Schuman Challenge Korea:

Policy Ideas Competition for a Stronger EU-Korea Partnership

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1 The opportunity

The Schuman Challenge offers undergraduate and graduate students in Korea an opportunity to develop policy ideas, meet European and Korean practitioners, build research and presentation skills, and compete for a fully funded study visit to Brussels. Working in teams, participants will explore how EU–Korea cooperation can address challenges that matter to people and businesses on both sides.

Inspired by Robert Schuman's 1950 declaration, the competition explores how cooperation and solidarity can address shared challenges. Teams submit a policy essay on one of two topics listed in Section 6, with shortlisted teams invited to a Final Round. It is organised within the EU-funded Public and Cultural Diplomacy project launched by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Korea. As an EU public diplomacy initiative, the competition aims primarily to engage Korean students in EU–Korea cooperation, while also welcoming the perspectives of international students.

2 Provisional timetable

Stage	Date & Time (KST)
Announcement and promotion	Mon 9 November – Wed 30 December 2026
Registration deadline	Wed 30 December 2026
Essay submissions open	Mon 4 January 2027
Essay submission deadline	Fri 29 January 2027
Essay assessment	Mon 1–Fri 5 February 2027
Publication of up to five finalist teams	Wed 10 February 2027
Finalist confirm attendance	Tue 16 February, 2027
Finalists submit presentation slides	Mon 22 February, 2027
Final presentations, results and awards	Fri 26 February 2027 — provisional

3 Eligibility and team composition

Each team must comprise exactly three students enrolled at the same accredited university in Korea at the registration deadline. Only undergraduate or master's students (including students on leave of absence and expected graduates) are eligible. Teams may combine undergraduate and graduate students from that university. Students from all disciplines are welcome. Each student may join only one team, and each team may submit one essay. At least two team members must hold Korean nationality. International students are welcome to participate, with a maximum of one international student per team.

4 Academic advisers

Each team must appoint one academic adviser: a professor from its university or an external EU expert. The adviser is additional to the three students and is not a competing team member. One adviser may mentor up to two teams. Academic advisers will be provided a modest amount of honorarium for each team mentored.

5 Competition format and submissions

Written round

Teams must submit an original policy essay of 2,500-3,500 words in English addressing one of the two topics in Section 6. Use the common structure in Section 6. The main text, executive summary and substantive footnotes count towards the limit; the title page, bibliography and citation-only notes do not. Annexes may not bypass the limit. Cite sources consistently.

Final round

Up to five teams will give a 15-minute presentation followed by 15 minutes of Q&A, both in English. Speaking roles must be reasonably balanced, and all students should be prepared to answer questions. Time limits apply equally to every team; advisers may not participate. Finalists must submit a one-page English briefing of no more than 300 words.

Teams may refine their proposals while retaining their topic and central problem. All finalists receive the same instructions and brief written feedback after the results are finalised.

6 Essay topics and structure

Choose one of the following two questions. For either option, focus on one clearly defined challenge or opportunity and propose two or three connected actions for 2027–2029. Explain why EU-Korea joint action would add value, the benefits and possible costs for each partner, and how implementation would work. The examples are illustrative; other relevant approaches are welcome.

Topic 1 Competitiveness and shared economic opportunities

How could the envisaged EU–Korea Competitiveness Partnership[1] create opportunities for people and businesses while strengthening the competitiveness and resilience of both economies?

Topic 2 Shared security and peace

How could the EU and Korea use their Security and Defence Partnership[2] to protect people, strengthen resilience and contribute to peace and stability?

Common essay structure

Use the following structure for either topic. Write for officials considering a practical cooperation initiative and distinguish your team's proposals from existing commitments and/or policy initiatives already adopted or implemented.

(1) Executive summary of up to 250 English words

[1] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2026/06/10/

[2] https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/security-and-defence-partnership-between-european-union-and-republic-korea_en

(2) Problem and policy context
(3) Policy options and trade-offs, followed by two or three prioritised joint actions and their expected benefits.
(4) Implementation plan for 2027–2029, identifying responsible actors, indicative resources or financing, milestones, risks and measurable results.
(5) Bibliography of verifiable sources.

7 Assessment and final ranking

Written Round:

A five-member panel of neutral academics and experienced policy or diplomatic practitioners will assess the entries. Essays will be reviewed anonymously, using the following evaluation scheme.

Criterion	Weight	What judges assess
Analytical rigour	30%	A clear problem, credible evidence, sound reasoning, alternatives and trade-offs.
Policy relevance and feasibility	40%	Added value for EU–Korea cooperation, realistic actions, actors, resources, risks and results.
Clarity and structure	20%	A coherent, accessible argument and an effective executive summary.
Understanding of the policy context	10%	Accurate treatment of institutions, existing policies and commitments.

Final Round:

Up to five finalist teams will be selected by their written-round scores across both topics. **The finalist teams are invited to a Final Round composed of presentation and following Q&A sessions. The evaluation in the Final Round will be based on the following scheme.**

Criterion	Weight	What judges assess
Policy relevance and feasibility	40%	The relevance, quality and practicality of the proposal presented.
Responses to questions	30%	Understanding, evidence, explanation of choices and recognition of limitations.
Clarity and structure	20%	A focused, coherent explanation within the time limit.
Team participation and delivery	10%	Meaningful contributions by all three students and effective coordination.

Final score

There is one overall ranking and one set of prizes. Each round is scored out of 100, with eligible judges' scores averaged before the round weights are applied.
Final score = 50% of the written-round score + 50% of the final-round score.

Independent, well-supported criticism of either partner's policies is welcome. All eligible teams are assessed against the same criteria, irrespective of nationality or degree level. Accent, native-speaker fluency and the sophistication of visual materials are not assessed as separate qualities.

8 Awards and prizes

First place (Grand Prize)

The three students in the winning team will receive a funded study visit to Brussels, accompanied by their academic adviser. The visit will deepen their understanding of EU institutions and EU–Korea cooperation through meetings and learning activities. The prize covers return airfare, accommodation and meals for the three winning students and their accompanying academic adviser.

The adviser's inability to travel will not prevent the students from taking up their prize. Travel prizes are personal and may not be transferred.

Other awards

Award	Prize
Second place	Each of the three students receives a Certificate of Distinction and a Samsung Galaxy tablet (Galaxy Tab S11 Wifi) or an equivalent tablet computer.
Third place	Each of the three students receives a Certificate of Excellence and a gift voucher for cultural and educational goods worth KRW 500,000.
All eligible entries	Every student who submits an eligible entry receives a **Schuman Challenge Participation Certificate**; finalist status will be recognised where applicable.

The student members of the three highest-ranked teams will also be invited to selected EU Delegation events, including the 2027 Europe Day reception, subject to final event arrangements.

9 Registration

Each team can pre-register at:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vDtuKCxyxME6jXuHOmMiBU4dLRTZfWeAJ44zQP5Tzdo/edit?ts=6adb1597