



Global Overseas Adoptees' Link (G.O.A.'L)

"The adoptee organization in Korea run by adoptees since 1998"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DUAL CITIZENSHIP FOR KOREAN ADOPTEES!

G.O.A.'L Initiates Global Campaign for Dual Citizenship

Seoul, 15th May 2008 - From 1956 until today a total of more than 160,000 children have been officially adopted from Korea to fourteen different countries. The majority went to the USA and an unknown number of Korean children have been adopted individually. Global Overseas Adoptees' Link (G.O.A.'L) is an organization that was founded in 1998 by Korean adoptees who returned to Korea in order to live here, learn Korean or search for their birth families. Since 1998, G.O.A.'L has been active within Korea and has lobbied for inclusion of adoptees into the Overseas Koreans Act from 1999. Since then, many adoptees from around the world continue to show interest in G.O.A.'L activities as well as the Korean culture. Many adoptees have studied Korean, some have reunited with their birth family and most importantly, Korean adoptees have manifested their will to take part in the Korean society and to participate at the life of the country.

Today G.O.A.'L will launch a global campaign in order to support the right for Korean adoptees to have dual citizenship. It would concern adoptees from countries that accept themselves dual citizenship. These countries include: US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Switzerland, Italia, the United Kingdom and possibly Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Belgium.

Currently, the Korean law does not accept dual citizenship, as article 10 of the Nationality Act of 1997 states *"a foreigner who has acquired the nationality of the Republic of Korea but maintains a nationality of a foreign country shall renounce the nationality of the foreign country within six months after the acquisition of the nationality of the Republic of Korea"*

Article 10, Nationality Act of 1997

Likewise, as article 12 reads, a dual national shall select one nationality before he reaches 22 years of age. It states *"a person who has had the nationalities of both the Republic of Korea and a foreign country by birth or by dint of the provisions of this Act (hereinafter referred to as a "dual national") before he reaches his full twenty years of age shall select*

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one nationality before he reaches his full twenty-two years of age; and a person who becomes a dual national after he reached his full twenty years of age shall select one nationality within two years"

Article 12, Nationality Act of 1997

Today, Korean adoptees are considered as foreigners when in actuality they never chose voluntarily to give up their Korean citizenship. Actually Korean adoptees have a strong interest to be part of the Korean people and by holding the Korean citizenship, this would help make civil engagement possible as it would give them the right of vote. However they shall not give up the citizenship of their welcoming country for all that. Many adoptees got much love, caring and a good education from their adoptive family and country, consequently it is difficult to ask them to cut the link with their respective nationality. Obviously dual citizenship involves some problems of loyalty, but Korean adoptees indeed experience loyalty for both of their countries. They are ready to manage the rights and obligations involved by both nationalities.

This campaign acknowledges the issue of mandatory military service for males in Korea. Immigration authorities are concerned with dual citizenship being misused to escape one's military obligation. It is important to note that under International Law, Korean adoptees are considered "orphans" which therefore exempts them from having to serve in the Korea military.

By granting this right to Korean adoptees the Korean government could set a precedence which is also very important for the thousands of international adoptees worldwide. Korea was the pioneer in international adoption and can regain this status by changing the laws accordingly. Korean adoptees represent a new type of "Global Korean" by speaking many different languages and having the cultural knowledge of the countries they were adopted in. Consequently the introduction of dual citizenship for Korean adoptees would benefit to the Korean society by bringing a new multicultural aspect. In addition it would benefit the adoptees as well, by giving them a larger and more complete sense of belonging.

Many examples holding dual citizenship and participating successfully to their country's public affairs can be mentioned: current California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger holds both Austrian and American citizenship, and French current Minister of Justice and Mayor of Paris' 7th arrondissement Rachida Dati is citizen of France and Morocco. She represents a symbol of the successful integration of the North African community in France. These examples prove that the presence of citizens holding dual nationality can be an asset for the country, especially for a country like Korea who values the quality of its community.



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This campaign is supported by advisory board consisting of Lee Jong-hoon (President of the Institute of Governance and Management, Ph.d in Political Science) and Professor Lee Chulwoo (Yonsei University, Ph.d in Law). Their knowledge is essential is the whole campaign. Also supporting this campaign is a member of the Korean National Assembly, Congressman Kim Chung-hwan.

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In case you have any questions or would like to schedule an interview, please contact our office at 02 325-6585.