



EAST ASIA/SOUTHEAST ASIA :: KOREA, SOUTH

Introduction :: KOREA, SOUTH

Background:

An independent kingdom for much of its long history, Korea was occupied by Japan beginning in 1905 following the Russo-Japanese War. In 1910, Tokyo formally annexed the entire Peninsula. Korea regained its independence following Japan's surrender to the US in 1945. After World War II, a democratic government (Republic of Korea, ROK) was set up in the southern half of the Korean Peninsula while a communist-style government was installed in the north (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DPRK). During the Korean War (1950-53), US troops and UN forces fought alongside ROK soldiers to defend South Korea from a DPRK invasion supported by communist China and the Soviet Union. A 1953 armistice split the Peninsula along a demilitarized zone at about the 38th parallel. PARK Chung-hee took over leadership of the country in a 1961 coup. During his regime, from 1961 to 1979, South Korea achieved rapid economic growth, with per capita income rising to roughly 17 times the level of North Korea in 1979.

South Korea held its first free presidential election under a revised democratic constitution in 1987, with former ROK Army general ROH Tae-woo winning a close race. In 1993, KIM Young-sam (1993-98) became the first civilian president of South Korea's new democratic era. President KIM Dae-jung (1998-2003) won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000 for his contributions to South Korean democracy and his "Sunshine" policy of engagement with North Korea. President PARK Geun-hye, daughter of former ROK President PARK Chung-hee, took office in February 2013 as South Korea's first female leader. In December 2016, the National Assembly passed an impeachment motion against President PARK over her alleged involvement in a corruption and influence-peddling scandal, immediately suspending her presidential authorities. The impeachment was upheld in March 2017, triggering an early presidential election in May 2017 won by MOON Jae-in. South Korea hosted the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in February 2018, in which North Korea also participated. Discord with North Korea has permeated inter-Korean relations for much of the past decade, highlighted by the North's attacks on a South Korean ship and island in 2010, the exchange of artillery fire across the DMZ in 2015, and multiple nuclear and missile tests in 2016 and 2017. North Korea's participation in the Winter Olympics, dispatch of a senior delegation to Seoul, and three inter-Korean summits in 2018 appear to have ushered in a temporary period of respite, buoyed by the historic US-DPRK summits in 2018 and 2019.

Geography :: KOREA, SOUTH

Location:

Eastern Asia, southern half of the Korean Peninsula bordering the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea

Geographic coordinates:

37 00 N, 127 30 E

Map references:

Asia

Area:

total: 99,720 sq km

land: 96,920 sq km

water: 2,800 sq km

country comparison to the world: 110

Area - comparative:

slightly smaller than Pennsylvania; slightly larger than Indiana

Area comparison map:



Land boundaries:

total: 237 km

border countries (1): North Korea 237 km

Coastline:

2,413 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm; between 3 nm and 12 nm in the Korea Strait

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: not specified

Climate:

temperate, with rainfall heavier in summer than winter; cold winters

Terrain:

mostly hills and mountains; wide coastal plains in west and south

Elevation:

mean elevation: 282 m

lowest point: Sea of Japan 0 m

highest point: Halla-san 1,950 m

Natural resources:

coal, tungsten, graphite, molybdenum, lead, hydropower potential

Land use:

agricultural land: 18.1% (2011 est.)

arable land: 15.3% (2011 est.) / permanent crops: 2.2% (2011 est.) / permanent pasture: 0.6% (2011 est.)

forest: 63.9% (2011 est.)

other: 18% (2011 est.)

Irrigated land:

7,780 sq km (2012)

Population distribution:

with approximately 70% of the country considered mountainous, the country's population is primarily concentrated in the lowland areas, where density is quite high; Gyeonggi Province in the northwest, which surrounds the capital of Seoul and contains the port of Incheon, is the most densely populated province; Gangwon in the northeast is the least populated

Natural hazards:

occasional typhoons bring high winds and floods; low-level seismic activity common in southwest

volcanism: Halla (1,950 m) is considered historically active although it has not erupted in many centuries

Environment - current issues:

air pollution in large cities; acid rain; water pollution from the discharge of sewage and industrial effluents; drift net fishing; solid waste disposal; transboundary pollution

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic-Marine Living Resources, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands, Whaling

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

strategic location on Korea Strait; about 3,000 mostly small and uninhabited islands lie off the western and southern coasts

People and Society :: KOREA, SOUTH

Population:

51,418,097 (July 2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 27

Nationality:

noun: Korean(s)

adjective: Korean

Ethnic groups:

homogeneous

Languages:

Korean, English (widely taught in elementary, junior high, and high school)

Religions:

Protestant 19.7%, Buddhist 15.5%, Catholic 7.9%, none 56.9% (2015 est.)

note: many people also carry on at least some Confucian traditions and practices

Age structure:

0-14 years: 13.03% (male 3,448,627 /female 3,251,786)

15-24 years: 12.19% (male 3,295,814 /female 2,970,439)

25-54 years: 45.13% (male 11,986,760 /female 11,220,268)

55-64 years: 15.09% (male 3,825,127 /female 3,935,700)

65 years and over: 14.55% (male 3,202,232 /female 4,281,344) (2018 est.)

population pyramid:



Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 36.7 (2015 est.)

youth dependency ratio: 19 (2015 est.)

elderly dependency ratio: 17.7 (2015 est.)

potential support ratio: 5.6 (2015 est.)

Median age:

total: 42.3 years

male: 40.6 years

female: 44 years (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 33

Population growth rate:

0.44% (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 157

Birth rate:

8.3 births/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 219

Death rate:

6.3 deaths/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 151

Net migration rate:

2.4 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 43

Population distribution:

with approximately 70% of the country considered mountainous, the country's population is primarily concentrated in the lowland areas, where density is quite high; Gyeonggi Province in the northwest, which surrounds the capital of Seoul and contains the port of Incheon, is the most densely populated province; Gangwon in the northeast is the least populated

Urbanization:

urban population: 81.5% of total population (2018)

rate of urbanization: 0.3% annual rate of change (2015-20 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

9.963 million SEOUL (capital), 3.467 million Busan, 2.763 million Incheon, 2.221 million Daegu (Taegu), 1.558 million Daejeon (Taejon), 1.518 million Gwangju (Kwangju) (2018)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.07 male(s)/female (2017 est.)

15-24 years: 1.12 male(s)/female (2017 est.)

25-54 years: 1.06 male(s)/female (2017 est.)

55-64 years: 0.98 male(s)/female (2017 est.)

65 years and over: 0.71 male(s)/female (2017 est.)

total population: 1 male(s)/female (2017 est.)

Mother's mean age at first birth:

31 years (2014 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

11 deaths/100,000 live births (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 145

Infant mortality rate:

total: 3 deaths/1,000 live births

male: 3.2 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 2.8 deaths/1,000 live births (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 212

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 82.5 years

male: 79.4 years

female: 85.8 years (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 13

Total fertility rate:

1.27 children born/woman (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 219

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

79.6% (2015)

note: percent of women aged 20-49

Health expenditures:

7.4% of GDP (2014)

country comparison to the world: 72

Physicians density:

2.33 physicians/1,000 population (2016)

Hospital bed density:

11.5 beds/1,000 population (2015)

Drinking water source:

improved:

urban: 99.7% of population

rural: 87.9% of population

total: 97.8% of population

unimproved:

urban: 0.3% of population

rural: 12.1% of population

total: 2.2% of population (2012 est.)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 100% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 100% of population (2015 est.)

total: 100% of population (2015 est.)

unimproved:

urban: 0% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 0% of population (2015 est.)

total: 0% of population (2015 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

NA

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

NA

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

NA

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

4.7% (2016)

country comparison to the world: 184

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

0.7% (2010)

country comparison to the world: 124

Education expenditures:

5.3% of GDP (2015)

country comparison to the world: 51

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 17 years

male: 17 years

female: 16 years (2013)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

total: 10.4%

male: 11.3%

female: 9.7% (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 124

Government :: KOREA, SOUTH

Country name:

conventional long form: Republic of Korea

conventional short form: South Korea

local long form: Taehan-min'guk

local short form: Han'guk

abbreviation: ROK

etymology: derived from the Chinese name for Goryeo, which was the Korean dynasty that united the peninsula in the 10th century A.D.; the South Korean name "Han'guk" derives from the long form, "Taehan-min'guk," which is itself a derivation from "Daehan-je'guk," which means "the Great Empire of the Han"; "Han" refers to the "Sam'han" or the "Three Han Kingdoms" (Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla from the Three Kingdoms Era, 1st-7th centuries A.D.)

Government type:

presidential republic

Capital:

name: Seoul; note - Sejong, located some 120 km (75 mi) south of Seoul, is being developed as a new capital

geographic coordinates: 37 33 N, 126 59 E

time difference: UTC+9 (14 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

9 provinces (do, singular and plural), 6 metropolitan cities (gwangyeoksi, singular and plural), 1 special city (teugbyeolsi), and 1 special self-governing city (teukbyeoljachisi)

provinces: Chungbuk (North Chungcheong), Chungnam (South Chungcheong), Gangwon, Gyeongbuk (North Gyeongsang), Gyeonggi, Gyeongnam (South Gyeongsang), Jeju, Jeonbuk (North Jeolla), Jeonnam (South Jeolla);

metropolitan cities: Busan (Pusan), Daegu (Taegu), Daejeon (Taejon), Gwangju (Kwangju), Incheon (Inch'on), Ulsan;

special city: Seoul;

special self-governing city: Sejong

Independence:

15 August 1945 (from Japan)

National holiday:

Liberation Day, 15 August (1945)

Constitution:

history: several previous; latest passed by National Assembly 12 October 1987, approved in referendum 28 October 1987, effective 25 February 1988

amendments: proposed by the president or by majority support of the National Assembly membership; passage requires at least two-thirds majority vote by the Assembly membership, approval in a referendum by more than one-half of the votes by more than one-half of eligible voters, and promulgation by the president; amended several times, last in 1987; note - an amendment proposed in March 2018 that would change the presidential term to 4 years and increase the term limit to 2 failed in the National Assembly vote in June 2018 (2018)

Legal system:

mixed legal system combining European civil law, Anglo-American law, and Chinese classical thought

International law organization participation:

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; accepts ICCt jurisdiction

Citizenship:

citizenship by birth: no

citizenship by descent only: at least one parent must be a citizen of South Korea

dual citizenship recognized: no

residency requirement for naturalization: 5 years

Suffrage:

19 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President MOON Jae-in (since 10 May 2017); note - President PARK Geun-hye (since 25 February 2013) was impeached by the National Assembly on 9 December 2016; PARK's impeachment was upheld by the Constitutional Court and she was removed from office on 9 March 2017

head of government: Prime Minister LEE Nak-yon (since 1 June 2017); Deputy Prime Ministers KIM Dong-yeon (since 9 June 2017), KIM Sang-kon (since 4 July 2017)

cabinet: State Council appointed by the president on the prime minister's recommendation

elections/appointments: president directly elected by simple majority popular vote for a single 5-year term; election last held on 9 May 2017 (next to be held in 2022); prime minister appointed by president with consent of National Assembly

election results: MOON Jae-in elected president; percent of vote - MOON Jae-in (DP) 41.1%, HONG Joon-pyo (LKP) 25.5%, AHN Cheol-soo (PP) 21.4%, other 12%

Legislative branch:

description: unicameral National Assembly or Kuk Hoe (300 seats statutory, 299 for current term); 253 members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote and 47 directly elected in a single national constituency by proportional representation vote; members serve 4-year terms)

elections: last held on 13 April 2016 (next to be held on 15 April 2020)

election results: percent of vote by party - NFP 33.5%, PP 26.7%, MPK 25.5%, JP 7.2%, other 7.1%; seats by party - MPK 123, NFP 122, PP 38, JP 6, independent 11

note: as of February 2019, seats by party - DP 128, LKP 113, BFP 29, PDP 14, JP 5, KPP 1, MP 1, independent 7

Judicial branch:

highest courts: Supreme Court of South Korea (consists of a chief justice and 13 justices); Constitutional Court (consists of a court head and 8 justices)

judge selection and term of office: Supreme Court chief justice appointed by the president with the consent of the National Assembly; other justices appointed by the president upon the recommendation of the chief justice and consent of the National Assembly; position of the chief justice is a 6-year nonrenewable term; other justices serve 6-year renewable terms; Constitutional Court justices appointed - 3 by the president, 3 by the National Assembly, and 3 by the Supreme Court chief justice; court head serves until retirement at age 70, while other justices serve 6-year renewable terms with mandatory retirement at age 65

subordinate courts: High Courts; District Courts; Branch Courts (organized under the District Courts); specialized courts for family and administrative issues

Political parties and leaders:

Bareun Future Party or BFP [PARK Joo-sun] (merger of Bareun Party and People's Party)

Democratic Party or DP [CHOO Mi-ae] (renamed from Minjoo Party of Korea or MPK in October 2016; formerly New Politics Alliance for Democracy or NPAD, which was a merger of the Democratic Party or DP (formerly DUP) [KIM Han-gil] and the New Political Vision Party or NPVP [AHN Cheol-soo] in March 2014)

Justice Party or JP [LEE Jeong-mi]

Liberty Korea Party or LKP (formerly the New Frontier Party (NFP) or Saenuri, previously the Grand National Party [HONG Jueen-Pyo])

Minjung Party or MP (formed from the merger of the New People's Party (formerly the New People's Political Party or NPP) and the People's United Party or PUP)

Korean Patriots' Party or KPP [CHO Won-jin]

Parliamentary Group for Peace and Justice [ROH Hoe-chan] (parliamentary group made up of PDP and JP)

Party for Democracy and Peace or PDP [CHO Bae-sook]

People's Party or PP [AHN Cheol-soo]

International organization participation:

ADB, AfDB (nonregional member), APEC, Arctic Council (observer), ARF, ASEAN (dialogue partner), Australia Group, BIS, CD, CICA, CP, EAS, EBRD, FAO, FATF, G-20, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (national committees), ICt, ICRM, IDA, IEA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), LAIA (observer), MIGA, MINURSO, MINUSTAH, NEA, NSG, OAS (observer), OECD, OPCW, OSCE (partner), Pacific Alliance (observer), Paris Club (associate), PCA, PIF (partner), SAARC (observer), SICA (observer), UN, UNAMID, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNIFIL, UNMIL, UNMISS, UNMOGIP, UNOCI, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, ZC

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador CHO Yoon-je (since 29 November 2017)

chancery: 2450 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008

telephone: [1] (202) 939-5600

FAX: [1] (202) 797-0595

consulate(s) general: Agana (Guam), Anchorage (AK), Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Seattle

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Harry HARRIS (since 10 July 2018)

embassy: 188 Sejong-daero, Jongno-gu, Seoul 110-710

mailing address: US Embassy Seoul, 9600 Seoul Place Washington, D.C., 20521-9600

telephone: [82] (2) 397-4114

FAX: [82] (2) 725-0152

Flag description:

white with a red (top) and blue yin-yang symbol in the center; there is a different black trigram from the ancient I Ching (Book of Changes) in each corner of the white field; the South Korean national flag is called Taegukki; white is a traditional Korean color and represents peace and purity; the blue section represents the negative cosmic forces of the yin, while the red symbolizes the opposite positive forces of the yang; each trigram (kwa) denotes one of the four universal elements, which together express the principle of movement and harmony

National symbol(s):

taegeuk (yin yang symbol), Hibiscus syriacus (Rose of Sharon), Siberian tiger; national colors: red, white, blue, black

National anthem:

name: "Aegukga" (Patriotic Song)

lyrics/music: YUN Ch'i-Ho or AN Ch'ang-Ho/AHN Eaktay

note: adopted 1948, well-known by 1910; both North Korea's and South Korea's anthems share the same name and have a vaguely similar melody but have different lyrics

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Economy :: KOREA, SOUTH

Economy - overview:

After emerging from the 1950-53 war with North Korea, South Korea emerged as one of the 20th century's most remarkable economic success stories, becoming a developed, globally connected, high-technology society within decades. In the 1960s, GDP per capita was comparable with levels in the poorest countries in the world. In 2004, South Korea's GDP surpassed one trillion dollars.

Beginning in the 1960s under President PARK Chung-hee, the government promoted the import of raw materials and technology, encouraged saving and investment over consumption, kept wages low, and directed resources to export-oriented industries that remain important to the economy to this day. Growth surged under these policies, and frequently reached double-digits in the 1960s and 1970s. Growth gradually moderated in the 1990s as the economy matured, but remained strong enough to propel South Korea into the ranks of the advanced economies of the OECD by 1997. These policies also led to the emergence of family-owned chaebol conglomerates such as Daewoo, Hyundai, and Samsung, which retained their dominant positions even as the government loosened its grip on the economy amid the political changes of the 1980s and 1990s.

The Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 hit South Korea's companies hard because of their excessive reliance on short-term borrowing, and GDP ultimately plunged by 7% in 1998. South Korea tackled difficult economic reforms following the crisis, including restructuring some chaebols, increasing labor market flexibility, and opening up to more foreign investment and imports. These steps lead to a relatively rapid economic recovery. South Korea also began expanding its network of free trade agreements to help bolster exports, and has since implemented 16 free trade agreements covering 58 countries—including the United State and China—that collectively cover more than three-quarters of global GDP.

In 2017, the election of President MOON Jae-in brought a surge in consumer confidence, in part, because of his successful efforts to increase wages and government spending. These factors combined with an uptick in export growth to drive real GDP growth to more than 3%, despite disruptions in South Korea's trade with China over the deployment of a US missile defense system in South Korea.

In 2018 and beyond, South Korea will contend with gradually slowing economic growth - in the 2-3% range - not uncommon for advanced economies. This could be partially offset by efforts to address challenges arising from its rapidly aging population, inflexible labor market, continued dominance of the chaebols, and heavy reliance on exports rather than domestic consumption. Socioeconomic problems also persist, and include rising inequality, poverty among the elderly, high youth unemployment, long working hours, low worker productivity, and corruption.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$2.035 trillion (2017 est.)

\$1.974 trillion (2016 est.)

\$1.918 trillion (2015 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollars

country comparison to the world: 14

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$1.54 trillion (2017 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

3.1% (2017 est.)

2.9% (2016 est.)

2.8% (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 109

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$39,500 (2017 est.)

\$38,500 (2016 est.)

\$37,600 (2015 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollars

country comparison to the world: 46

Gross national saving:

36.6% of GDP (2017 est.)

36.3% of GDP (2016 est.)

36.6% of GDP (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 15

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 48.1% (2017 est.)

government consumption: 15.3% (2017 est.)

investment in fixed capital: 31.1% (2017 est.)

investment in inventories: 0% (2017 est.)

exports of goods and services: 43.1% (2017 est.)

imports of goods and services: -37.7% (2017 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 2.2% (2017 est.)

industry: 39.3% (2017 est.)

services: 58.3% (2017 est.)

Agriculture - products:

rice, root crops, barley, vegetables, fruit, cattle, pigs, chickens, milk, eggs, fish

Industries:

electronics, telecommunications, automobile production, chemicals, shipbuilding, steel

Industrial production growth rate:

4.6% (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 63

Labor force:

27.75 million (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 23

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 4.8%

industry: 24.6%

services: 70.6% (2017 est.)

Unemployment rate:

3.7% (2017 est.)

3.7% (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 45

Population below poverty line:

14.4% (2016 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 6.8%

highest 10%: 48.5% (2015 est.)

Distribution of family income - Gini index:

35.7 (2016 est.)

35.4 (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 94

Budget:

revenues: 357.1 billion (2017 est.)

expenditures: 335.8 billion (2017 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

23.2% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 129

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

1.4% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 24

Public debt:

39.5% of GDP (2017 est.)

39.9% of GDP (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

Fiscal year:

calendar year

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

1.9% (2017 est.)

1% (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 97

Central bank discount rate:

1.5% (31 December 2017 est.)

1.25% (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 126

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

3.48% (31 December 2017 est.)

3.37% (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 170

Stock of narrow money:

\$793.9 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$658.7 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 8

Stock of broad money:

\$793.9 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$658.7 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 8

Stock of domestic credit:

\$2.986 trillion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$2.515 trillion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 9

Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$1.305 trillion (31 December 2016 est.)

\$1.28 trillion (31 December 2015 est.)

\$1.269 trillion (31 December 2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 11

Current account balance:

\$78.46 billion (2017 est.)

\$99.24 billion (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 6

Exports:

\$577.4 billion (2017 est.)

\$512 billion (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 5

Exports - partners:

China 25.1%, US 12.2%, Vietnam 8.2%, Hong Kong 6.9%, Japan 4.7% (2017)

Exports - commodities:

semiconductors, petrochemicals, automobile/auto parts, ships, wireless communication equipment, flat displays, steel, electronics, plastics, computers

Imports:

\$457.5 billion (2017 est.)

\$393.1 billion (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 9

Imports - commodities:

crude oil/petroleum products, semiconductors, natural gas, coal, steel, computers, wireless communication equipment, automobiles, fine chemicals, textiles

Imports - partners:

China 20.5%, Japan 11.5%, US 10.5%, Germany 4.2%, Saudi Arabia 4.1% (2017)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$389.2 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$371.1 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 9

Debt - external:

\$384.6 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$384.1 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 29

Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:

\$230.6 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$180.1 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 29

Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:

\$344.7 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$358 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 20

Exchange rates:

South Korean won (KRW) per US dollar -

1,130.48 (2017 est.)

1,160.41 (2016 est.)

1,160.77 (2015 est.)

1,130.95 (2014 est.)

1,052.96 (2013 est.)

Energy :: KOREA, SOUTH

Electricity access:

electrification - total population: 100% (2016)

Electricity - production:

526 billion kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 10

Electricity - consumption:

507.6 billion kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 9

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 155

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 166

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

111.2 million kW (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 11

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

70% of total installed capacity (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 109

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

21% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 7

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

2% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 139

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

8% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 86

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 156

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 148

Crude oil - imports:

3.057 million bbl/day (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 5

Crude oil - proved reserves:

NA (1 January 2017 est.)

Refined petroleum products - production:

3.302 million bbl/day (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 6

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

2.584 million bbl/day (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 8

Refined petroleum products - exports:

1.396 million bbl/day (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 6

Refined petroleum products - imports:

908,800 bbl/day (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 6

Natural gas - production:

339.8 million cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 76

Natural gas - consumption:

45.28 billion cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 18

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 131

Natural gas - imports:

48.65 billion cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 9

Natural gas - proved reserves:

7.079 billion cu m (1 January 2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 82

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

778.4 million Mt (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 7

Communications :: KOREA, SOUTH

Telephones - fixed lines:

total subscriptions: 26,842,952 (2017 est.)

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 52 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 10

Telephones - mobile cellular:

total subscriptions: 63,658,688 (2017 est.)

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 124 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 23

Telephone system:

general assessment: excellent domestic and international services featuring rapid incorporation of new technologies; ranked 1st out of 34 Asian telecoms; exceedingly high mobile and mobile broadband penetration and very high fixed broadband penetration; strong support from govt, savvy population has catapulted the nation into one of the world's most active telecommunication markets; 5G services to go live for enterprise customers in 2019; slower growth predicted over the next five years to 2023; Chinese telecommunications company Huawei has partnered with other MNOs in South Korea

domestic: fixed-line 52 per 100 and mobile-cellular services 124 per 100 persons widely available; rapid assimilation of a full range of telecommunications technologies leading to a boom in e-commerce

international: country code - 82; numerous submarine cables provide links throughout Asia, Australia, the Middle East, Europe, and US; satellite earth stations - 66

Broadcast media:

multiple national TV networks with 2 of the 3 largest networks publicly operated; the largest privately owned network, Seoul Broadcasting Service (SBS), has ties with other commercial TV networks; cable and satellite TV subscription services available; publicly operated radio broadcast networks and many privately owned radio broadcasting networks, each with multiple affiliates, and independent local stations

Internet country code:

.kr

Internet users:

total: 44.153 million (July 2016 est.)

percent of population: 89.9% (July 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 16

Broadband - fixed subscriptions:

total: 21,195,918 (2017 est.)

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 41 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 9

Transportation :: KOREA, SOUTH

National air transport system:

number of registered air carriers: 12 (2015)

inventory of registered aircraft operated by air carriers: 348 (2015)

annual passenger traffic on registered air carriers: 65,482,307 (2015)

annual freight traffic on registered air carriers: 11.297 billion mt-km (2015)

Civil aircraft registration country code prefix:

HL (2016)

Airports:

111 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 53

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 71 (2017)

over 3,047 m: 4 (2017)

2,438 to 3,047 m: 19 (2017)

1,524 to 2,437 m: 12 (2017)

914 to 1,523 m: 13 (2017)

under 914 m: 23 (2017)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 40 (2013)

914 to 1,523 m: 2 (2013)

under 914 m: 38 (2013)

Heliports:

466 (2013)

Pipelines:

3790 km gas, 16 km oil, 889 km refined products (2017)

Railways:

total: 3,979 km (2016)

standard gauge: 3,979 km 1.435-m gauge (2,727 km electrified) (2016)

country comparison to the world: 48

Roadways:

total: 100,428 km (2016)

paved: 92,795 km (includes 4,193 km of expressways) (2016)

unpaved: 7,633 km (2016)

country comparison to the world: 37

Waterways:

1,600 km (most navigable only by small craft) (2011)

country comparison to the world: 49

Merchant marine:

total: 1,897

by type: bulk carrier 95, container ship 86, general cargo 379, oil tanker 196, other 1141 (2018)

country comparison to the world: 12

Ports and terminals:

major seaport(s): Busan, Incheon, Gunsan, Kwangyang, Mokpo, Pohang, Ulsan, Yeosu

container port(s) (TEUs): Busan (19,850,000), Kwangyang (2,249,558), Incheon (2,679,504) (2016)

LNG terminal(s) (import): Incheon, Kwangyang, Pyeongtaek, Samcheok, Tongyeong, Yeosu

Military and Security :: KOREA, SOUTH

Military expenditures:

2.7% of GDP (2017)

2.3% of GDP (2016)

2.3% of GDP (2015)

2.64% of GDP (2014)

2.63% of GDP (2013)

country comparison to the world: 35

Military branches:

Republic of Korea Army, Navy (includes Marine Corps), Air Force (2011)

Military service age and obligation:

18-35 years of age for compulsory military service, with middle school education required; minimum conscript service obligation - 21 months (Army, Marines), 23 months (Navy), 24 months (Air Force); 18-26 years of age for voluntary military service; women, in service since 1950, admitted to 7 service branches, including infantry, but excluded from artillery, armor, anti-air, and chaplaincy corps; HIV-positive individuals are exempt from military service (2017)

Transnational Issues :: KOREA, SOUTH

Disputes - international:

Military Demarcation Line within the 4-km-wide Demilitarized Zone has separated North from South Korea since 1953; periodic incidents with North Korea in the Yellow Sea over the Northern Limit Line, which South Korea claims as a maritime boundary; South Korea and Japan claim Liancourt Rocks (Tok-do/Take-shima), occupied by South Korea since 1954

Refugees and internally displaced persons:

stateless persons: 197 (2017)