



A taste of politics, economy and international relations

Study tour to DPRK (North Korea) 23 September – 1 October 2019



Rotterdam, 10 July 2019

How do the North Koreans view the current international situation and the recent developments? What is the impact of the UN Security Council sanctions on North Korea's economy? What changes are visible to the visitor, and what are the business opportunities at the moment? In this special period, we plan to organize an extra study tour, with a focus on politics, economy and international relations, and with visits to Pyongyang and other places.

Last year was the start of a period of relaxation around North-Korea, after the historic meetings between North Korean leader Kim Jong-un with South Korean president Moon Jae-in and with Donald Trump. In his New Year's speech on the 1st of January, Kim Jong Un was very positive when mentioning the DPRK-US relations. The summit in Hanoi between Kim Jong-un and Trump however did not result in any agreement. The meeting between the two leaders at the DeMilitarized Zone on June 30, when Trump became the first sitting American president to set foot in the North, will start the beginning of a new round of negotiations between the two countries.



Despite the high-level meetings, North Korea is still facing a large 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 the 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. Kim Jong-un, during his recent New Year's address, emphasized especially the economic pillars of his policy, with a focus on economic self-sufficiency. A growing number of factories are making products for domestic consumption. This shift from importing consumer and industrial goods to domestic manufacture could also offer business opportunities for some foreign companies.

North Korea welcomes cooperation with Europe, for example in the field of business. Despite the sanctions, there are still economic sectors where international trade is allowed. North Korea is offering various products and services to export markets, while the country is also in need for many foreign products. 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 an interesting option. There are several sectors, including production, renewable energy, [agriculture](#), horticulture, logistics, [animation](#), tourism and [ICT outsourcing](#), 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 options in North Korea.



Are you interested in learning about these political and economic developments? Then you are welcome to join our unique study tour in September 2019. We try to make program interesting and well-varied, and it will include various visits (e.g. to factories, a school, a farm, a university) in Pyongyang. We will 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.

Study tour 2019: a short overview (draft)

Our upcoming study tour will take place from 23 September – 1 October 2019. It will have an introductory character and will cover a broad range of political, economic, security and societal issues, with various interactions with Koreans. **Individual visits, for example with specific companies, universities or research institutes can be arranged.** The draft programme of the mission, which will start and end in Beijing, is as follows:

Monday 23 September

In the morning or afternoon: individual visa collection at the DPRK Embassy in Beijing.

Tuesday 24 September

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.



Wednesday 25 - Monday 30 September

The tour will include various visits (e.g. to companies, factories, a school, a farm and greenhouse, a university). There will be lectures and discussions with managers of companies, and presentations by government officials, members of the Academy of Sciences, a Ministry, a shopping center and supermarket (see picture). Specific request for visits or meetings can be made.

In this period, the 15th Autumn Pyongyang International Trade Fair takes place, and we will attend this busy event (see picture). Last year it had hundreds of exhibitors from North Korea and abroad. For an impression, see the [video of a fair in 2018](#).



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. There will be some time for informal activities, for example a visit to a funpark, a museum, the dolphinarium, the Heineken pub, etc.

Apart from the capital Pyongyang, 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. We could also visit Mount Myohyang.

Tuesday 1 October

Early departure from Pyongyang to Beijing with Air Koryo (JS151, 08:25 – 09:55). 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 1950 Euro per person. In the fee is included:

- Requesting the visa (to be picked up at the DPRK Embassy in Beijing)
- all organisational costs (arranging visits and meetings, assistance of Korean guides and translators)
- hotel accommodation in North Korea
- all meals and drinks (soft drinks, beer) in North Korea
- entrance ticket to the Pyongyang Autumn International Trade Fair
- local transport and drivers in Pyongyang, Kaesong and Panmunjom.



In the fee is not included:

- cost of visa for North Korea (from around 60 euro)
- air tickets from Beijing to Pyongyang v.v. (around 600 Euro)
- optional activities (e.g. Internet use; attending the spectacular Arirang Mass Game 'The land of the People' - tickets from 100 Euro, see picture).



Logistics / arrangements of the study tour

- Above program is a draft proposal and can be changed; the final program is to be decided by the Korean organizers. Requests for specific visits or meetings are welcome. The visits of the group will be accompanied by Korean guides and translators and the participants will understand that individual trips and outings might not be possible.
- The size of the delegation will be limited. The Korean organizers will make the selection of the participants. Unfortunately, Americans, Japanese or South Koreans are not able to participate.
- No travel arrangements should be made before the approval of the participant. 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. Note: even without approval of participation, provisional Air Koryo tickets to DPRK can be booked (contact us for details).
- Participants will arrange 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 a 144 hour of visa-free transit for certain nationalities who are transiting through Beijing.
- 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, calamities), etc.



For further information



This mission is initiated by GPI Consultancy, a specialized Dutch consultancy firm in the field of offshore sourcing. We arrange press missions and study tours 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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Paul Tjia, founder and director of GPI Consultancy, is the co-author of the handbook: "Offshoring Information Technology - Sourcing and Outsourcing to a Global Workforce" (Cambridge University Press). It contains a section on North Korea: www.amzn.to/xegoU9

