EU-Korea Digital Trade Agreement

2025/0273(NLE) - 10/09/2025 - Preparatory document

PURPOSE: to conclude, on behalf of the Union, the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Korea on Digital Trade.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: digital trade accounts for around 25% of total international trade and has grown faster than traditional trade. The EU is both the world's largest exporter and importer of services that can be supplied electronically, worth EUR 1.3 trillion in 2022, representing 54% of total EU trade in services.

On 27 June 2023, the Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations on disciplines related to digital trade with the Republic of Korea. The Commission, on behalf of the Union, and Korea launched negotiations on 31 October 2023. Negotiations were concluded in principle on 10 March 2025.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council decide to approve, on behalf of the Union, the **Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Korea on Digital Trade**.

The EU-Korea Digital Trade Agreement is a **modern, stand-alone agreement with ambitious commitments** on digital trade. The agreement will strengthen online consumer protection, provide legal certainty for businesses wishing to engage in cross-border digital trade, and remove unjustified barriers to digital trade. It will complement the existing EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by deepening and supporting existing bilateral trade relations between the EU and Korea from a digital perspective.

The commitments on digital trade are **binding** and range from commitments on cross-border data flows and online consumer protection to commitments on software source code protection.

The Agreement:

- includes provisions consistent with EU practice based on the 2018 horizontal provisions on cross-border data flows and the protection of personal data and privacy in trade agreements, which recognise the right of each Party to determine the appropriate level of protection for privacy and personal data;

- provides for horizontal exceptions, a dispute settlement mechanism, and an institutional framework;

- makes applicable, through cross-references, the relevant provisions of the FTA that establish the framework for the application of the EU-Korea Digital Trade Agreement.

The Agreement will enter into force once the EU and Korea have fulfilled their respective requirements and procedures necessary for signature and conclusion, and have exchanged written notifications to this effect.