



# **Coping with China**

Public attitudes in South Korea and Europe as  
the basis for the effective policy collaboration

Richard Q. Turcsányi | Lucia Husenicová | Su-Jeong Kang



# Coping with China

Public attitudes in South Korea and Europe as  
the basis for the effective policy collaboration

Richard Q. Turcsányi | Lucia Husenicová | Su-Jeong Kang

A grant from the Korea Foundation supported the publication of this report under the project "Coping with China: Public attitudes in South Korea and Europe as the basis for effective policy collaboration."

The survey data are the result of the European Regional Development Fund project "Sinophone Borderlands – Interaction at the Edges", CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/16\_019/0000791.

# Content

Content.....	1
Recommendations .....	2
Introduction.....	4
The development of the EU-ROK relationship.....	6
Public attitudes in South Korea and Europe .....	10
Policymakers and stakeholders' interviews.....	20
Recommended areas of cooperation .....	25
Endnotes .....	27
Authors.....	29
Central European Institute of Asian Studies .....	30

# Recommendations

- While Europeans and Koreans share views on international affairs in general, there is a need to improve people-to-people relations and understanding between the EU and the ROK. Especially **Europeans tend to be indifferent** to South Korea, although South Korean culture has been gaining popularity among some sections of European societies. This lack of understanding also has some foreign policy implications, for instance, relatively lower trust in Korean products, such as 5G technology. Overall, there seems to be a space and opportunity to improve South Korean image in Europe, and the EU-ROK relationship can benefit from it. **Public diplomacy** is one of the tools to work towards these goals.
- The EU-ROK diplomatic relations have been on the rise in recent decades, and several agreements have been signed that cover the most important topics in the relationship. However, there is a widespread opinion that **better implementation of existing agreements** would improve the overall quality of the partnership. This also supports the previous point as more exchanges would increase the mutual understanding between the two sides, for instance, in areas such as education, research, tourism, culture, and others.
- Trade is one area where current agreements have been identified as getting outdated. A **revision to the EU-ROK FTA**, signed in 2010, would be beneficial to cover the most recent issues, including technological advances and the security of supply chains in critical areas, including medical equipment.
- The EU and the ROK are strategic partners and share views on international affairs, both at the level of public opinion and the political elite. In particular, they see China as a great challenge, yet they also agree that they need to engage it. As such, the EU and the ROK should **continue supporting each**

**other** in the quest for greater strategic autonomy, especially in the context of growing tensions between China and the US, to avoid being forced to choose one side and cut ties with the other. Besides, the shared belief in the multilateral rule-based order should be translated into the **support for effective global governance** for the benefit of middle powers (such as the ROK and various EU member states) and specific international actors (such as the EU itself).

# Introduction

The European Union (EU) and the Republic of Korea (ROK, also South Korea) are important strategic and economic partners, and they share similar values stemming from their liberal-democratic systems. As democracies, both sides must consider public opinion as the final arbiter of public policies – and for both of them, China has become a hot political topic due to its unprecedented rise, but also controversial foreign policy steps, growing authoritarianism at home, and generally turbulent relationship. At the same time, China is a crucial international partner not only in economic terms, such as trade or investment, but also in global issues, including pandemics, climate change, international security, and others. South Korea and the EU largely share an understanding of China's necessary but challenging and sometimes troubling role in their foreign relations.

The EU-ROK relationship has developed immensely over the previous years – yet there is still a perception that it does not entirely reach its full potential. Currently, there are about 40 groups between the two sides where various aspects of mutual relations are discussed; however, putting the agreements into action seems to be still behind. Nevertheless, the EU-ROK partnership is evaluated positively by political elites representing both sides, as well as by experts and academics, even though they are also focusing on challenges and shortcomings.

As part of the yearlong project funded by the Korea Foundation, we have focused on two particular issues which could help move the EU-ROK relations further. First, China is one of the biggest challenges both sides have to deal with. Second, public attitudes create the context that both EU and ROK policymakers have to consider when conducting foreign policy – and specifically with China.

We started by studying domestic settings and public attitudes in South Korea and the EU and then analyzed their implications for effective foreign policies towards

China. For public attitudes, we have relied chiefly on our unique survey data from South Korea and various EU countries, which we produced in collaboration with the Sinophone Borderlands project of Palacky University Olomouc. The results of the public opinion surveys were juxtaposed with the elite views, which we studied through interviews with relevant experts and analysts, policymakers, and policy advocates from South Korea and the EU.

Building upon the primary data gathered via public opinion surveys and interviews, the project has aimed to explore opportunities for policy collaboration between South Korea and the EU when facing the challenges China presents. The project's ultimate goal has been to offer policy recommendations to both South Korean and EU policymakers and stakeholders on how to collaborate and handle the relationship with China in a way that would be effective in achieving results and having the support of the domestic public.

The paper will proceed as follows. First, we will sum up the development of EU-ROK relations up to the present day. Second, we look into the results of our polls informing us about the public attitudes in South Korea and the EU about international affairs, China, and each other. Third, we summarise findings from the interviews with experts and policymakers on China and mutual relations and the relevance of public opinion for foreign policy in the EU and ROK. We sum up the policy recommendations below as the conclusion.

# The development of the EU-ROK relationship

The European Economic Community and the Republic of Korea established diplomatic relations in 1963. Initially, the focus of the relations was primarily economic, although it started to pick up pace only after the South Korean market started to open more widely in the 1980s. Gradually, political and cultural relations were formed. The first foreign ministerial meeting occurred in 1983, and the political talks began in 1989. This coincided with the opening of the first South Korean mission to the EC in 1989, followed by the EC Commission Delegation office opening in Seoul the following year.

Since then, the evolution of relations between EC/EU and ROK can be divided into three periods: getting to know each other (1991-2000), broadening mutual relationship (2001-2009), and when the ROK has become one of the most important EU partners in Asia from 2010 onwards.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1990s, the EU and ROK signed several agreements that focused on strengthening economic relations, while the trade in goods almost doubled. Political and diplomatic relations were developing primarily through cooperation within multilateral institutions such as the UN and its agencies. Besides, the EU supported the ROK during the Asian Financial crisis and joined the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), supporting the North Korean nuclear issue resolution.

In the 2000s, the partnership brought an even higher increase in mutual trade relations. After the enlargement of the EU, South Korean investments started to move into newly admitted member states, making the ROK the most prominent Asian investor in some of these countries. From the Central European perspective, Korean investments have been the key feature of relations with the ROK since the 2000s. The South Korean investments are largely directed at



manufacturing, R&D, and real estate. The investments in automotive and electronic sectors are located primarily in Central and Eastern European Union member states – Slovakia, for instance, hosts the KIA plant producing cars for the European market or a large facility of Samsung producing electronics.<sup>2</sup>

In 2007, negotiations on the FTA started between the EU and the ROK. In addition, biennial summits were introduced in 2002 and replaced by the summits of heads of government in 2009. In diplomatic and political relations, the cooperation was strengthened within the OECD, UN, and G20. In addition, cooperation in research and development started to evolve. The EU member states have become more interested in broadening the cooperation between universities and research institutions concerning modern technologies related to semiconductors and high-definition television, where South Korea has become a world leader. Increasingly, Korean culture has become widely popular in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Moving to the post-2010 period, the EU-ROK relationship has been based on three newly signed agreements: the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and Framework Agreement (FA) signed in 2010, and the Crisis Management Participation Agreement (CMPA) of 2014. In addition, South Korea became an EU strategic partner in 2010.

In the area of trade, South Korea has become the 9th most important export and import partner for the EU; they established 15 independent bodies to deal with the issues related to trade relations. The FTA that entered fully into force in 2015 was the first example of the so-called 'new-generation FTA' the EU has signed. Since 2011, we can see an increase in imports and exports from around € 30 billion to over € 50 billion. Export from the EU to the ROK increased over ten years from € 30 billion to € 52 billion by 2021. ROK exports to the EU started at € 34 billion in 2011 and increased to €55 billion in 2021.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding investments in South Korea, the EU has been the most important source of foreign direct investments in South Korea and is estimated to account for about a third of the entire FDI in the country.<sup>5</sup> The EU FDI is generally focused on finance, business, services and construction, and the manufacturing sector.

Based on the available data, the Netherlands is the biggest investor, followed by Germany and France.<sup>6</sup>

The Framework Agreement helped strengthen political relations and diplomatic ties. From 2015 on, the EU and South Korea have held ad-hoc foreign ministerial meetings and are engaged in dialogues covering vast issues and developments in third countries.

The Crisis Management Participation Agreement (CMPA) formed a platform for security cooperation between partners, especially in the anti-piracy mission ATALANTA in the Gulf of Aden.

Among the recent activities in bilateral relations, the EU and ROK signed a digital partnership on November 28, 2022. The agreement aims to enhance digital cooperation and deliver concrete results in collaborative research, semiconductors research and resilience against global supply chain disruption, quantum technologies and high-performance computing, 5G and 6G, online and digital platforms cooperation, artificial intelligence, and digital trade. In addition, the partnership document mentions the need to build skills among young people and the necessity to adopt laws and systems related to the free and trusted flow of data related to the digital identity area. The document stipulates the necessity to create a mechanism for safe ways for information sharing, especially related to cyber security and trust-building issues in this area.

Although the current agreements between the EU and ROK are seen positively, specific issues need to be addressed, especially when it comes to the FTA. As it was signed in 2010, due to recent technological development and the increase of e-commerce, those parts of the agreement covering this area of cooperation need to be updated and elaborated in more detail.<sup>7</sup> It is not yet clear how and if the new digital partnership will affect these issues.

When it comes to practical applications of the agreements, in the last 12 years since the adoption of the FTA, trade relations have increased. So did the number of contacts between the two partners, and the ROK became the EU's strategic

partner. Thanks to the CMPA, South Korean naval forces are participating in the ATALANTA mission in the sea off the Horn of Africa and the West Indian Ocean. The newest digital partnership can be seen as a joint reaction to the most recent security, economic and political events and technological development.

# Public attitudes in South Korea and Europe

The data used in this paper were produced as part of the Sinophone Borderlands project and in collaboration with CEIAS. A series of representative online public opinion surveys were conducted in 2020-2022, investigating global attitudes towards international affairs, China, and other related issues. Altogether, we have surveyed 56 countries worldwide (four of them twice – Germany, Czech Republic, Latvia, and the UK) and have collected responses from more than 80 thousand respondents. We hired reputable market and social research agencies to collect the data, including NMS, Focus, and STEM/MARK, who collaborated with global partners such as Cint, Rakuten, Toluna, and others, to collect responses. The research has an ethical statement from the Palacky University Olomouc ethical board.

South Korean data was collected between April 11 and June 23, 2022, with a research sample of 1,363 respondents representative of the general population based on the quotas of gender, age (18-65 years), and region within the country.<sup>8</sup> In Europe, we organized two separate series of surveys. Between August-October 2022, we surveyed nine EU members (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Portugal, and Romania) with a research sample of at least 1,500 respondents in each country, representative of the general population with regards of gender, age (18-65), education level, urban-rural divide, and region within each country (and in Latvia also of the ethnic division).<sup>9</sup> Besides, between September-October 2020, we surveyed another ten EU members (Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden) with the same characteristics as the 2022 survey.<sup>10</sup>

To review the most relevant findings, South Koreans and Europeans generally share their negative views of China and positive views of the US (Figure 1 and

Figure 2). However, there are quite substantial differences in the levels of these sentiments: Koreans are much more negative of China and much more positive of the US than any of the EU countries we surveyed. Moreover, there are substantial differences between various EU countries: when it comes to the views of China, Greece, Romania, and Latvia stand out as neutral on average in their overall attitude towards China. In turn, several EU countries, including Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, and Greece, are less positive towards the US than others. These findings are generally in line with the results from our survey in 2020 when China was seen negatively by all the EU countries then surveyed (except Latvia), and the views towards the US were not too positive in several countries, including France, Sweden, and Spain.

Interestingly, South Koreans are also more positive about the EU than the respondents in most EU countries we surveyed, except the Portuguese (Figure 3). Overall, the EU, and especially some of the EU countries (such as Germany and France), are among the most positively perceived countries in South Korea. The most positive overall is the US, and the most negative is China – ahead of Russia and North Korea (Figure 4). As such, it can be observed that South Koreans are quite clear in their strategic views and see themselves very close to the EU, only slightly less so than they feel about the US.

Figure 1: How positively or negatively do you feel about China?

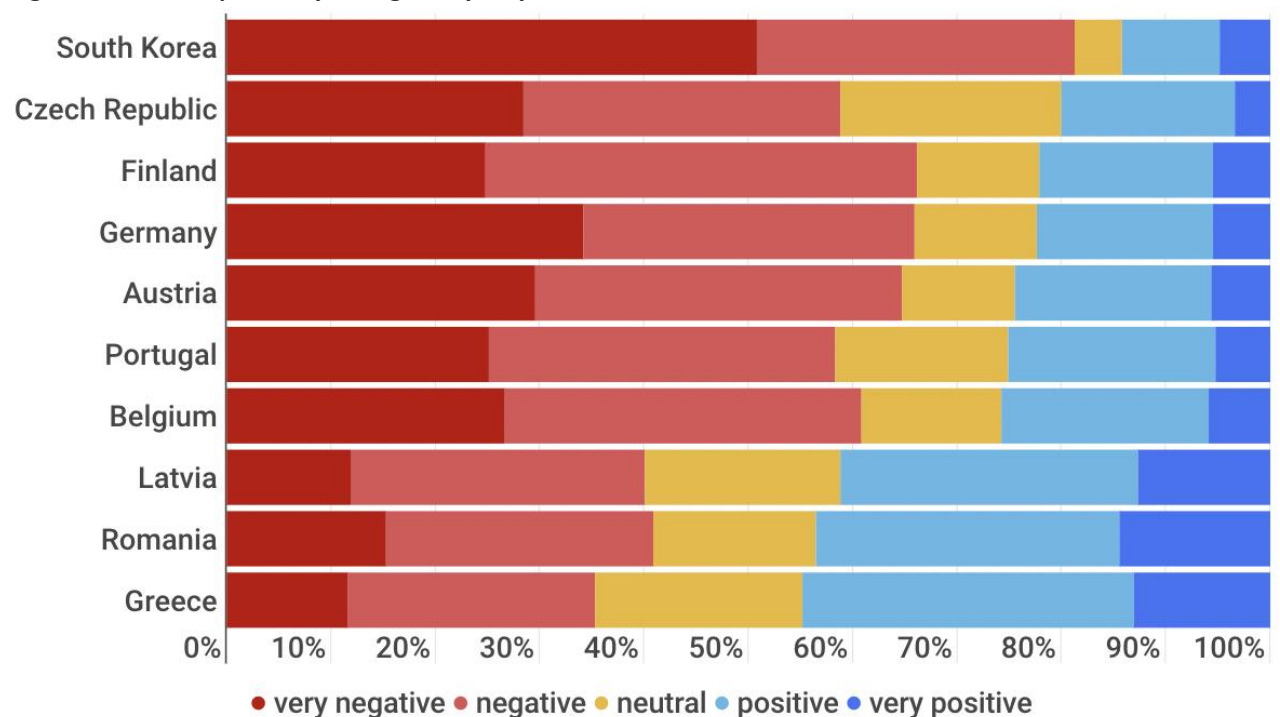


Figure 2: How positively or negatively do you feel about the US?

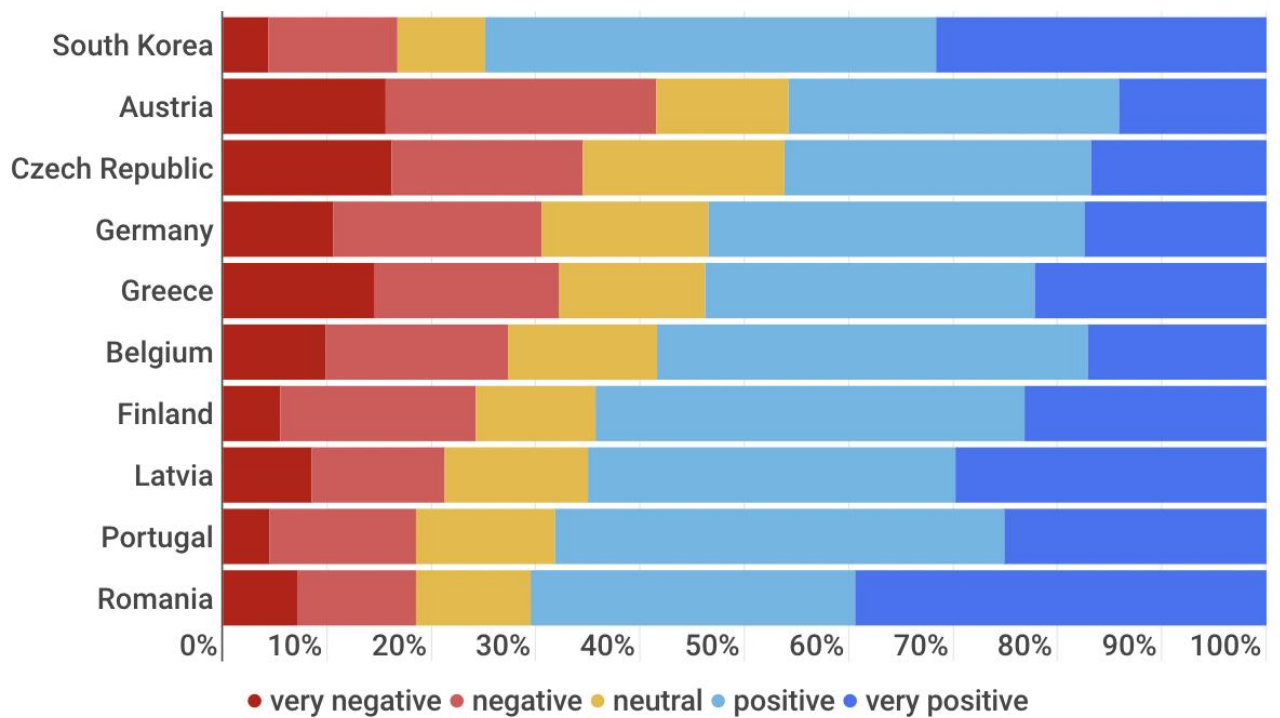


Figure 3: How positively or negatively do you feel about the EU?

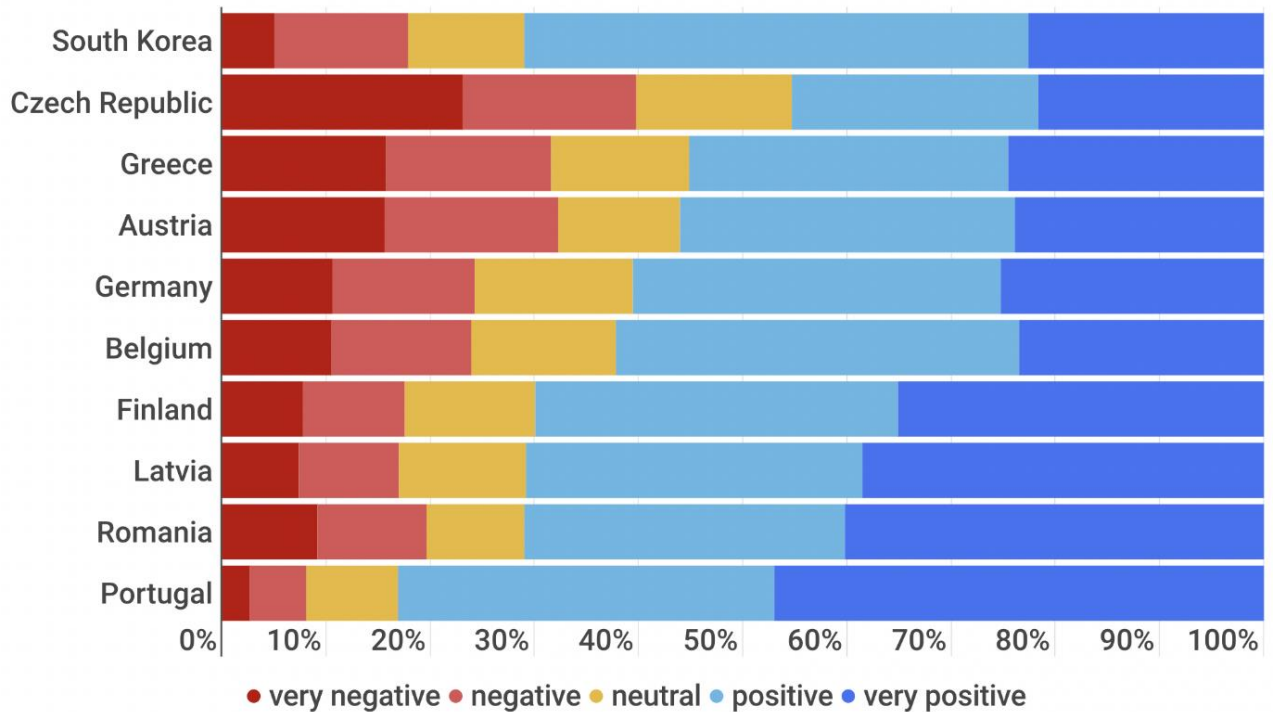
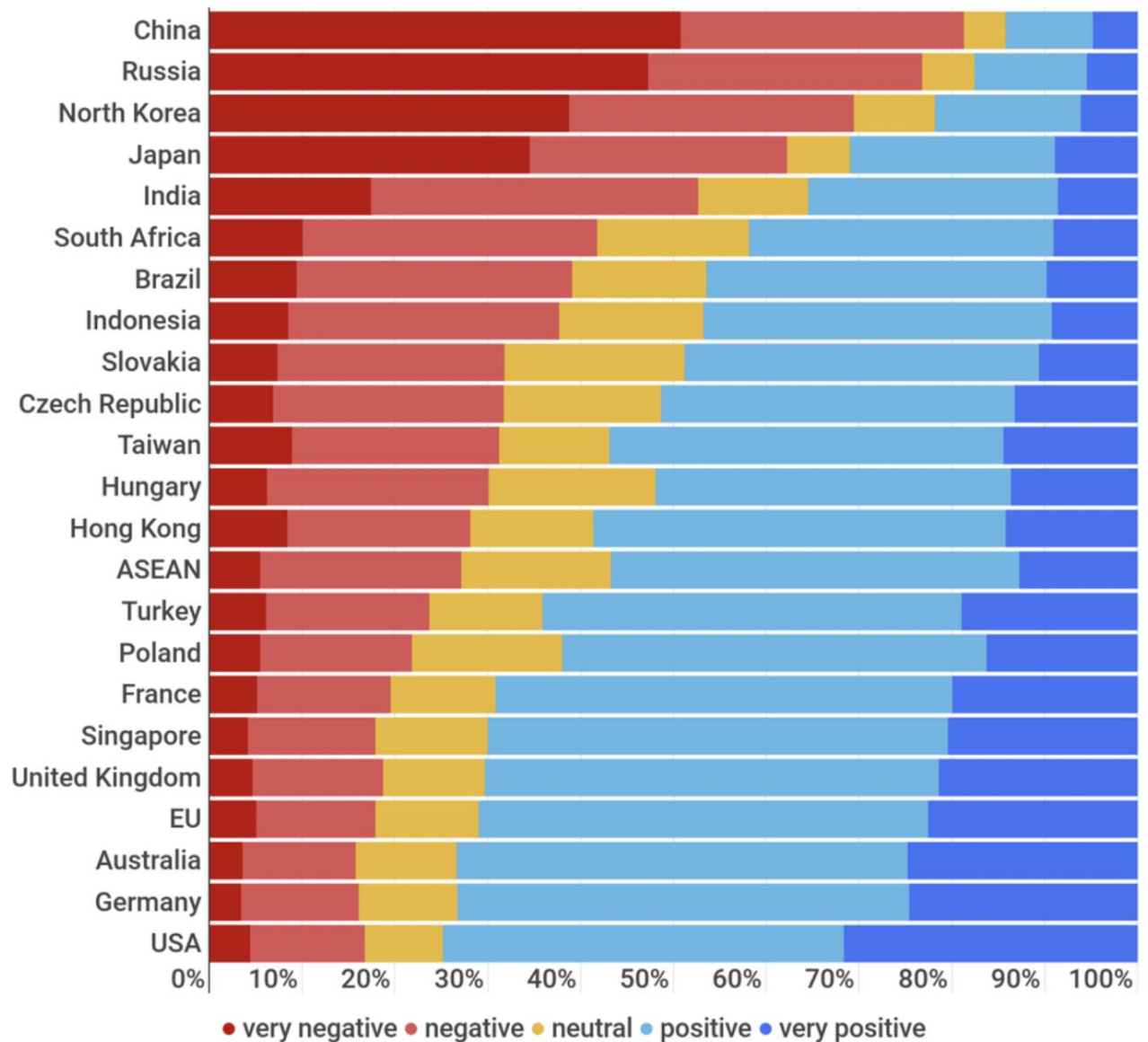


Figure 4: How positively or negatively do you feel about the following countries? (South Korean respondents)



In turn, Europeans seem to be indifferent to South Korea (Figure 5). The average sentiment towards South Korea across nine surveyed EU countries in 2022 was 53 (on a scale of 0-100), which means only slightly above the neutral mark of 50. In comparative perspective with how other non-EU countries are perceived, South Korea is seen substantially less positive than English-speaking countries (Canada, Australia, UK, USA), but also less positive than Japan – and on a similar level as South Africa, Mexico, and Brazil. This reveals that although economically, politically, and culturally South Korea might be expected to be treated and seen in Europe as similar to Japan, in reality, there is quite a big difference between the two.

This is also confirmed by our 2020 survey when we asked respondents in Europe about companies of which countries they would prefer to cooperate with when constructing 5G networks. In most countries, respondents decisively favor cooperation with companies from the EU, followed by those from Japan and the US. Cooperation with companies from South Korea was generally seen less favorably, and at a similar level as cooperation with companies from China – and in several EU countries (such as Spain, Italy, Hungary, Latvia, and Slovakia), Chinese companies were even more favored than the Korean ones.<sup>11</sup>

Besides, there are only minor differences between the nine EU countries where respondents were asked about their attitude towards South Korea (Figure 6). While the average sentiment towards South Korea in Austria and the Czech Republic was 49 (i.e., just under the neutral), the most positive among the Europeans – Finland's respondents – only stood at 58 (i.e., only slightly leaning towards the positive side).



Figure 5: Overall sentiment towards selected non-EU countries (respondents from nine EU countries, mean values, 0 being most negative, 50 neutral, 100 most positive)

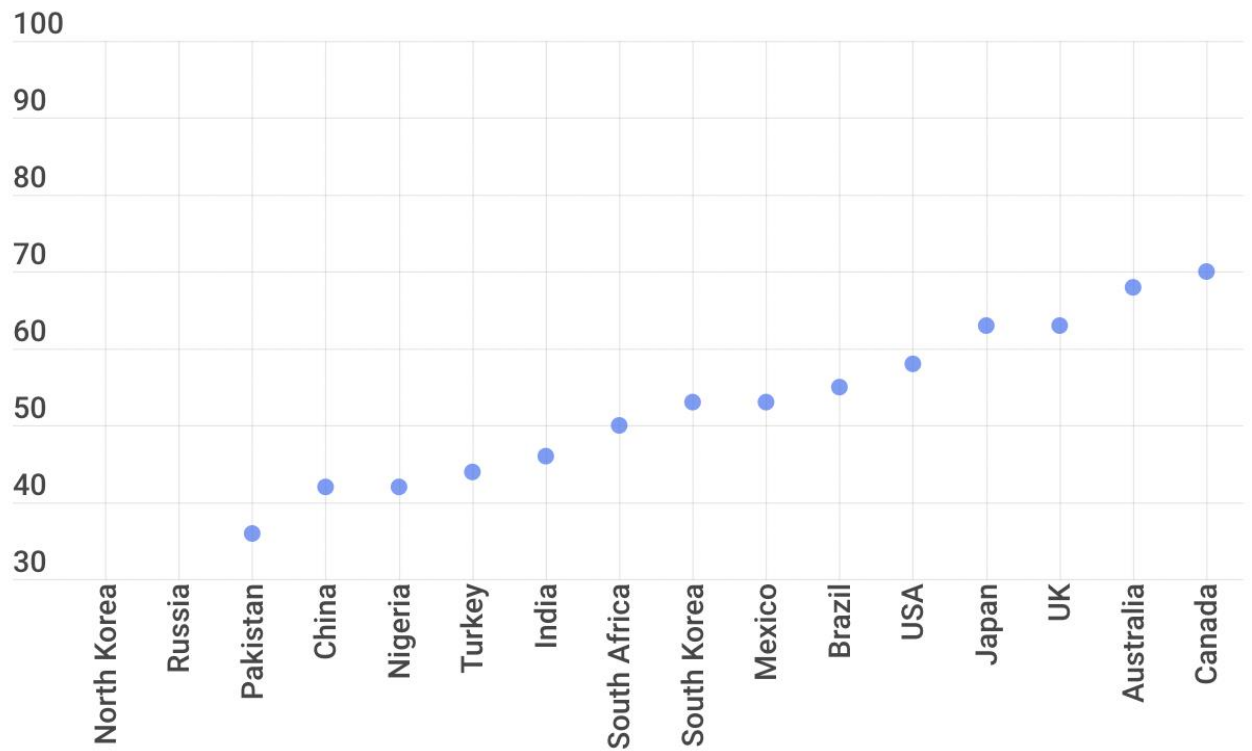
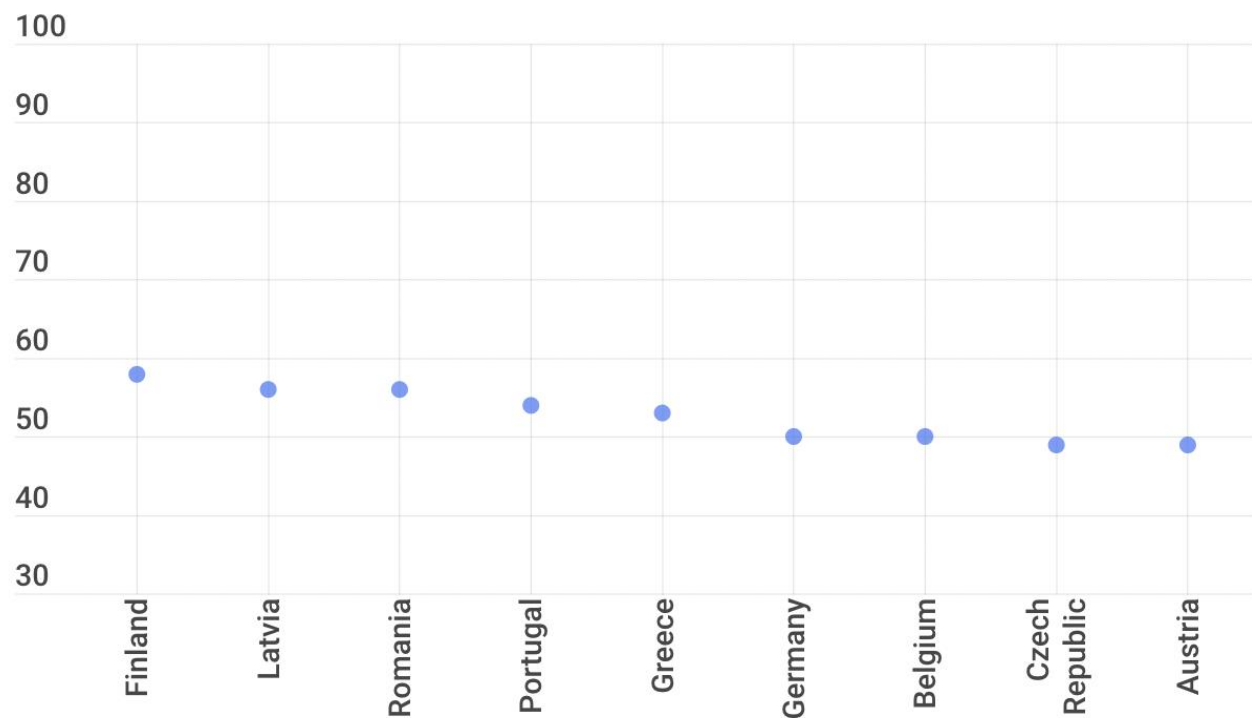


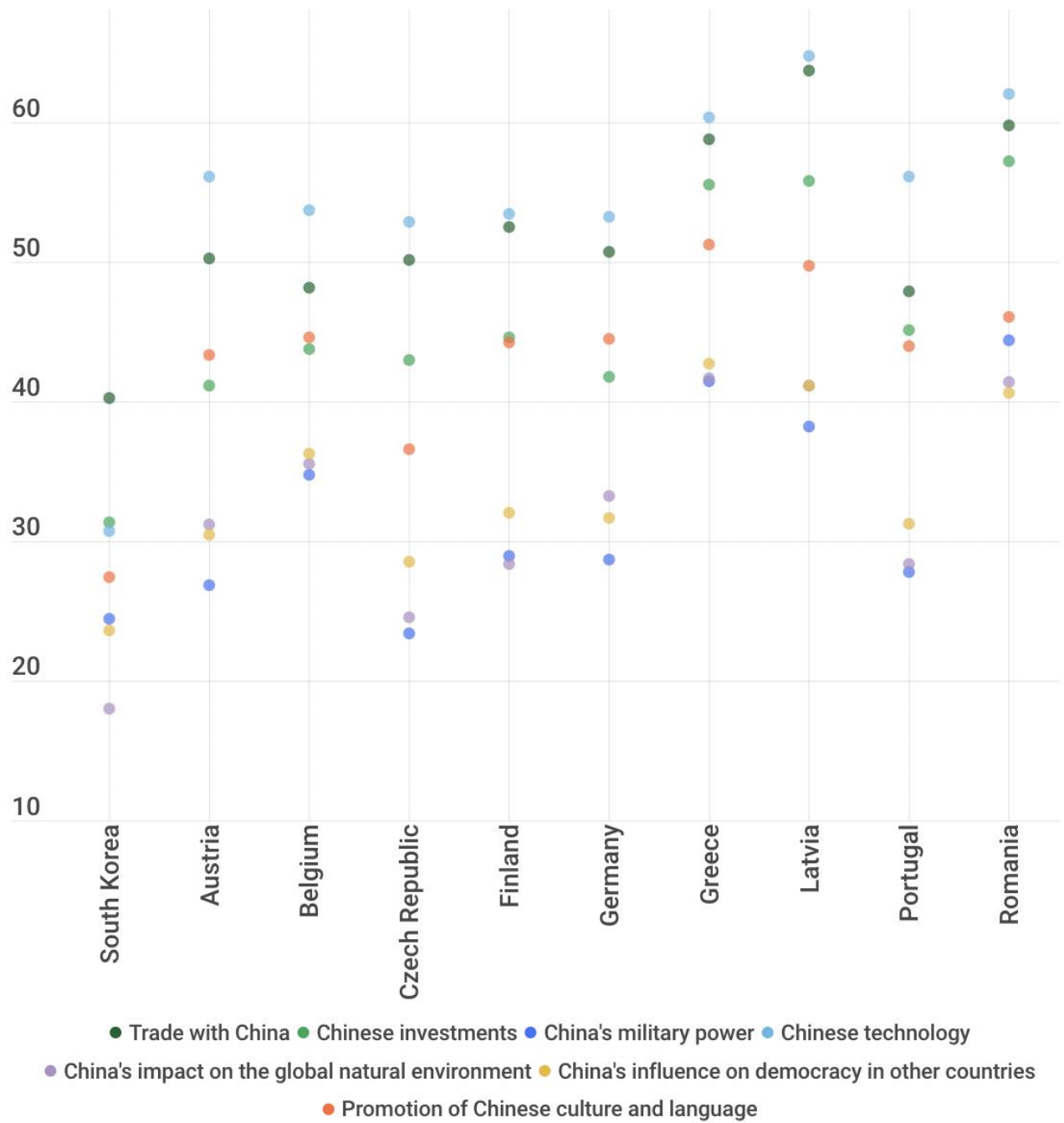
Figure 6: Overall sentiment towards South Korea (mean value, 0 most negative, 50 neutral, 100 most positive).



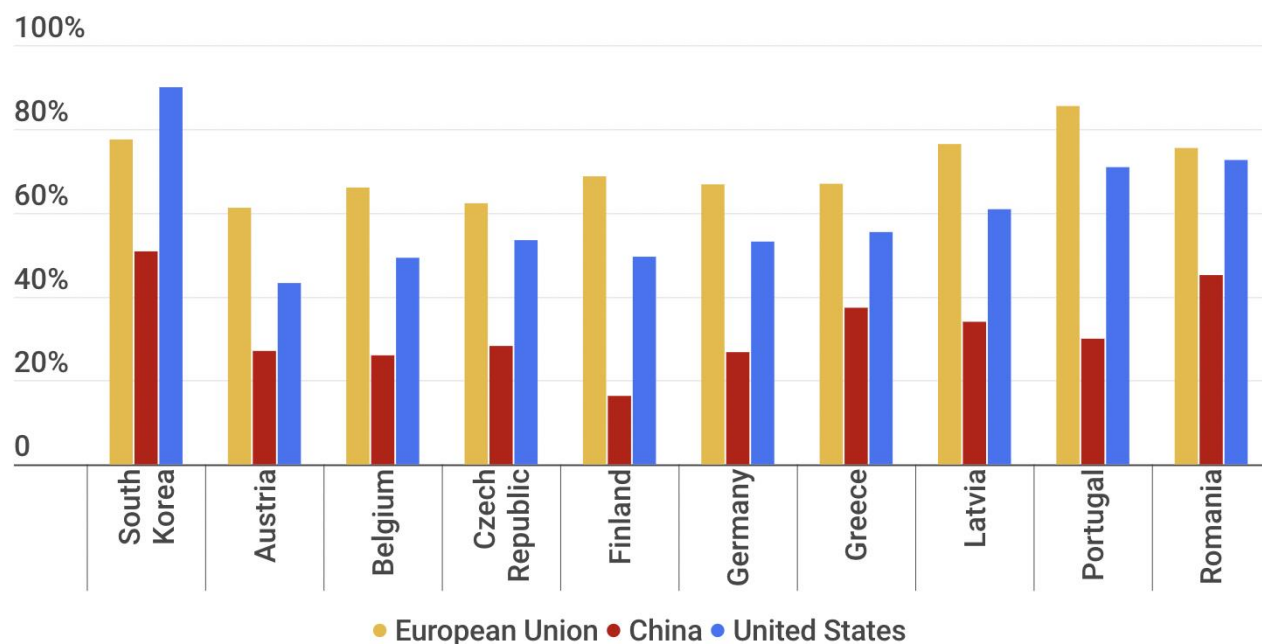
Zooming in on how South Korea and the EU countries perceive various aspects of China, it is interesting to note that in most of the EU countries, Chinese technology is the most positively seen aspect of China – and indeed, the only one with predominantly positive views in all nine EU countries (Figure 7). In South Korea, Chinese technology was seen as substantially more negative (by more than 20 percentage points). In South Korea, trade with China was seen as substantially better than other aspects of China – although even this was on the negative spectrum. Another noteworthy difference between South Korea and the EU countries was the negativity towards China's impact on the global natural environment. Only Finnish, Czech, and Portuguese respondents came close to how negatively South Koreans saw this aspect of China.

What kind of foreign policies do South Koreans and Europeans favor? The answers from the survey show that South Koreans, as expected, prefer strategic alignment with the US more than with the EU and China (Figure 8). In turn, Europeans generally favor the alignment with the EU over the US, with China far below. What is noteworthy, however, is that the option of strategic alignment with China got substantially higher support in South Korea than in any of the surveyed EU countries. This can be interpreted that even though Koreans are very negative about China, they probably recognize the geopolitical reality in their neighborhood (and particularly concerning North Korea), where China and its positions have to be considered.

Figure 7: Feelings towards the issues related to China (mean values on the 100-point thermometer)



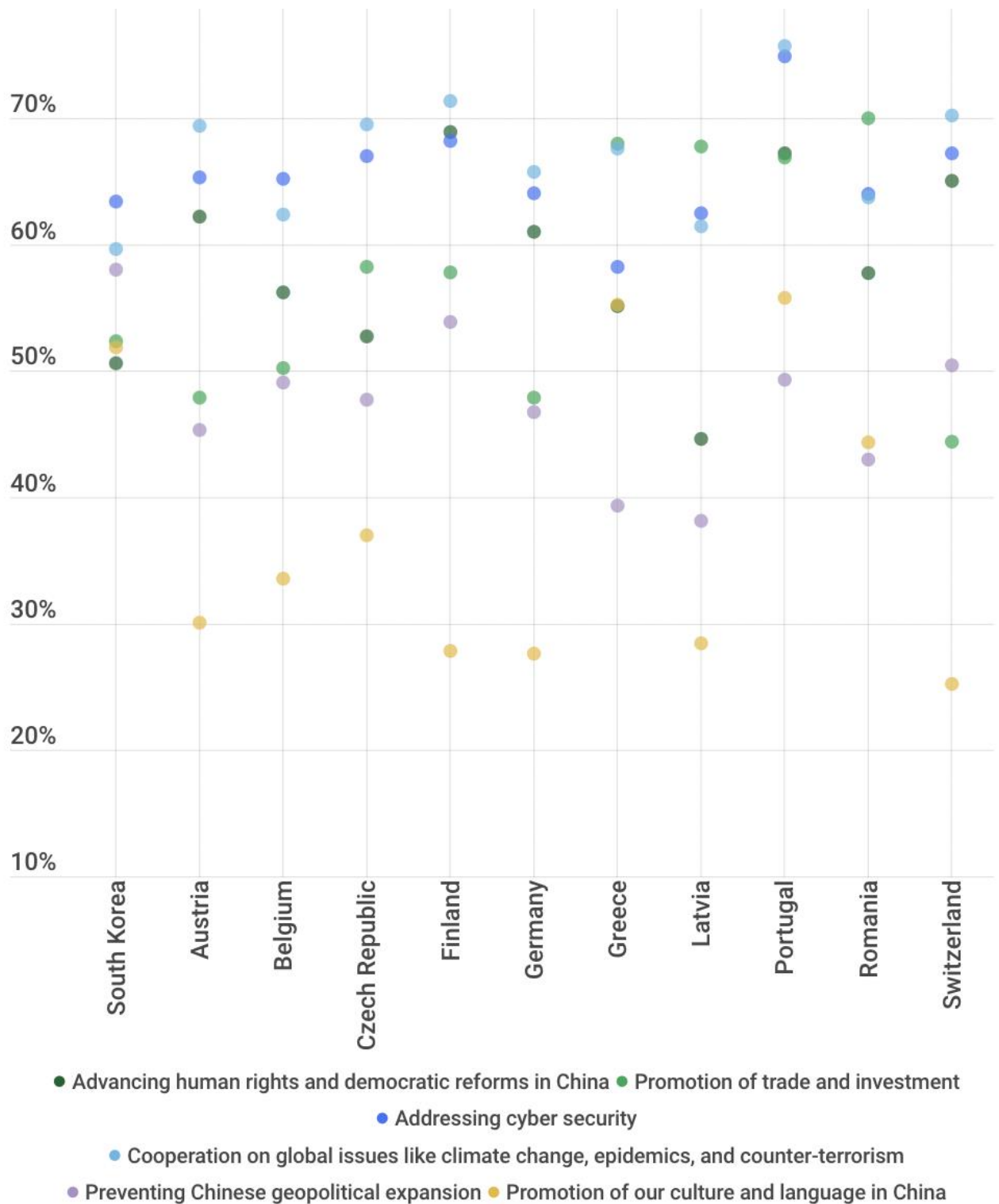
**Figure 8:** How closely should your country's foreign policy align with the following actors? (% of respondents who wish to align closely)



Finally, what specific policies on China do respondents prefer the most? What is noteworthy is that in South Korea, respondents actually do not differ much between various options, while European respondents differ much more between the options (Figure 9). That could be interpreted as Europeans having a clearer preference for a particular policy over another, but also South Koreans seeing merit in a comprehensive approach since none of the options scored under the neutral mark of 50 in South Korea.

In South Korea, as in most of the EU countries, however, addressing cyber security and cooperation on global issues got the most support among the respondents as the policies their governments should be pursuing towards China. In Latvia and Romania, the promotion of trade and investment scored as the most preferred policy option. However, it can be concluded that in South Korea and most of the EU, economic diplomacy is not seen among the most preferred options (in South Korea, it is actually the last one). Also, in Europe, there was much less enthusiasm for promoting of own culture and language in China, as well as for preventing the geopolitical expansion of China.

Figure 9: Foreign policy preferences towards China (% of respondents agreeing)



# Policymakers and stakeholders' interviews

To juxtapose the findings from the public opinion surveys and the analysis of the EU-ROK relations, we conducted a series of interviews with policymakers and stakeholders in both the EU and the ROK. We approached selected interviewees for the face-to-face interviews in Brussels and Seoul and online and were able to secure ten interviews with experts, academics, and researchers who are focusing either directly on the EU-ROK relations, China-ROK relations, or Chinese foreign policy and international relations in general. In addition, comments and talking points presented by the European External Action Service (EEAS) presented on various fora in Brussels related to EU-Indo-Pacific and EU-ROK relations were considered.

The interviews covered a range of issues and topics: from the assessment of the perception of China among the population of the EU and ROK, the main challenges in the EU-ROK relations, how much China factors in relations and influences change in policies, what areas of cooperation vis-a-vis China the experts identify, and what role the opinion polls play in political decisions.

The interviewees generally tend to think that in the area of foreign policy, public opinion is usually not decisive as foreign policy is perceived as a unique area requiring specific expertise. In particular, it is believed that there is a national interest to be followed that is preserved thanks to experts. There is also a perception that public opinion can be formed and influenced in a top-down direction by policymakers and experts. The development of the discussion about the 5G in the EU member states, especially about the importance of the country of origin, was given as an example of such a trend.

Nevertheless, the interviewees agreed that governments should reflect what people expect, especially in democratic countries where the political elites

compete over the support and votes of the people. In this regard, it was suggested that opinion polls and the policies adopted in the EU are in line, especially regarding China. Naturally, there are legitimate concerns in the EU as well as in South Korea about China's domestic and foreign policies, and public opinion, as well as policymakers, largely share those concerns. This could have been particularly observed in the case of South Korea after the deployment of the THAAD system and the reaction of the Chinese government that imposed sanctions on South Korean products in 2016.

The interviewees agree that the EU and ROK are facing a security dilemma rooted in the US-China rivalry, which opens an area of cooperation for them. The EU and South Korea are in a complicated situation: they would like to avoid taking a side in this competition, as both the US and China are their essential partners. Therefore they need to increase their strategic autonomy through cooperation with other like-minded countries in their respective regions and globally. Here the multilateral forums, as well as separate bilateral relations of both partners with third parties, can serve as valuable platforms to cooperate and coordinate reactions and prepare unified positions and policies that are in line.

In the overview of the state of cooperation between the EU and the ROK, several areas were mentioned by the experts. Both parties are seen as global players: the EU is the largest economic actor in international affairs (although often struggling to conduct unified foreign policy). At the same time, South Korea is perceived as an important middle power and also an economic and technological powerhouse. The concept of a global pivotal state is hinted at in this regard by the new ROK administration as it prepares its foreign policy strategies.

As a result, both partners perceive themselves – and are also largely perceived by others – as responsible actors on a global scene who share interests in multiple areas. Those commonly repeated in the interviews were the security of the global supply chain, the need for technological innovation, and norms and standards related to it, especially in digital governance, AI governance, and space technology governance. From the technological cooperation, semiconductors

rank high among the topics of discussion, primarily due to the recent development of the weakening supply chain with this commodity. In addition, the ROK is seen as supportive of the EU's demands for a fair, competitive environment in the global economy. Moreover, both partners emphasize the issue of intellectual property as the critical area of their interest in the global economy and technological development.

Both the EU and ROK share an interest in preserving the current rule-based order, while they also support the creation of new rules and regulations, especially related to modern technologies. The necessity of international rules and standards is more pressing due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The interviewees agree that values, democratic political systems, and adherence to human rights are seen as part of the identity of both the EU and ROK. However, the opinions were not united on how these principles could be used concerning China. For the EU and its representatives, as well as representatives of particular EU member states, to focus on the normative issues in their talk with China plays a role and is generally expected to some extent. The South Korean interviewees are more reserved when it comes to a need to bring human rights issues to the table with China. The reason is probably the recent experience of how China reacted to the deployment of THAAD on South Korean territory and the cultural sanctions' effect on South Korea and its perception of China. At the same time, the economic dependency on China is seen as a strong factor in dealing with China. This is a factor in the case of the EU, too; however, policymakers are not reluctant to be openly critical of China. Part of the explanation can also be the geopolitics, where South Korea is located immediately in China's vicinity. It has to keep functional relations with China also because of the North Korean issue, in which China plays a vital role.

In the security field, maritime security ranks high, partially due to the ATALANTA mission. However, it also touches upon relations with China, especially regarding the importance of the South China Sea and the perseverance of freedom of navigation. Among other security topics, the issue of non-proliferation, especially



related to the North Korean nuclear program, is stressed by experts, but also possibilities to cooperate on the topic outside of the Korean peninsula, as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains an important international issue. From the more modern security issues, the data and cyber security are stressed in the interviews – in this regard, the Digital Partnership agreement signed between the EU and ROK on November 28, 2022, aims to address these topics.

From all the areas mentioned, a few were identified as those where the relations can be improved, and the representatives of both should pay special attention to it. First, the more general one covers the necessity to work harder on the implementation of existing agreements. Interviewees, mainly on the European side, generally agree that the EU-ROK relations are strong regarding the amount and content of documents signed. What is lacking is better diligence on both sides to implement them in full and potentially expand them into more areas; the CMPA can be one of them. In general, the EU representatives are aware of this specific shortcoming, not only concerning the ROK. We could see more activities on the EU side in this regard during the previous year.

The second area covers economic cooperation but also goes beyond trade as it covers the necessity of economic security, especially as a reaction to the recent issues with the global supply chain and the overall dependency of economies of both partners, in particular on China. Here the experts bring an issue of technological sovereignty – and the issue of semiconductor development is at the center. There is a mutual interest in broadening cooperation in these areas, and South Korean Samsung, a semiconductors producer, is a strong player in these discussions. Overall, economic relations are generally covered by the FTA signed in 2010; however, there is a consensus that an update is needed.

The last topic, concerning security, is related to the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, which brought back the necessity to focus on armament and defence. South Korea has a strong defence industry, and some EU member states have strong interests in this regard. With the recent procurement of various military

equipment by Poland, South Korea sees this particular area as important for the future and is prepared to cooperate more closely with other EU member states as well. The other issue is the cyber security cooperation that has been identified as a critical area of cooperation.

Some South Korean interviewees suggested that the EU should, at the moment, take the lead in EU-ROK relations and their further expansion as the strategies of the new South Korean government are still being formed. The active approach from the EU would encourage the South Koreans to work more on developing relations and cooperation with the EU.

## Recommended areas of cooperation

Besides the need to work on the implementation of the existing agreements and possible update of the FTA, the focus on public diplomacy seems to be one of the urgent areas to broaden the mutual understanding among people as an important factor for strengthening the strategic partnership as well as cooperation on the issues such as the environmental crisis, but also security of the supply chain and modern technology that affect the everyday life of all of us.

Additionally, the last years of the global pandemic showed us how vulnerable the medical supply chain is, especially in the EU, and how high the dependency on one medical equipment provider is. In this area, the ROK proved to be a reliable partner of the EU.

Looking outside of the bilateral partnership and emphasizing the strategic character of EU-ROK relations, cooperation with and in third countries is an area for further strengthening. If we talk about the challenges presented by the competition between the US and China, other actors around the world are facing the same issue, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. Both EU and ROK already cooperate in maritime security – South Korea participates in the ATALANTA mission of the EU in the Gulf of Aden. In addition, the EU has a new mission in the north Indian Ocean, which also opens the door for maritime cooperation. The maritime area is crucial for both partners, as securing the maritime roads is necessary for supply chain stability and physical security.

The EU recently signed (October 17, 2022) a Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement with ASEAN that replaces existing bilateral aviation agreements of member states with ASEAN members. Alongside rules for fair competition, transparency, and commitment to improving social and labor policies, the agreement stipulates the creation of a forum for regular meetings and

mechanisms for dispute solutions. At the same time, the South Korean former government focused on improving and expanding ties with ASEAN to better protect its trade from risks caused by the US and China frictions. This position is not expected to change under the current ROK government, which is preparing to publish its Indo-Pacific Strategy.

In light of the competition between the US and China, it is only natural to expect that the EU and ROK will focus their attention on decreasing their dependency on either of the powers, especially in terms of trade and economy.

# Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Nicola Casarini, Antonio Fiori, Nam-Kook Kim, Jae-Seung Lee, Ramon Pacheco Pardo. 2021. The Routledge Handbook of Europe-Korea Relations. New York: Routledge.
- <sup>2</sup> Matej Šimalčík. 2021. Slovakia in East Asia: no longer naive, still not committed. In Peter Brezáni (ed). 2020 Yearbook of Slovakia's Foreign Policy. Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association. <https://www.sfpa.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Yearbook-of-Slovakias-Foreign-Policy-2020.pdf>.
- <sup>3</sup> Klára Dubravčíková. 2018. "K-POP as a global phenomenon. Why China fails to achieve similar success?" Central European Institute of Asian Studies, 18 July 2018. <https://ceias.eu/k-pop-as-a-global-phenomenon/>.
- <sup>4</sup> Eurostat. 2022. South Korea-EU - international trade in goods statistics. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=South\\_Korea-EU\\_-\\_international\\_trade\\_in\\_goods\\_statistics&oldid=559682](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=South_Korea-EU_-_international_trade_in_goods_statistics&oldid=559682).
- <sup>5</sup> Françoise Nicolas. 2021. Korea-EU Direct Investment Links: The Neglected Facet of a Tight Partnership. In Nicolas Casarini et al. (eds). The Routledge Handbook of Europe-Korea Relations. New York: Routledge.
- <sup>6</sup> OECD stats. 2022. FDI financial flows - By partner country. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=64194#>.
- <sup>7</sup> Kim Chang-beom, Ramon Pacheco Pardo and Michael Reiterer (eds). 2022. Korea-EU Cooperation: Moving to the Next Level, VUB. <https://brussels-school.be/publications/other-publications/korea-eu-cooperation-moving-next-level>.
- <sup>8</sup> Richard Q. Turcsanyi, Klára Dubravčíková, Su-Jeong Kang, James Locovozzi, Matej Šimalčík, Lucia Husenicová. 2022. South Korean public opinion on the world in times of global turmoil: US yay, China nay, Japan meh. Bratislava: Central European Institute of Asian Studies. [https://ceias.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Korean-poll-finaldraft-adjustments-3-1\\_rqt-1-2.pdf](https://ceias.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Korean-poll-finaldraft-adjustments-3-1_rqt-1-2.pdf).

- <sup>9</sup> Richard Q. Turcsányi, Alfred Gerstl, Kristína Kironská, Klára Dubravčíková, James Iocovozzi, Peter Gries, Matej Šimalčík, Konstantinos Tsimonis, José Magano, Erhan Doğan, Jony Essa, Benjamin Toettoe, Tim Ruehlig, Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova, Diya Jiang, Hermann Aubie. 2022. Trans-Atlantic public opinion on China: Great power competition amidst Russian invasion of Ukraine. Bratislava: Central European Institute of Asian Studies. [https://ceias.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Europe\\_and\\_North\\_America\\_Draft-FINAL.pdf](https://ceias.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Europe_and_North_America_Draft-FINAL.pdf).
- <sup>10</sup> Richard Q. Turcsany, Matej Šimalčík, Renata Sedlaková, Jiří Čeněk, Kristína Kironská, Andrej Findor, Ondrej Buchel, Marek Hruška, Adrian Brona, Una Berzina Cherenkova, Mario Esteban, Beatrice Gallelli, Jelena Gledic, Peter Gries, Sergei Ivanov, Bjorn Jerden, Marc Julienne, Tamas Matura, Tim Ruhlig, and Tim Summers. 2020. European public opinion on China in the age of COVID-19. Differences and common ground across the continent. Bratislava: Central European Institute of Asian Studies. [https://ceias.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/COMP-poll-report\\_3.pdf](https://ceias.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/COMP-poll-report_3.pdf).
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.

# Authors

**RICHARD Q. TURCSÁNYI** | Program Director, CEIAS



[turcsanyi@ceias.eu](mailto:turcsanyi@ceias.eu)



[@RQTurcsanyi](https://twitter.com/RQTurcsanyi)

**LUCIA HUSENICOVÁ** | Board Member, CEIAS



[husenicova@ceias.eu](mailto:husenicova@ceias.eu)

**SU-JEONG KANG** | Assistant Professor, Chosun University



[philoself@gmail.com](mailto:philoself@gmail.com)

# Central European Institute of Asian Studies

The Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS) is an independent think tank based in Bratislava (Slovakia), and with branches in Olomouc (Czech Republic), and Vienna (Austria).

The main goal of CEIAS is to spread knowledge about Asia among scholars and experts in Central Europe and beyond, while also informing the public about Central European activities in Asia.

To this end, CEIAS conducts and publishes its research, organizes public seminars and conferences, supports education on Asian topics, and communicates with the local, regional, and international media.

CEIAS activities focus mainly on international relations and security studies in East, Southeast, South, and Central Asia. CEIAS cooperates with a number of experts and similar organizations in the region and beyond.

Follow us online:



<https://www.facebook.com/CEIASeu/>



[https://twitter.com/CEIAS\\_eu](https://twitter.com/CEIAS_eu)



[https://www.instagram.com/ceias\\_eu/](https://www.instagram.com/ceias_eu/)



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ceias-eu/>



<https://www.ceias.eu>



[office@ceias.eu](mailto:office@ceias.eu)



## **Coping with China:**

Public attitudes in South Korea and Europe as the basis for the effective policy collaboration

**Authors:** Richard Q. Turcsányi, Lucia Husenicová, Su-Jeong Kang

**Design:** Matej Šimalčík

**Citation:** Richard Q. Turcsányi, Lucia Husenicová, Su-Jeong Kang. *Coping with China: Public attitudes in South Korea and Europe as the basis for the effective policy collaboration*. CEIAS, January 2023.

### **Published by:**

Central European Institute of Asian Studies  
Murgašova 2, 811 04 Bratislava, Slovakia  
[www.ceias.eu](http://www.ceias.eu) | [office@ceias.eu](mailto:office@ceias.eu)

All rights reserved.

© Authors

© Central European Institute of Asian Studies, 2022



Spreading knowledge about Asia