

The ROK's Northeast Asian Transportation Policy and the Eurasia Initiative

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1. International Transportation in the ROK's Upper-Level Plans

The ROK has three upper-level plans that cover international transportation: the Comprehensive National Territorial Plan, the National Transport Network Plan, and the National Logistics Master Plan.

The Comprehensive National Territorial Plan is a top-level national plan established on the basis of the Constitution and the Framework Act on National Territory. Currently, the Fourth Comprehensive Plan is underway, spanning the two decades from 2000 to 2020. Six strategies have been selected for promotion under the Fourth Comprehensive Plan, one of which is national territorial management and the development of integrated infrastructure across the Korean Peninsula to equip the ROK for the Age of Northeast Asia. This plan was partially revised in 2011 to take account of changes in the international environment. It focuses on building national maritime infrastructure for achieving new growth open to the world, as well as cross-border infrastructure and a global base that will set the pace for the Age of Eurasia and the Pacific. In other words, the ROK will build a multimodal transportation system linking the ROK, China, and Japan, and promote its linkage to the Asian Highway (AH) and the Trans-Asian Railway (TAR). The main emphasis is on making the leap to becoming a gateway for global transport and logistics.

The National Transport Network Plan is a 20-year national plan established on the basis of the Transportation System Efficiency Act. This plan sets out a comprehensive, long-term basic policy on investment in major national transport infrastructure, providing a roadmap for efficiently building an integrated national transport system. One of the main tasks is to create a single unified transport and logistics market in Northeast Asia and enhance global transport and logistics networks.

The National Logistics Master Plan is a long-term plan established under the Freight Distribution Promotion Act. When initially published, this plan spanned the period from 2001 to 2020, but it was revised in 2005. This plan's vision is to establish the ROK as a world power in the field of logistics by 2020, setting three specific goals to this end: becoming a nation that serves as a hub for logistics that will drive prosperity for the whole of Northeast Asia; becoming a country with a logistics industry that creates global added value; and becoming an advanced country in the field of logistics that serves as a pioneering model of a knowledge-based economy.

The government has set its national policy agenda on the basis of these upper-level plans. One of the three key national policy goals of the Roh Moo-hyun administration was to establish the ROK as the economic hub of Northeast Asia. One of the administrative tasks under the four administrative priorities set by the Park Geun-hye administration is "promoting the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative and expanding Eurasian cooperation."

2. The SRX (Silk Road Express) Project and the Eurasia Initiative

The two key priorities in the Park Geun-hye administration's Northeast Asian transportation policy are the SRX (Silk Road Express) Project and the Eurasia Initiative. The SRX (Silk Road Express) Project involves linking the Trans-Siberian Railway, the Trans-China Railway, and the Trans-Korean Railway to form a multimodal logistics network (to be developed into the SRX). This means augmenting the Trans-Korean Railway and transcontinental railways to create a cheap, safe, and fast international

multimodal transportation network linked to Eurasia.

The other key priority, the Eurasia Initiative, is a strategy for providing new momentum for economic growth in Eurasia. The Eurasia Initiative seeks to make Eurasia “a Continent that is truly One,” “a Continent of Creativity,” and “a Continent of Peace.” This initiative has emerged against the background of the trust-building process on the Korean Peninsula and the vision for Northeast Asian economic cooperation. At bilateral summit meetings, the ROK has agreed with China and Russia to pursue the Eurasia Initiative in partnership with the development policies of those countries, namely the “One Belt, One Road” strategy and the Russia’s new eastern policy, respectively.

The vision for making Eurasia “a Continent that is truly One” is an economic development strategy with a spatial perspective, which aims to build a single market via transportation, energy, and international commerce and trade. The main elements in the transportation segment of the vision are the development of the SRX (Silk Road Express) and the development of the Northern Sea Route.

The Rajin-Khasan Logistics Project is a leading example of a project under the Eurasia Initiative, which involves bringing Russian coal to the ROK via a port in the DPRK, using the transport and logistical networks of the ROK, the DPRK, and Russia. It is an excellent example of a project in which companies rather than governments take the lead in opening up economically efficient transport corridors and could serve as a model for other projects of this nature. In addition, local governments have recently been at the heart of discussions concerning the operation of a train ferry linking the Shandong Peninsula in China with the Port of Pyeongtaek in the ROK.

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