

## UPF Prague, Czech Republic honors the Korean Independence Movement of 1919

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Prague, Czech Republic -- During the centenary of the Korean Independence Movement, which took place March 1, 1919, the Czech UPF chapter convened a special meeting and discussion with the ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Czech Republic. This event took place in the Peace Embassy in Prague on May 9, 2019.

A full room of more 30 people welcomed the Korean ambassador, who gave a very profound and honest lecture about the Independence Movement that protested the Japanese occupation, as well as the current situation on the Korean Peninsula.



He spoke about the Independence Movement as a historical event and milestone in the history of the Korean people. In his opinion, he said, history must have some direction. Even though Korea does not have material resources, it is the unwavering spirit and determination of the Koreans that brought the

country to stand among the most developed in the world, he said. When we think about the situation after the Korean War, when everything was devastated, it is a miracle, the ambassador said.



After the speech there was a very vivid discussion, and many questions came from the floor. Many people asked about traditional values in Korea and especially about the current situation concerning the reunification of the Korean Peninsula. The Korean ambassador gave honest answers to all the questions and did not evade any question. This, together with his humble attitude, made a very good impression on the audience.

Concerning family traditions in Korea, the ambassador mentioned that traditionally children have taken care of their old parents. This was a kind of duty. Nowadays, however, this trend is slowly disappearing, maybe due to the nation's economic prosperity, and the parents are sent to senior homes. This brings loneliness for them.

After the attacks in 2012 from North Korea, the people in South Korea realized that there is still a big danger from the North. Many of them decided to join the army voluntarily.

Forgiveness is a very important factor in the process of reunification, and South Korea is ready to forgive, said the ambassador. The question is who should be punished, because many people suffered (defectors, political prisoners). Reunification cannot be based on the communist regime, he said. There are about 30,000 North Korean defectors in South Korea.

The process of reunification is very complex, with many different aspects and dimensions, the ambassador said. How to do it in a dignified way and not hurt the ordinary people? Not only economic questions play an important role but also human and humanitarian aspects, the Korean ambassador concluded.

After more than two hours of discussion, the audience were glad to eat the Korean food that had been provided by the ROK Embassy in Prague as a contribution to a very successful event.

We can say that this was the best event at the Prague Peace Embassy until now, and people really liked it. They are interested in public matters and like to listen to somebody relevant who can bring firsthand information.