

Institute of National Remembrance

<https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/945,Ambassador-of-the-Republic-of-Korea-visits-the-IPN.html>

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Ambassador of the Republic of Korea visits the IPN
Sung-joo Choi, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea in Warsaw, and Shik Kim, First Secretary of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, were interested in the mission of the Institute, as well as the work of prosecutorial and vetting divisions and the Office of Search and Identification.







Dr Jarosław Szarek, IPN President, and Dr Mateusz Szpytma, Deputy President of the Institute, also talked about the activities of the IPN National Education Office, Archive and the work of the newly established Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom. The Korean guests emphasised that their country wants to prepare for the future unification of the two Koreas, hence the Polish experience of the post-1989 political transformation is of main interest to them.

Dr Jarosław Szarek asserted that the IPN, the largest Polish institution devoted to popularizing historical knowledge, existing for 17 years and possessing now about 100 km of archival records, would be honoured to advise on settlements with the past. He suggested a joint Polish-Korean workshop for experts from the field of law, archives and

education who would be willing to learn about Polish achievements. A visit of the President of the IPN to the Republic of Korea and a lecture at one of the universities was also proposed.

The guests recounted their meeting with an employee of the IPN Historical Research Office Dr Marek Hańderek at the Jagiellonian University conference, co-organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and entitled "Polish Experience in Transformation and Possible Implications for the Korean Peninsula", which had allowed them to get to know the scope of the Institute's activities.

Deputy President of the IPN Dr Mateusz Szpytma praised the Korean preparations for the transformation, remarking that the opposition in Poland was not ready in 1989 for the challenges brought about by the fall of communism. According to Dr Szpytma the same was true of the changes in Germany and Ukraine. It is worth remembering especially that the scale of the necessary changes in Korea will probably be much larger.

Dr. Jarosław Szarek talked about how difficult it is to overcome communism and that it would take several generations to stabilise the situation in Poland, as strong resistance of the milieus connected with the previous system undoubtedly undermines the reforms.

Establishing a partnership with the Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights (NKHR), established in 1996, was also discussed. It has played a significant role in international dissemination of knowledge about human rights abuses in North Korea. This has been achieved

through the organization of international conferences and cooperation with the media and artists. The NKHR has been working to create an international network of NGOs that would influence global decision-makers and the UN, so that they react appropriately to the dramatic situation of North Koreans.

NKHR is a laureate of several awards, including the human rights defender John Diefenbaker award in 2011 – the year of its being instituted by the Canadian federal government – and the Freedom Award, awarded by the International Rescue Committee since 1957 for “extraordinary contributions to the cause of refugees and human freedom”.

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