltMetPromo, has inter alia produced the tourism brochure ‘Baltic Sea Region: Live like locals’, published in English and Japanese. The brochure promotes Nordic capitals, Baltic cities, and Berlin and Warsaw to outsiders.

Although its focus may be broad, ONE BSR aims to include Baltic and Nordic capitals in the same story, which would help to increase their recognition as part of a global region.

### We need platforms

One of the clearest conclusions that the Researcher has made from this field study is this: building international relationships is a long-term project. Swedish and Finnish relationships in Korea date back many decades, so Estonia and Latvia should not expect quick results.

However, the world is changing, and so should our methods for dealing with it. Today innovation is indeed happening in many places at once, and mobility is not a luxury but a necessity in our knowledge-intensive economies.


Although it has been prophesised already fifteen years ago<sup>8</sup>, the “death of distance” has not arrived yet. The Nordic/Baltic region and South Korea are still separated by 7,000km of sparsely populated

---

<sup>6</sup> Source: <http://www.hel.fi/hel2/onebsr/news.html>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Frances Cairncross, *The Death of Distance: How the Communications Revolution Will Change Our Lives*, Harvard Business Press, 1997



territory, and the costs of travel are still considerable. While English has become the lingua franca in both Nordic/Baltic region and South Korea, cultural differences between them are significant and are unlikely to go away just because we have internet<sup>9</sup>.

With the cost and effort involved, the movement of people between both regions must be planned and managed so as to maximise its value. The best cases of South Korean-Nordic cooperation show that this can be achieved by establishing permanent ‘platforms’: rooted in the local academic, scientific, economic, and political context, yet speaking the same language with their international partners.

This is a role for which universities and colleges are naturally suited. Focusing international cooperation on university students, professors and researchers will produce multiple ‘spill-over’ effects into economic and cultural relations. As they gain international experience, not only will academics and especially students broaden their horizons, but they are likely to develop professional and personal connections that will shape their entire careers.

## Towards Nordic/Baltic cooperation in South Korea

Both South Korea and Nordic countries are home to a number of world-class universities and corporations, and have much to share and learn from each other. The academic and business infrastructure of Estonia and Latvia is less developed, and of a smaller scale.

It would be logical to suggest that Estonian and Latvian organisations should utilise the existing networks and cooperation platforms established by their Nordic colleagues. However, this is still uncharted territory, as examples of Nordic-Baltic cooperation in external markets are rather scarce.

In fact, there already exists a framework for Nordic-Baltic cooperation abroad: the Nordic Innovation Fund project ‘Nordic innovation representations’<sup>10</sup> launched in 2009. From its initial focus on Asia, it has recently expanded its scope to all countries outside the EU. The programme is open to partners from Baltic countries, provided they have Nordic partners. (To the Researcher’s knowledge, there has been at least one such case: Estonian participation in a Nordic green-technology delegation tour to the US.)

While all Nordic representatives in South Korea welcomed dialogue with their Baltic counterparts, the need for a ‘political-level’ agreement was acknowledged by both Baltic and Nordic representatives. In any case, much will depend on individual organisations’ initiative and ambition for involvement in the Nordic-Korean cooperation processes.

Although brought together by geography and history, even today, after 20 years of cooperation and investment, Nordic and Baltic countries remain vastly different societies moving not necessarily in the same direction.

---

<sup>9</sup> If anything, it could be argued that communications revolution has in fact **increased** the distance between people; this thought certainly crosses one’s mind when observing passengers on a packed Seoul metro train, each one immersed in their tablet computer.

<sup>10</sup> <http://nordicinnovation.org/en-GB/projects/programme-for-nordic-innovation-projects-with-asia/>

## Interview notes

**Disclaimer:**

The author of this report has tried to convey the ideas and opinions communicated by his interviewees to the best of his understanding. The author disclaims any responsibility for the opinions expressed in the interviews.



## Reconnaissance interview No. 1

<b>Interview date:</b>	31 August 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Riga, Latvia
<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Liberte</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Dace</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Deputy Head of Asia, Africa and Oceania Division
<b>Organisation:</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia

### Background

This was Ms. Liberte last day in this Division. From September, she will take another job within the Ministry. Her successor has not yet been appointed.

### Interview notes

Republic of Korea will open an embassy in Riga to cover the three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). It is planned to send charge d'affaires in autumn of 2012.

LG and Samsung corporations' headquarters for Baltic States are based in Riga. In total there are 40-50 Korean nationals in Riga, including family members.

The rivalry between China, Japan and South Korea has been intensifying recently. However, Latvia's agenda is to maintain a balanced view between these three major players.

South Korean foreign policy agenda is 'Pax Americana', i.e. the current world order. As it asserts its place in the world, South Korea is interested in studies of occupation, independence etc., and has proposed cooperation in these areas to Latvian scholars of history and other disciplines.

Latvia's Ambassador to Korea is based in Tokyo. Latvia is represented in Korea by Mr. Kwon, Honorary Consul General, who is a big-time businessman.

Latvian collaboration with Nordic countries in Korea so far was implemented in a tourism promotion event which took place in Seoul in 2011, where Latvia cooperated with Finnair.

Samsung call centre was moved from Sweden to Latvia in the wake of a local retail-price fixing scandal; Sweden was not too happy about this.

LG in Latvia keeps a relatively low profile.

Student exchange with South Korean universities is the most possible first step of cooperation.

In South Korea, a good contact is Dr Oh from Korean SME Research Institute KOSBI. Latvian Embassy in Tokyo will help to establish contact with Mr. Kwon, Latvian Honorary Consul General in Korea.

## Reconnaissance interview No. 2

<b>Interview date:</b>	13 September 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Riga, Latvia
<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Bērziņa</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Baiba</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Project Manager, Foreign Trade Promotion Department, Export Promotion Division
<b>Organisation:</b>	Latvian Investment and Development Agency LIAA

### Interview notes

Ms. Bērziņa is the person in charge of organising a trade mission for Latvian wood-processing and pharmaceutical industries to South Korea from 2 to 6 December 2012.

During Latvian Prime Minister Dombrovskis' visit to South Korea in 2011, there was a business delegation that accompanied him. From the Korean side, there was the most interest expressed in Latvian wood-processing and pharmaceutical industries – thence the focus on these two industries in the current trade mission.

The initiative to organise this trade mission comes from LIAA, with input from the industry. Through Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs they have contacted Korean Importers Association KOIMA, which was found most suitable to help with this mission from the Korean side. KOIMA had already organised an industrial exhibition for Latvian companies in Seoul during Prime Minister's visit, and there was separately another exhibition focused on incoming tourism to Latvia.

As for cooperation with other (e.g. Nordic) countries in foreign markets, this could be done via European Enterprise Network EEN, which is represented in Latvia by another LIAA project manager, Mr. Edgars Bulvāns.

There are regular trilateral meetings of LIAA, Ministry of Economics and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where they share news and adjust agendas.

Before official visits LIAA does practice economic and cultural 'orientation' for the business delegation; however, not this time, as this will likely be a very small delegation (only 3 companies have registered this far). Update: during a follow-up meeti

LIAA has not thought about cooperating with Nordic representations in East Asia, and in any case this would be a question for higher-level management. However, the idea of getting in touch with Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Korea is a good one, and the Latvian trade delegation could well have a meeting with them.

## Interview No. 01

<b>Interview date:</b>	25 September 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Prof.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Lee</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Nam Sik</b>
<b>Position:</b>	President
<b>Organisation:</b>	aSSIST business school

### Interview notes

Seoul Integrated School of Integrated Sciences and Technologies (aSSIST) was the first Korean executive MBA programme established with the help of Helsinki School of Economics (HSE).

It started when HSE invited Prof. Dong-sung CHO (currently Professor of Strategy and International Business at Graduate School of Business, Seoul National University) as one of 200 global professors to visit the school.

On Prof. Cho's initiative, aSSIST was established in 1995. aSSIST got much freedom in organising its curriculum. Its educational programme is open-platform, consisting of 2-week modules (which allows having various guest lecturers at reasonable cost compared to full-time position).

aSSIST was established as a Korean educational institution in 2004, as South Korean Ministry of Education insisted they incorporate as a new school. Previously it was a Limited company running HSE executive programmes. Before 2004, aSSIST's status was not very clear, as it was a sort of educational service.

Now aSSIST offers dual degrees, both from Aalto University and aSSIST (with some tracks offering only one degree). Annually there are 200 students. Every summer have a programme at Aalto University. aSSIST hopes to introduce standard business education to Korea, as it exists in Europe and the US.

President Nam Sik LEE himself is planning soon to take the leadership position at another school, Keywon Art and Design Academy.

aSSIST has a very good relationship with Finnish Embassy in Seoul. In near future, they plan to tear down and rebuild the aSSIST building "in Finnish style", with natural materials etc. They want to establish a Korean-Nordic centre at the new aSSIST building, and invite organisations such as the Korean-Finnish Chamber of Commerce to locate there. [In the entrance hall of aSSIST there is a plaque indicating it as Finnish Honorary Consulate General.]

aSSIST invites students from the EU regularly: they just had a group of 12 students from Germany, and 25 Executive MBA students from University of Tampere. They also develop custom courses, such as that for the visiting students from the MHMK school in Germany.

Professor Lee has visited Estonia, in particular Tallinn University (describing them as providing “good basic science education”) and Tartu Business Park. He has met scientists who have developed a nanotech atomic microscope; however, it is difficult to find clients for such a product and to develop it as a business.

Prof. Lee finds that people in the Baltics have good ideas; he feels it would be beneficial to organise an exhibition showcasing their inventions and bring it to South Korea, leading to their manufacturing in South Korea. (He recommends visiting Dongdaemun Market in Seoul, which is specialised in fashion and clothing; the goods marketed there could well be designed in Nordic-Baltic region and manufactured in South Korea.)

As a good example, Prof. Lee cites similar kind of cooperation that they have with Israel; there is a research budget for Korean-Israeli cooperation of \$4m provided by Korean government.

It is difficult to create global-scale innovations even in Korea. Apparently, Koreans developed a proto-Facebook called Sky Star 10 years before Facebook. It had better features than today’s Facebook, but did not expand beyond Korea, and is now defunct.

As another example, a South Korean start-up developed drugs for Alzheimer’s; however, it is difficult to bring them to market for a Korean company; it would be easier done in Silicon Valley.

Prof. Lee gave the researcher Hidden Brands – the book that profiles promising Korean technology start-ups. (The book is in Korean, but provides website addresses of the featured companies.)

Prof. Lee is a member of the Republic of Korea President’s Council on Nation Branding. In his view, Korean national brand is relatively weak in comparison to those of Korean corporations. If Korean national brand can be raised, its companies would be able to sell goods at a premium, closer to the level of Japan rather than China. Right now South Korea is not very well-known and often associated in the global public mind with North Korea and its sad record.

Korean Foreign Trade Promotion Organisation KOTRA is an important network; it has more representatives abroad than Korean Embassies. South Korean Ministry of Knowledge Economy is very active to expand exports; when South Korea’s exports started declining, they started looking at markets such as Africa, Latin America, Indonesia and other Asean countries to fill the gap.

South Korea is a very energy-consuming economy; this could be an important area to cooperate in with Nordic-Baltic countries. For instance, South Korea invests heavily in the development of solar cells, all stages of the process – from technology to manufacturing.

## Interview No. 02

<b>Interview date:</b>	26 September 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Mr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Persson</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Henrik</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Minister Counsellor
<b>Organisation:</b>	Swedish Embassy in Seoul

### Interview notes

From time to time, there are common Nordic reports produced on various subjects. Nordic Foreign Ministers are considering joint visits to South Korea.

Sweden, Finland and Denmark have common policy in the EU; this is their main vehicle for influencing policy. If approached by Latvian and Estonian Ambassadors, Counsellor Persson would be happy to talk about cooperation.

Investment promotion is an area where Nordic and Baltic countries can collaborate in Korea. *Invest in Sweden* is present in Korea on a small scale; is in the process of merging with Swedish Trade Council, and adding more staff to its Seoul office. The current Trade Commissioner Mr Johan Chun is very new to the job [which probably explains his reluctance to meet with the Researcher]. Trade Commission is independent of the Embassy, although its head does have a diplomatic rank.

Perhaps it is worth organising an event of Baltic-Nordic scale in South Korea.

Sweden's story is that Stockholm is the hub of Scandinavia/Nordic/Northern European region, which includes the Baltic States; Finland probably has a very similar story.

Swedish Embassy issues work and study permits also on behalf of Denmark and Norway; not sure who represents Latvia and Estonia in Korea for this purpose (if at all).

There is good awareness and knowledge of Sweden in South Korea. In May 2012, there was the state visit of the Swedish Royal Couple to South Korea. In addition to its embassy in Seoul, Sweden has had an embassy in Pyongyang, North Korea, since 1975, whereas the British and Germans only opened theirs in 2002. This and having high-ranking Swedish armistice observers in DMZ (Demilitarised Zone between North and South Korea) shows Sweden's genuine interest in Korean affairs.

Studying in Sweden will be further encouraged and promoted in South Korea. In near future, the heads of all (leading) Swedish Universities are coming to South Korea for a one-week study visit; separately, a delegation from Lund University will visit soon.

There is a good exchange of postgraduate students between Sweden and South Korea already in place.

There are currently two Swedish visiting professors at Korean universities; the most recently added professor is teaching 'Swedish welfare models'.

Korean institute of policy studies ASAN recently organised a conference 'How to understand the Swedish welfare model' with 6 Swedish professors; they did not even ask for the Embassy's help in doing this, only to make welcoming remarks at the conference opening.

Some prominent examples of Swedish-Korean university collaborations are: Karolinska Institute in medicine; Royal University of Technology and KAIST (this one thanks to a generous grant by a wealthy Swedish couple who were both in Korean War).

There are about 1000 Korean professionals (including family members) currently in Sweden; some 500 Swedish professionals (including family members) are in South Korea. In addition, there are some 9000 Swedish-Koreans who were adapted after the War, and are often quite active in developing Korean-Swedish ties (even though they may speak Swedish rather than Korean).

There are some 300-400 student visa applications from Korea to Sweden per year. The recent introduction of tuition fees by Swedish universities does not necessarily deter Korean students (as money is not so much the issue for them).

### Interview No. 03

<b>Interview date:</b>	26 September 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Mr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Lee</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Herbert (Hwijae)</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Head of International Division
<b>Organisation:</b>	Korean Association of Importers KOIMA

<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Lee</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Joohyun</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Assistant Manager, International Division
<b>Organisation:</b>	Korean Association of Importers KOIMA

#### Interview notes

Last year Koima organised a trade mission to Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, and Finland.

From Latvia, the scented candle manufacturer Munio Candela and a peat supplier found partners in South Korea. Mr. Herbert Lee has inter alia met Ligita and Sergejs Davidovs (former staff members at Latvian Embassy in Beijing).

Baltic Countries were a “strange environment” for the Korean delegation. Whereas they previously thought of them as being influenced by Russia, the reality showed them as different, better organised and safe places. Especially the street café culture in Riga is remarkable.

Koreans are interested to import agricultural products, chemicals. Korean companies do a lot of business with China. Doing business with Russia for them is more difficult than with China.

Latvia should open doors for immigration of Korean people. Mr Lee himself holds dual citizenship of Korea and New Zealand, where he immigrated some 10 years ago (but has come back since).

In import business, there are three key factors: Price, Quality and Delivery. Every summer, there is a three-day Korea Import Goods Fair, which is an exhibition but also an opportunity for one-on-one business meetings.

There are 8000 companies who are members of Koima. It is a non-profit foundation, but has a 100% owned subsidiary which is a Ltd. Co., and which does business such as representing foreign producers/brands, such as Munio Candela. (However, the latter may be a difficult sell, as in Korean culture candles are associated with temples and traditional festivals rather than home comfort as in the West; this is changing, but slowly.)

## Interview No. 04

<b>Interview date:</b>	27 September 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Mr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Kim</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Bosup</b>
<b>Position:</b>	PhD student
<b>Organisation:</b>	College of Fine Arts and Design, Seoul National University

<b>Title:</b>	Mr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Lee</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Kyurak</b>
<b>Position:</b>	PhD student
<b>Organisation:</b>	College of Fine Arts and Design, Seoul National University

<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Jung</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Haena</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Lecturer, Oriental Painting Department
<b>Organisation:</b>	College of Fine Arts and Design, Seoul National University

### Interview notes

Meeting with Professor Soon-Jong Lee was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances related to the admission process for new students.

The Researcher met with College administrators and PhD students:

Mr Bosup Kim

Mr Kyurak Lee

Ms Haena Jung

We had a tour of the College and other SNU campus facilities, including the Seoul National University Museum of Art MoA, and discussion with the administrators; it was agreed to meet Professor Lee at a later date (6 Oct. at 8am).



## Interview No. 05

<b>Interview date:</b>	27 September 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Park</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Yoonjoe</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Director of Arts
<b>Organisation:</b>	British Council Korea

### Interview notes

British Council's priorities in Korea are Design, Performing Art and Visual Art  
They try to be proactive for social change.

UK has more experience with creative industries than Korea does, and takes a different approach.

Focus of Korean art and design education is on technique, not so much on ideas; recently, however, there is a push to teach more creativity.

Some of British Council's partner organisations in Korea (in creative industries):

Korea Foundation  
Korea Design Promotion Institute  
Korea Design Publishing House  
Seoul Design Foundation

Recommended museums and galleries:

MoCa  
Leeum  
Plateau gallery  
Seoul Museum of Art (media art)

## Interview No. 06

<b>Interview date:</b>	28 September 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Prof.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Kim</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Wontaik “Tony”</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Chair of Design Management, leader of Future Design Lab
<b>Organisation:</b>	International School of Advanced Design Studies IDAS, Hongik University

<b>Title:</b>	Prof.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Lee</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Keun</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Dean, Professor of Industrial Design Department
<b>Organisation:</b>	International School of Advanced Design Studies IDAS, Hongik University

### Interview notes

IDAS teaches design, design management, and new media design. IDAS annually accepts 72 Master’s students and 8 PhD students, so there are ca. 200 students at the school at any given time

IDAS is a design school focused on the process and the method; this is rather innovative for Korea, where most design schools are more traditional.

In fact, originally IDAS was established with the expertise of a professor from Royal College of Art RCA in London.

Today, IDAS has student exchanges with a number of leading design schools. However, they have discontinued exchanges with RCA, as they demanded that the exchange students pay tuition to the host school (which would be rather high for out-of-EU students); this, in Prof. Kim’s opinion, is against the spirit of student exchanges.


IDAS practices graduate student exchange with Aalto University School of Art and Design for one semester, 2-4 students each way. Faculty exchange is planned as well, but not yet practiced.

IDAS started cooperating with what is today Aalto University in 2001/2002.

Student exchanges provide exposure to a different culture and broaden their perspectives.

IDAS was originally established by South Korean government in 1996; however, in 2004 it merged into the private Hongik University (due to a land purchase deal by Hongik).

Of the admitted students, 60-70% have work experience; of the entrants, ½ are professors, ¼ CEOs of design companies, ¼ journalists, psychologists etc.



Of the graduates, 1/3 go to big corporations, 1/3 start their own businesses, 1/3 become freelancers on a project-by-project basis.

Some alumni find jobs abroad: in Italy, thanks to an Italian professor at IDAS, in Spain, in the United States

Every year, IDAS runs an international workshop; this year, it will be led by Ms. Cheryl Heller of the School of Visual Arts in New York, the topic being 'Design for Social Innovation'.

As for a Baltic/Nordic-Korean cooperation project, Prof. Kim and IDAS Dean Prof. Lee will be happy to hear proposals and take part in co-developing them.

As a first step, Prof. Kim could take part in Expat Riga conference in May 2013, before or after 14-17 May Cumulus Design Research conference in Oslo. Some IDAS students will accompany Prof. Kim to Oslo and could come to Riga as well.

## Interview No. 07

<b>Interview date:</b>	28 September 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Dr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Oh</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Dong Yoon</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Research Fellow
<b>Organisation:</b>	Korea Small Business Institute KOSBI

### Interview notes

“Korean SMEs (small and medium enterprises) are scared to go outside of Korea.”

Since 1975, Korean SMEs have a secure supply chain as subcontractors to large corporations; there is an on-going conflict between SMEs and corporations. Therefore, SMEs must go abroad; they do, but only go to China. Out of the total Korean SME outbound investment, 60% is in China.

Korean SMEs are squeezed by the growing labour costs in China. South Korean government supports SMEs’ return to South Korea by providing business infrastructure (e.g. free land) and incentives. There is a plan for a “U-turn law”; however, South Korean government proceeds carefully not to annoy China by openly promoting the pull-out of Korean FDI (foreign direct investment).

It is estimated that 80,000 Korean SMEs are in China; most of them are 100% owned by Korean owners. Of all Korean SMEs in China, 80% go to coastal areas; Qingdao, which is an hour’s flight from Incheon, has 20,000 Korean SMEs.


Labour costs in South Korea are much higher than in China; therefore, the only solution is to keep low-value product manufacturing in China, high-value manufacturing in South Korea.

SMEs follow big corporations in their overseas investments; e.g. when Hyundai goes to Poland (or Czech Rep. or Slovakia), SMEs follow as suppliers. In China, there are some 6,000 Korean SMEs who are suppliers to big Korean corporations.

However, the large Korean corporations who are present in China must allow Korean-owned SMEs to compete with native Chinese SMEs, again not to annoy Chinese government.

There are many government programmes for Korean SMEs to go abroad. There will be a Korean SME delegation to Riga on 19-20 November, organised by Korean Small and medium business federation Kbiz, together with the South Korean Embassy in Stockholm and Korean Foreign Trade Organisation KOTRA.

Dr. Oh was in Latvia for the Korean-Latvian forum in October 2011. Riga is an “impressive city”, but “different” (from e.g. Prague); street café culture is attractive; Latvia is a “calm country”.



Heavy and chemical industry SMEs need to find local partners when they invest abroad.

Japanese are more forward-looking in their FDI strategy: Japanese SMEs set up factories in Vietnam, and export from there to China.

After 20 years of diplomatic relations (and investment) with China, Korean SMEs are starting to go to Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia.

Recently, Japanese SMEs are becoming interested in South Korea. Korean SMEs are “very dynamic”, whereas Japanese SMEs are slower to innovate.

As part of its Overseas Development Aid ODA, South Korean government has a knowledge-sharing programme; Korean SME policy is one of the best in the world. (As part of this programme, Dr Oh will soon travel to Colombia to consult SMEs there.)

## Interview No. 08

<b>Interview date:</b>	04 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Mr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Carlberg</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Peter</b>
<b>Position 1:</b>	Managing Director
<b>Organisation 1:</b>	Alfa Laval Korea
<b>Position 2:</b>	President
<b>Organisation 2:</b>	Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Korea

### Interview notes

Swedish presence in Korea was established early on. State support to companies for activities overseas is country-specific. There are no common Nordic activities in Korea, let alone Nordic-Baltic. However, private sector can be more flexible than nation-states.

Mr Carlberg himself has double citizenship of Sweden and Finland. He is a Finnish Swede who has worked most of his life in Sweden, and recently has lived in Denmark. Therefore he is very much 'pan-Nordic'.

He sees very little cooperation among the nations in South Korea, but would welcome it; however, it "has to be decided on the political level".

"Even though Nordic brands (e.g. Ikea, Nokia, H&M, Volvo) are well known, most Koreans cannot point out the Nordic countries on the map."

Mr Carlberg has served in Korea as Alfa Laval's Managing Director since 2 ½ years. Alfa Laval has been in Korea since 1962 (as a trading house), and fully established in 1977. Ten years ago they had no Korean competitors, now there are some similar local products.

Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Korea was established in February 2012. There is a 'Nordic group' in South Korea which is more of a social club. There are a total of 75 Swedish companies in Korea; of those, 52 are members of the Chamber.

Not so many new Swedish companies are establishing in Korea, but there are some that are testing the market.

South Korea is interested in green energy and has been investing in it: for instance, just recently Koreans have bought a German solar cell power company.

Pharmaceutical sector is also important, as South Korea is trying to establish itself as a health tourism destination. "After K-pop and movies, South Korea becomes known for health tourism." South Korean prices are very competitive vs. EU and US for such things as plastic surgery.

“South Korea is beating Japan at everything: movies, music, electronics.” South Korea is “still very corrupt”, but an advanced country; it’s “like a small China”. As a smaller country, South Korea can move faster than others.

There is a generation gap between those born in 1950s and those born in 1970s in terms of speaking English and being aware of the world beyond Korea.

Korea has no welfare system. When the Queen of Sweden visited South Korea in spring 2012, she visited hospitals, as she is very interested in hospitals and elderly care. Population ageing is the top threat for South Korea.

Young Koreans want to study in Australia, US or Canada for one year, to learn English. There is government support for the import of teachers of English (native speakers only).

There are ca. 400 Swedes in South Korea. (Norwegians are all concentrated in Busan, as they have shipping and fishing investments.)

South Koreans work for 2200h per year (the most) and Swedes 1700h (the least) of OECD countries; however, productivity in South Korea is much lower. At Alfa Laval, have Swedish work culture, therefore people are eager to work there rather than at large South Korean corporations. Big corporations dominate South Korean economy, and they have “military-style” management.

**Family upbringing and education system “program” Korean people into a certain mind-set.** This is a high-pressure society, a leader in suicides. Now South Korea has to look at softer values, otherwise it will not make innovations.

On the other hand, unlike Japan, South Korea is a predominantly Christian nation. South Korea is open to change, while Japan is conservative.

South Korea is the biggest exporter relative to GDP, even above Germany.

To sell in South Korea, companies must localise their products or be very unique.

“How can Baltic States ever come up with world-leading brands?” (When told the story of the Baltic German inventor Walter Zapp and the world’s smallest photo camera Minox made in Riga in 1937, Mr. Carlberg responds that it’s a good story which Koreans may appreciate.)

Those Koreans who do know the Nordic countries, think of them very positively.

“It is the big brands, music, and sports that a country is known for”.

“People in Korea (and everywhere else) like heroes”.

## Interview No. 09

<b>Interview date:</b>	04 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Mr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Heimonen</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Matti</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Ambassador
<b>Organisation:</b>	Embassy of Finland in the Republic of Korea

<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Leidy</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Kaisa</b>
<b>Position:</b>	First Secretary, Deputy Head of Mission
<b>Organisation:</b>	Embassy of Finland in the Republic of Korea

### Interview notes

Regarding the ambition of Expat-project, the Ambassador comments that Shanghai and Seoul themselves experience shortages of skilled labour force. Skilled engineers are paid more in Shanghai than they are in Helsinki.

Attracting people with experience is more expensive than attracting recent graduates.

In South Korea, 80% of high school graduates enter colleges and universities, which is a very high percentage.

Traditional university cooperation, when partner universities visit each other once a year, is not sufficient. The role of companies and governments that the universities are working with is important. Instead of small, separate trips by individual university rectors to China, it makes sense to visit together as a delegation.

A case in point, the business school aSSIST has 3000 alumni in Korea, who make up an influential network.

Message from the Ambassador: our country is too small for individual players to work in isolation; there is more credibility when presenting as part of a bigger team – ‘Team Finland’.

It is possible to establish serious cooperation with Asian partner universities, as Aalto University has done with Tongji University in Shanghai. There is a need to have 7-days-a-week presence in the host nation, with people who can speak Chinese (or, in this case, Korean).

Finnish presence in Korea is relatively small: there are 30-40 Finnish companies in Korea vs. 200 of them in Shanghai alone.

There are a total of ca. 100 Finnish nationals in Seoul; however, many of them are exchange students, here for one semester.



**Q: From Team Finland to Team Baltics?**

A: Coordinating between different organisations in the same country can be difficult already; coordinating between different governments is even more so.

Confirmation of events in China (and Korea) can be quite late, just one or two weeks prior, adding another layer of difficulty.

We need to be realistic as to what can be achieved, so as not to harbour unfounded expectations.

We should be “credible” partners.

(Ambassador will write to Ari Virtanen of FinPro Korea to inform him of the Researcher’s visit and the Expat-project.)

## Interview No. 10

<b>Interview date:</b>	06 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Prof.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Lee</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Soonjong</b>
<b>Position 1:</b>	Dean
<b>Organisation 1:</b>	College of Fine Arts and Design, Seoul National University
<b>Position 2:</b>	Executive Director
<b>Organisation 2:</b>	Korea Design Research Institute KDRI
<b>Position 3:</b>	Chairman
<b>Organisation 3:</b>	Korean Federation of Design Associations

### Interview notes

Seoul National University College of Fine Arts and Design entrance exams are very competitive: there are 80 applicants for 1 position. (The workload associated with the high number of applicants was the reason our interview with Prof. Lee had to be rescheduled.)

Prof. Lee is a designer who likes to develop future visions, foresight, and future-living scenarios. Futuristic thinking should be an important area for the society, with art and design at the centre.

Prof. Lee is currently doing research on revitalising art & design research. There is a need to prove the importance of art and design in the economy to the government. There are 3 perspectives on design: design profession, design as art, and design as business.

Designers make objects beautiful and competitive. Design products (objects or services) should teach their users creativity, with the objective of developing a creative nation.


College of Fine Arts and Design has exchange programmes with Aalto University where students visit for one semester. Finnish/Nordic design skills lie in crafts and prototyping.

Recently (in the last 4 years or so) the college is focusing on expression, imagination and problem-solving skills. At this year's entrance exam they gave a problem-solving to arts students (when before they only had to make drawings).

College of Fine Arts and Design has Design Research Centre, with corporate partners such as LG, Hyundai, Samsung, Korea Telecom, and companies in automotive design, game development, as well as architectural firms.

Of the college's alumni, 1/3 teach, 1/3 are designers in large corporations, 1/3 are freelance consultants or entrepreneurs/"brandmakers" involved in design brand development.

Denmark and Italy have good examples of design entrepreneurship.



Young designers need to work for themselves, not only for big corporations. To establish own design company, a designer need to find production with small risk, as well as help with prototyping and sales of products. (There is a plan to develop a more efficient design law in South Korea, facilitating the establishment of design businesses.)

The government must give money to design schools to help develop design products. However, the government prefers giving support engineering schools to introduce business courses and help them learn business. This has to do with the fact that many top leaders and managers in South Korea come from engineering.

The current trend is education tracks combining design, business and engineering. SNU will start this with BA programme, then MA eventually. However, more students need to apply for this programme.

Students don't know so much of Nordic countries. However, they appreciate Nordic design sense and thinking. Nordic countries have 'naturally oriented design'.

The purpose of design education is to develop entrepreneurship and creative leadership. Prof. Lee has proposed 2 courses for all students: Creativity and design; Art, design and green society.

"The purpose of creativity is to share wealthy situations with less wealthy people."

In reality, investment in design in South Korea is incomparable to investment in engineering. There is a powerful engineering tradition (as outlined above). In the USA, big corporations insist that investment in R&D must be made not only in engineering but increasingly in design.

There are 25,000 design students in South Korea, which makes 5% of all university students. However, there are 50,000 'art and design' students, which make up 10% of total.

There is a plan to launch an Asian association of design programmes, similar to the early-stage Cumulus (International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media). As a first step, Korea-Japan exchange programmes will be developed as a prototype.

Prof. Lee plans to visit Helsinki in March 2013, which could provide an occasion for him to visit Riga as well.

### Interview No. 11

<b>Interview date:</b>	08 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Prof.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Kim</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Uchang</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Distinguished Professor, Academy of Advanced Studies
<b>Organisation:</b>	Ewha Womans University

<b>Title:</b>	Prof.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Kim</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Mi Hyun</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Professor of Korean Language and Literature; Associate Vice President for Communications
<b>Organisation:</b>	Ewha Womans University

### Interview notes

Prof. Uchang Kim took part in a seminar on Asian literature titled 'Landscape and Language' at the University of Latvia in November 2011.

He has fond memories of Latvia, whose nature is in big contrast to the congested urban environment of Seoul, and says (probably jokingly) that he would like to emigrate there.

Prof. Uchang Kim helped set up the next interview, and offers his help in establishing contact with Korea University.

**Interview No. 12**

<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Yoon</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Jae Sook</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Managing Director
<b>Organisation:</b>	Office of Global Affairs, Ewha Womans University

<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Suh</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Anna</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Program Manager
<b>Organisation:</b>	Office of Global Affairs, Ewha Womans University

**Interview notes**

Ewha Womans University Global Office makes an introduction to the university, and expresses their interest to develop student exchange with Latvian universities and colleges, which they do not have yet.

### Interview No. 13

<b>Interview date:</b>	08 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Mr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Rhee</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Sangmook</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Communication Officer
<b>Organisation:</b>	Seoul Design Foundation

#### Interview notes

Seoul Design Foundation is a non-profit organisation owned by the municipal government of Seoul.

It works in three main directions:

1. Dongdaemun Design Plaza (the building complex designed by the famous architect Zaha Hadid, which is to house a design museum, design exhibition spaces and other design-related activities)
2. Design business support and infrastructure
3. Design for citizens

There will be grand opening of Dongdaemun Design Plaza in March 2014 with a design exhibition.

Seoul is not yet a design capital; rather, it is a city with the ambition to be a good design city. This ambition is the reason it was chosen as World Design Capital in 2010.

Previous mayor of Seoul who established Seoul Design Foundation was committed to design. Now there is a new mayor, who is still is committed to design, but with a shift of focus on design for citizens.

Mr Rhee is looking for international partners and he would like to receive more information on Latvia: its design centre, museum, etc.

## Interview No. 14

<b>Interview date:</b>	09 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Mr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Kim</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>J. August</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Secretary
<b>Organisation:</b>	Honorary Consul General of Latvia in the Republic of Korea

### Interview notes

As secretary to the Honorary Consul General of Latvia Mr. Kwon (since 1½ yrs), Mr. Kim helps with logistics, transport and scheduling for Latvian missions to Korea.

In 2011, Prime Minister Dombrovskis of Latvia made a visit to Korea, with a business delegation of 24 companies. Latvian companies presented themselves in a booth at Koima Trade Show.

Latvian Prime Minister Dombrovskis visited Samsung Corporation. (Initially it was planned he would speak at Seoul National University, but it had to be cancelled due to a student protest over tuition fees taking place on campus.)

In February 2013, there will be a new President in South Korea; therefore Latvian Ambassador Vaivars will visit Seoul to present his credentials. In April/May 2013, Latvian Saeima (parliament) speaker Solvita Ābolģina is to visit Korea.

There are several potential areas of interest for Korea in Latvia. As a tourism destination, Latvia is still a terra incognita for Korean people who have been to Europe already 3-4 times. There was a Latvian tourism seminar in Seoul in summer 2011.

Films are a good medium to interest people in a country. The Korean film 'My Way' (about WW2 landing at Normandy) was shot in Ventspils area recently; while commercially unsuccessful, it is a "good film". Another Korean film, 'Berlin' (about spies) was also shot this year in Latvia.

Another area is logistics and shipping. The Latvian business delegation visited the Port of Incheon (which, however, is focused on intra-Asian trade with China and Japan).

In wood-processing industry, the Latvian plywood manufacturer Latvijas finieris has been supplying plywood to Hyundai oil tankers for many years now.

Recently, South Korean construction industry is not doing well; many companies are going bankrupt or seeking court protection. Building of apartments has stopped; however, small private housing could be the next big 'Blue Ocean' thing.

When delegations visit, Mr Kim has many brochures and booklets from Latvia; however, he has no physical place/location for meeting people. Mr Kim himself is the “physical location” of Latvian Consulate General in Korea.

For instance, Samsung Construction was interested to send a research team to Latvia early this year; Mr. Kim provided them with some contacts. He needs at least a brochure with basic information on doing business in Latvia (even better if it were in Korean).

Every two years there is a meeting of Latvian honorary consuls in Riga; he did not go last year as Mr. Kwon had to cancel due to his busy schedule.

Mr. Kwon owns the fashion company G&Co., with brands such as Thursday Island (popular among 20-something young professionals); he also owns oil fields in the US, a stock exchange-listed company in Japan, etc.; he is travelling much of the time (as he was at the time of this interview).

For his regular job, J August Kim is assistant to Managing Director of the coffee distributor illy South Korea, which is also owned by Mr. Kwon.



## Interview No. 15

<b>Interview date:</b>	09 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Prof.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Lee</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Kun-Pyo</b>
<b>Position 1:</b>	Executive Vice President, Head of Design Centre
<b>Organisation 1:</b>	LG Electronics
<b>Position 2:</b>	Professor
<b>Organisation 2:</b>	Industrial Design Department, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology KAIST

### Interview notes

Prof. Lee went to Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago in 1982 on a South Korean government grant; he studied for 5 years and got a Master's degree; later he got a PhD in Japan. He was "brainwashed" into the 'Northern' design thinking, but now feels this design system is too linear. Now South Korea is developing its own design policy.

Prof. Lee used to think that Korean design methods are unscientific, illogical. However, "logical models work in short product life-cycles". Now he is realising what are Korea's strengths – "just making it, thinking later".

Level of general taste of the public is really high in Germany, Switzerland, Denmark and other Nordic countries. "Nordic tradition strives to create timeless design". Danish design is perhaps too craft-oriented; "too much respect for human rights".

Nordic societies put much value on the quality of life; however, this has left them behind in development. "Nordic countries do not have technology."

(By way of example: as Executive Vice President, Prof. Lee's vacation is only 7 days a year, while his personal friend, the Danish Ambassador to Korea, takes full 6 weeks' vacation.)

Denmark has small resources; however, a small country has agility that a bigger one lacks. Prof. Lee thinks focusing and specialising is the solution for small countries. South Korea, with its few natural resources, has had to survive by exporting.

Today, [emerging middle-class] Chinese consumers with lots of money "buy up everything", but "they have no taste". Genuinity and authenticity are highly valued in Nordic counties, in contrast to fakes (even present in airport duty-free shops in China)

Korea still has room to develop its identity; developed countries have fixed identities.

Prof. Lee has visited Tallinn; it is "different from Helsinki".

“In Finland, people don’t smile; people have stubbornness”. Professor Lee remembers fondly the time in Finnish sauna and cottage by the lake.

Prof. Lee gives thumbs up to the brand of Latvia as a green, slow-life country; “it could work today”.

Denmark and Finland are good at producing publications about their design. Indeed, in the past, Denmark published a good magazine which made Danish design known worldwide.

After returning to South Korea from IIT, Prof. Lee educated others in a systemic approach to design (where before Korean design used to be art-based). There was a period of reverse-engineering imported products and making them look different; however, by 1990s South Korean companies needed research-oriented design process.

Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology KAIST was established in 1971 by the visionary dictator Mr. Park. As an incentive, [doctoral] students there did not have to do military service.

KAIST was the first engineering school to open a design department. Before that, design education in Korea was only art-based. (Even today in South Korea, 80% of design schools require drawing in their entrance exams.) First KAIST Industrial Design graduates arrived at the time when companies badly needed them.

KAIST is the only university that belongs to the Ministry of Science and Technology. Today KAIST teaches most classes in English.

Prof. Lee still works as PhD supervisor at KAIST Industrial Design Department. It seeks people who are good at maths and interdisciplinary thinking.

Prof. Lee joined LG three years ago. He was a board member of ICSID (International Council of Societies of Industrial Design), and is currently the President of IASDR (International Association of Societies of Design Research).

To do business in Asia, one needs introductions, needs “to shake hands”. This is what Prof. Yrjö Sotamaa (former Rector of Helsinki University of Art and Design UIAH) has done, organising conferences, publishing proceedings, travelling and meeting leading design schools, and thus raising UIAH to world class.

“Every country needs a visionary”.

**Interview No. 16**

<b>Interview date:</b>	10 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Daejeong, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Prof.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Chung</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Kyun-won</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Chairman
<b>Organisation:</b>	Industrial Design Department, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology KAIST

<b>Title:</b>	Dr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Nam</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Ki-Young</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Associate Professor
<b>Organisation:</b>	Industrial Design Department, KAIST

<b>Title:</b>	Dr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Nam</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Tek-Jin</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Associate Professor
<b>Organisation:</b>	Industrial Design Department, KAIST

<b>Title:</b>	Dr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Lee</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Woohun</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Associate Professor
<b>Organisation:</b>	Industrial Design Department, KAIST

<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Song</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Ji-Won</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Visiting Professor
<b>Organisation:</b>	Industrial Design Department, KAIST

**Interview notes**

Professor Chung has visited Helsinki twice, first as board member of ICSID, then as advisor to Helsinki World Design Capital 2012.

Department of Industrial Design KAIST ID is organised into 6 labs, led by professors and staffed by masters' and doctoral students.

Dr. Nam Ki-Young leads Design IS: Integration and Systems Lab.

The lab's theme is "Bottom-up Design Leadership as a Strategic Tool". Research is done on the potential of design as a strategic tool in several directions:

- / academic research on service design
- / innovation knowledge management
- / Samsung Global Design Index (confidential)
- / Coway: new product development through strategic market diversification

Lab members are PhD and MA students. They do lab work in parallel to their academic work. Students may be inspired by or refer to lab work, but cannot use it directly in their academic work.

The company who pays for lab work receives exclusive rights to use the intellectual property, yet it remains property of the university, which owns the patents.

Prof. Chung leads Design Management Lab.

KAIST tuition and living expenses for accepted students are covered by the national government; it is attended by top 1% of students.

KAIST Industrial Design Department has exchange programmes with Delft Technical University, Cincinnati University and Carnegie Mellon University. They have discussed student exchange with Prof. Helena Hyvönen, Dean of Aalto University.

KAIST Industrial Design Department has an exclusive collaboration with the Royal College of Art RCA: a whole class of 40 RCA students comes to KAIST for 3 weeks every year and work together with KAIST students. The most recent collaboration, led by Dr. Nam Tek-Jin, was on Dongdaemun Market in Seoul; a book will be published on this project soon.

KAIST started teaching in English since late 1990s; this has gradually progressed from 30% to 80% of courses. Biggest KAIST departments are Electrical engineering, Physics, Biology, and Mathematics.

KAIST Industrial Design Department has considered joining Cumulus, but did not, due to having no roots in arts unlike its other member schools. KAIST ID is a different kind of design school: it attracts people who are good at maths but interested in art and design, and may have some artistic skill, which they develop during studies.

## Interview No. 17

<b>Interview date:</b>	11 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Prof.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Cho</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Kyu-hyung</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Director
<b>Organisation:</b>	Institute of Foreign Language Studies, Korea University

### Interview notes

Prof. Uchang Kim was director of Institute of Foreign Language Studies IFLS in 1980s. Prof. Cho was his student.

Korea University has 500-1000 exchange students; 30-40% of classes are taught in English. They have recently sent a lecturer of Korean language to a German university.

IFLS does two things:

- 1: teaching English and other European languages to Koreans;
  - 2: Korean Language and Culture Centre teaches Korean to foreigners; there are 700 students, 6 levels of learning Korean, with 3 months for each, for a total of 18 months.
- After completing this programme, the student can then join Korea University and study in Korean.

IFLS also teaches Korean language as credit course to foreign students; they can take additional courses in English.

University of Latvia can send students to Korea University for Korean language and culture studies. Most international students come from China, Japan and US; currently seeking more Saudi, UK and other EU students. They have a small fund to offer a tuition discount for foreign students.

Goettingen University in Germany is quite active; they have a Korean department and send 20 students per year to Korea University.

Korea Foundation has recently opened a Cultural Centre in Madrid; they may have plans for more of those.

Of major Korean universities, only Seoul National University and KAIST are national (state-funded) universities. Other major universities are private: Korea University, Ewha Womans University, Yonsei University.

Korea University is very national in spirit; it was established in 1905 just before Japanese occupation. Korea was late in importing Western ideas and technology, unlike Japan, which started this in 17<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, paradoxically, the university buildings were built in Neo-Gothic style to symbolise Western ideas, while their contents was national.

In late 1990s and early 2000s Korean universities began looking to globalise, with Korea University leading the way. It has the ambition of Global Korea University, and has already established campuses in UK and Canada.

Just recently a Japanese university sent a group of 20 students to Korea University for a month-long Korean language course; similarly, they can tailor programmes for University of Latvia.

“Koreans have no idea of Latvia/Baltics/Eastern Europe”. Koreans think of the Baltics as part of Russian Empire rather than of the Nordic region. Nordic region is “more uniform”, Baltics more multicultural, therefore interesting to visit.

Prague became famous as a tourism destination, because there was a South Korean TV drama set there, which ran for 3-4 months.

“Koreans only visit Russia once”; it is “very bureaucratized”. Busan is closely connected to Russian Far East; they do a lot of business with Japan and Russia.

“We have to develop relationship through students.” Prof. Cho recommends his students to go “where there are no Koreans”, as Koreans like to instantly form collectives and not learn enough from their host country.

He will be happy to convey any documents, such as letters of intent, from University of Latvia to Korea University leadership.

**Interview No. 18**

<b>Interview date:</b>	11 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Mr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Han</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Jae-Ho</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Deputy Director, KF Cultural Centre Programme Team, Culture & Arts Department
<b>Organisation:</b>	Korea Foundation Cultural Centre

<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Choi</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Yoon Jung</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Program Officer, Culture & Arts Department
<b>Organisation:</b>	Korea Foundation Cultural Centre

**Interview notes**

Korea Foundation Cultural Centre organise art and design exhibitions in their gallery space in downtown Seoul. They would be interested in hosting Baltic design exhibitions.

They are working with foreign missions in Seoul. Usually the exhibitions are curated by museums, universities, or other organisations, and locally managed by Korea Foundation.

Exhibition catalogues are produced by curators, with help from Korea Foundation if necessary; other times they are produced by Korea Foundation.

Foreign museums apply to Korea Foundation for grants to produce exhibitions on Korea in their countries. Application deadline this year for exhibition grants from Korea Foundation is end of October (extended from the original 13 October).

They would like to host an exhibition on “new things from Baltic design”. Recently they had a Nordic design exhibition with an angle on artistic expression, and an exhibition of young designers from Poland; there will be Norwegian architecture exhibition in November.

## Interview No. 19

<b>Interview date:</b>	12 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Maing</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Eunjoo</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Head of International Affairs Division
<b>Organisation:</b>	Korea Institute for Design Promotion

<b>Title:</b>	Mr.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Park</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Eric</b>
<b>Position:</b>	Deputy Manager of International Cooperation Team, International Affairs Division
<b>Organisation:</b>	Korea Institute for Design Promotion

### Background

Korea Institute of Design Promotion (KIDP) was established by the South Korean government in 1970 in an aim to promote the design industry and expand export. As a national government design organization, KIDP promotes Korea's mid- to long-term design policies and engages in various exchange programs with countries around the globe. To meet the demands of the digital design era of the 21st century, KIDP particularly focuses on leading South Korea's economic development and enhancing the quality of life by promoting cutting-edge design industry. (Source: [www.kidp.or.kr](http://www.kidp.or.kr))

### Interview notes


(The interview had to be postponed because, on the day of the interview, a large group from an Executive MBA course in Singapore was visiting KIDP.)

KIDP is a government agency under the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, founded in 1970. KIDP advises South Korean government on the development of its design policies. Recently they have developed an SME design strategy (as the large corporations already have design strategies), and are working on its implementation.

Korea Design Centre is part of KIDP's 'design infrastructure'. Initially, KIDP was located in central Seoul near Hongik University; then they sold the land and purchased another plot south of Seoul. The money was enough to fund ½ of building costs as well, the other half being provided by the government.

The idea was that KIDP would occupy part of the KDC premises, while the rent from the rest would cover its operating costs, thus making KIDP financially self-sustainable. In fact, KIDP uses about 1/5 of the space and rents the rest to various offices; however, the rent revenue is not enough to cover its costs and it still needs a government subsidy.





KIDP has 100 staff members; it is the largest organisation of its kind in the world. KIDP's mission is 'Design promotion for national competitiveness' – that is, design is a means to its ultimate objective of strengthening national competitiveness.

KIDP design support infrastructure consists of KDC plus four regional centres (one of them is Seoul Design Foundation, which the Researcher has visited), and 30 design innovation centres, most of them at universities.

Korean design industry's size was 7.09bn USD in 2010, based on Design Census done once every four years. There are ca. 3,000 design firms and 123,000 designers in Korea; ca. 25,000 design graduates are produced every year. Korea is No.3 in the world by the number of design graduates; however, only 12.8% of Korean companies use design.

Government investment in design is 30-40m USD per year.

KIDP conducts national design policy and strategy. They support multi-disciplinary design education courses at universities and graduate schools; each year 5-10 schools are selected for a revitalisation of their programmes.

KIDP supports Overseas Workshops by Korean designers in EU and US.

KIDP selects young design talents, 'Next Generation Design Leaders', to improve their capabilities to world standard, aiming to grow Korean 'star designers' (15 were chosen in 2011). For instance, Min-Kyu Choi's design of a folding UK plug was awarded the UK Design of the Year prize in 2010.

KIDP used to organise internships for young designers at leading design consultancies abroad (21 in 2011); however, they stopped this programme in 2012 due to "budget optimisation".

Now KIDP's focus is more on SMEs rather than young designers. With this focus, they are working together with SBA, the small business support agency under Ministry of Knowledge Economy.

KIDP organises National Design Exhibition, and Design Management Award.

They have conducted design trade missions abroad (all of them to China).

KIDP organises Design Korea festival (as they have done already three times, all in China); this year it will be held in South Korea, coming up at the end of October.

KIDP runs Good Design selection competition. It also runs Korean national pavilions at international design exhibitions (like this year's 100% Design in London).

Since 2010, KIDP organises 'design sharing' programmes with several ASEAN countries: the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia, which include seminars and workshops, and advising national governments on design policies. Design sharing with ASEAN is initiated and funded by Korea, with no expectations in return.

KIDP has an international network; they used to have relations with Latvian Designers' Society, but have "lost contact". They do have contact with Norsk Form, and Swedish and Finnish design centres.

As for of Korean designers' skills – as heard from foreign experts, Korean students are skilful, good with computers, have good sketching skills, and are ambitious to achieve something in design.

However, Korean designers need more understanding of global cultures to be more open to foreign customers. Korean students also lack English language skills and creative thinking. They need more humanities, philosophy studies. "Designers like to sketch and handle tangible things, not so much to read."

Big Chinese corporations (Haier, Lenovo, et al.) have hired experienced design managers from large South Korean corporations in early 2000s, but since then have already learned everything they needed from them. Therefore, now Korea needs another strategy to promote its designers in China. One step in this will be opening the first KIDP branch office in Beijing this year (accompanied by a Korean design exhibition).

This year KIDP had visitors from Estonian Design Centre; KIDP was "quite surprised by the high design quality", despite Estonia's small population size. (The Estonians were on a design trade mission to Korea.)

KIDP is open to collaborations with international partners; however, they consider Nordic/Baltic countries to be "far away".

## Interview No. 20

<b>Interview date:</b>	15 October 2012
<b>Interview location:</b>	Seoul, South Korea
<b>Title:</b>	Ms.
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>Moon</b>
<b>First name:</b>	<b>Jennifer (Ji Yeon)</b>
<b>Position 1:</b>	journalist
<b>Organisation 1:</b>	Maeil Business Newspaper
<b>Position 2:</b>	Project Manager
<b>Organisation 2:</b>	World Knowledge Forum

### Background

The World Knowledge Forum is a “fete of knowledge”, the biggest in Asia. It is also known as Asia's Davos Forum. Established in October 2000, the World Knowledge Forum gathers more than 150 business and opinion leaders from around the world ranging from environmental and international organizations to world's biggest corporations and institutions. These leaders predict the future and discuss possible solutions for problems that are already, or might become, an issue. The main aim is to highlight the importance of knowledge sharing towards a balanced prosperity of the global economy. The WKF is hosted by Maeil Business Newspaper, Korea's premier business daily.

### Interview notes

Ms. Moon has been working on the organisation of World Knowledge Forums for the last three years. This year's forum ran from 9 to 11 October, with the theme was ‘The Great Breakthrough: New Solutions for Global Crisis’.

They are going to publish a book with its proceedings. There are already some articles appearing as a result of WKF.

There is not much opinion/knowledge on Nordic Countries in Korea. Most attention is on US and ‘core EU’: UK, Spain, Greece. However, in recent years are “getting closer” to Nordic Countries by inviting speakers to WKF. This year they invited the CEO of Finnair. Due to the fact that Chandoori, Korean soccer player who plays for a German club, was modelling for a Finnair ad (which was initially targeted at the European, not Korean market) Finnair became better known in South Korea.

Participants at WKF are company executives (60-70%), people from the government, students and academics. By working on WKF, Ms. Moon has developed good connections with world leaders, but not so much to the local audience/business leaders. [However, publications in Maeil are a sure way to reach those audiences.]

Ms. Moon agrees that it would be a good idea to invite a delegation of Korean journalists to Baltic States so that they can report on them, making these countries better known in Korea, and getting Korean investors interested.

## About the Expat-project

Expat-project (2012-2013) was co-financed by EU Central Baltic Interreg IVA Programme 2007-2013. Its ultimate aim is to make the Central Baltic Sea Region a more attractive destination, a more welcoming region to settle in, and a home to stay for international talents.

Human capital is one of the decisive factors that contribute to the high competitiveness of the Central Baltic Sea Region. In an interdependency world economy today, the regions and cities need to cultivate its human capital and to best retain the international professionals available at place in order to maintain and to increase its global competitiveness.

While Europe is a relatively attractive destination for highly skill immigrants, the Central Baltic Sea regions are not benefit fully from the international talents moving in and living here – nor are the internationals benefit from the opportunities the region should have on offer. The Expat-project addresses the factors that hinder the expats' smooth arrival and good quality of life in the Central Baltic Sea Region and developed methods and solution to improve the identified challenges, serving this way the interests of both the expats and the region as a whole.


The Expat-project conducted various research activities, includes best practice of soft-landing service models in Hague, Amsterdam, Stockholm and Toronto; three field studies on soft-departure services available in sourcing country in Shanghai, Seoul and Tbilisi; an online questionnaire on the internationals' opinion of their quality of life and a pilot development of a virtual service platform for internationals. The project results are presented in a series of reports providing aforementioned benchmarking results, analysis and policy recommendations.

Expat-project partners:

- Uusimaa Regional Council, Finland (Lead Partner)
- Culminatium Innovation Ltd, Finland
- Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland
- Turku Science Park Oy LTD, Finland
- Regional Council of Southwest Finland, Finland
- City of Uppsala, Sweden
- Riga Planning Region, Latvia
- University of Latvia, Latvia
- Institute of Baltic Studies, Estonia
- eGovernance Academy, Estonia

More information:

[www.expatproject.info](http://www.expatproject.info)



Terminology:

Expats refers to international knowledge workers, students and their families and spouses.

Contact	Emils Rode, MBA
Organisation	University of Latvia
Address	Raina Bulv.19, LV-1586 Riga, Latvia
Phone	+371 29404502
Email	emils.rode@gmail.com

This report reflects the author's views and managing Authority of Central Baltic INTERREG IV A Programme 2007-2013 cannot be held liable for the information published by the project partners.