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THE PENINSULA

Prospects for Growing Cooperation Between South Korea and the G7

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Another end of June means another G7 summit just wrapped up—this time in Italy's Apulia province. Both the [scope of discussions](#) and the expanded roster of participants suggest a changing role of the grouping, providing a choice opportunity to consider adding other partners to help bring order to an increasingly chaotic global landscape.

Although it was not invited as a full participant in the G7 leaders meeting, South Korea was involved on the sidelines of this year's [finance ministers' meeting](#) after having been [invited](#) by Italy earlier in the year. The increasing tempo of Seoul's participation makes it likely that future summits will continue in the same format. After having been invited by US President Donald Trump to the 2020 summit, which was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, South Korea first participated in G7 talks at the 2021 summit in the United Kingdom. Skipping the 47th G7 summit in 2022, South Korea's participation was reprised in Japan in 2023 with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, and South Korea's presence—or absence—is beginning to become more felt.

Trump had famously called for [South Korea's inclusion](#) alongside Australia and India into the G7, and since Korea's invitation in 2020, there has been a growing chorus of voices [calling for](#) South Korea's full inclusion into an [expanded G9](#). With a burgeoning bloc of

countries joining the [BRICS](#) organization alongside China and Russia, this idea seems to be gaining more traction, and the current geopolitical climate will necessitate the inclusion of more Indo-Pacific partners into competing dialogues to BRICS.

Given the original scope of the grouping (once a G8 with Russia), adding countries would be something of a reversion. It would also blend well with similar engagements at existing fora. Already, similarly aligned strategic organizations involving G7 members such as NATO, the Quad, and the Munich Security Conference all involve South Korea to some degree, while other similar partnerships, such as AUKUS, [offer potential](#).

This year's G7 [communiqué](#) called for enhanced policy coordination among the partners, so attention will be paid to the operationalization of such cooperation in the G7. Facing a [vacuum](#) of organizational clarity and shared consensus from larger institutions such as the United Nations, the G7 offers a more agile framework to take on the policy goals of other organizations. For example, finding solutions around controls on advanced technologies or rehousing international engagement mechanisms such as the WTO's Appellate Body and the UN Panel of Experts on North Korea will require greater policy coordination among like-minded countries. The G7 could be key to providing shared alignment, and a redesign of its structure to include South Korea and other partners would give those responses a much-needed multiplier effect.

If given a second term, both US presidential contenders have a good opportunity to pursue a G7 expansion as a valuable foreign policy tool. Regardless of this year's electoral outcome, Korea's participation in the G7 will likely continue. As world leaders search to find ways to navigate this new global system, engaging like-minded partners such as Korea to build a shared consensus should remain a top priority.

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