



A taste of politics, economy and culture:

Study tour to North Korea, with a general character: 10 – 19 April 2018



Rotterdam, 31 January 2018

What will be the impact of the recent UN Security Council sanctions on North Korea's economy? What are business opportunities at the moment? What changes will become visible to the visitor to Pyongyang? In this critical period, we organize a study tour to the country, in order to provide information about these topics, and to exchange views during personal meetings.

North Korea is now facing a growing number of international sanctions, and banned export items include key products as coal, seafood and textiles. North Korea can also import less, in particular oil. Before this latest round of sanctions, the nation's overall economy grew 3,9 percent in 2016. Actually, the North Korean economy has grown steadily in the Kim Jong-un era, due to several pragmatic policies. It experimented with agricultural reforms and has improved its agricultural production, transferred some decision-making responsibility from the state to the firm level, and increased private market transactions. Economic changes have been visible, and for example the number of building activities was increasing fast in Pyongyang.

Economic growth however is hampered by the continuing UN Security Council sanctions, and the UNSC 2770 and 2321 resolutions of 2016 and the 2371, 2375 and 2397 resolutions of 2017 are the toughest multilateral measures yet. Is it still possible for the Koreans to continue this growth when foreign trade has become much more difficult? Leader Kim Jong-un, during his recent New Year's address, emphasized both the military and the economic pillars of his policy. He stressed his intention to diversify and increase the quality of North Korean-made consumer goods. State media reports suggest that the economic development strategy of 2018 will be more heavily focused on expanding light industry and agriculture. There will be a shift from importing consumer and industrial goods to domestic manufacture, and this could also offer business opportunities for some foreign companies. Perhaps the current round of talks with South Korea and the cooperation during the upcoming PyeongChang Winter Olympics might result in more joint activities, for example related to the inter-Korean tourism project that brought hundreds of thousands of South Koreans to Mount Kumgang and to Kaesong. In addition, there are still various economic sectors where international trade is allowed.

North Korea especially welcomes business with Europe. North Korea is offering various products and services to export markets, while the country is also in need for many foreign products and investments. And in the current financial and economic situation, European companies face many challenges. They must cut costs, develop new products and find new markets. In these fields, North Korea is still an interesting option. There are several sectors, including production, renewable energy, agriculture, horticulture, logistics, tourism and Information Technology, that can be considered for business. North Korea is competing with other Asian countries by offering skilled labor at low monthly wages. In particular firms with production facilities in China, where the wages have been rising fast, have been investigating alternative options in North Korea.

Are you interested in learning about these political and economic developments, and in having discussions with North Koreans? Then you are welcome to join our study tour in April 2018. The tours are open for participants from different backgrounds, including politics, press, business, and universities. We try to make program interesting and well-varied, and it will include various visits (e.g. to factories, a school, a farm, museums, a university) in Pyongyang, while attending some cultural events as well. We will also travel south to Kaesong and the DMZ (DeMilitarized Zone) at Panmunjom. During the tour, there will be options for formal and informal discussions with Koreans.



Pyongyang: one of the newly built streets

Study tour 2018: a short overview (draft)

For European companies interested in exploring business options with North Korea, one of the immediate challenges is collecting detailed information and finding potential business partners. Local enterprises mostly do not have a presence on the Internet, and access to them is not easy. For this reason, we organize study tours on a regular basis.

Our upcoming mission will take place from 10 – 19 April 2018, and will have a rather general and broad character. It will cover political, economic and cultural topics, with formal and informal meetings with North Koreans. Several cities will be visited, including Pyongyang, Kaesong and Panmunjom. The draft programme of the mission, which will start and end in Beijing, is as follows:

Tuesday 10 April 2018

Participants will arrive in Beijing.

Wednesday 11 April

In the morning or afternoon: individual visa collection at the DPRK Embassy in Beijing. Receiving Air Koryo airplane tickets. Free time. Informal meeting of the participants.

Thursday 12 April

Individual transport from the hotel to the airport. Departure from Beijing to Pyongyang, using the national airline Air Koryo (JS152, 12:55 - 15:25). Upon arrival, we will meet our Korean hosts. Transport will be arranged to the hotel in Pyongyang. The program of the mission will be handed out to the participants, after which a welcome dinner will take place.



Friday 13, Saturday 14, Sunday 15, Monday 16, Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 April

The program will include various visits (e.g. to companies, factories, a school, a farm and greenhouse, museums, a university). There will be lectures and discussions with managers of companies, and presentations by government officials, members of the Academy of Sciences, KNPC (Korean National Peace Committee). Specific request for visits or meetings can be made by the participants.

During the tour, there will be options for formal and informal meetings with Koreans. These can also take place during visits to restaurants or cultural events. For example, the 31st Spring Friendship Art Festival will be held, and the delegation will have the opportunity to attend some performances during the week-long event and take part in other festivities surrounding this festival, such as the 1st Pyongyang International Vocal Competition.

There might be some time made available for informal activities, such as a city tour, a visit to a supermarket, an art gallery, etc. The latest fad in Pyongyang: sightseeing in ultralight airplanes.



One of the biggest and important holidays in North Korea is the 15th of April, which is Kim Il Sung's birthday. It is called 'Day of the Sun', and has sometimes a military parade in Pyongyang (note: it is not known yet if there will be a parade in 2018). And always there is a big dancing party on Kim Il Sung Square.

We will also go south to Kaesong, and further to the DMZ (DeMilitarized Zone) at Panmunjom, where North and South Korea continue their face-off.

Thursday 19 April

Free time in the morning, and departure from Pyongyang to Beijing (Air Koryo (JS252, 14:05 – 16:35). Upon arrival, participants can take a connecting flight to Europe, or continue their stay in China.



Participation fee

The participation fee for the North Korea part is 2380 Euro per person.

In the fee is included:

- arranging the visa (to be picked up at DPRK Embassy in Beijing)
- all organisational costs (arranging visits, assistance of Korean guides and translators)

- hotel accommodation in Pyongyang, including breakfast
- local transport and drivers in Pyongyang, Kaesong and Panmunjom.

Logistics / arrangements of the mission

- Requests for specific visits or meetings are welcome. The final program will however be decided by the Korean organizers. The group visits will be accompanied by Korean guides and translators; the participants will understand that individual trips and outings might not be possible.
- The size of the delegation will be limited. The North Korean organizers will make the selection of the participants.
- All participants will travel on their own to and from Beijing; the date of arrival and the choice of the hotel in Beijing are up to the participant.
- The participation fee for the North Korea part is 2380 Euro per person. Not included in this fee are: costs of visa for North Korea (around 60 euro); the air tickets from Beijing to Pyongyang v.v. (around 620 Euro) and the meals.
- Participants will arrange before the trip a visa for China (a double entry visa in case the trip will be continued in China) and insurances (e.g. travel; cancellation). Also medical vaccination – if required. Note: China offers 72 hours of visa-free transit for foreign visitors who are transiting through Beijing.
- No travel arrangements should be made before the approval of the participation by the North Koreans. The processing of the visa-applications by North Korea will take more than one month. **So in case of interest, a quick reply is requested.**
- The organizers have the right to cancel or postpone the mission in case of an insufficient number of registrations, unexpected events (e.g. political developments, the closure of the Korean border related to health issues) or calamities.



For further information



This mission is initiated by GPI Consultancy, a specialized Dutch consultancy firm in the field of offshore sourcing. We arrange press and business missions to various countries, including North Korea. Please contact us as soon as possible in case you are interested to participate, or if you need further information.

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For an impression of a previous mission to DPRK: www.gpic.nl/impressionDPRK2017.pdf