

2024 Europe and Middle East YSP Peace Road Unification March in South Korea

Song Yong-cheon
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On August 13, the '2024 Europe-Middle East Youth Student Peace Road Unification March', where people from around the world come together to wish for peace on the Korean Peninsula and world peace, was held at Imjingak in Paju City, Gyeonggi Province, with about 250 young university students in attendance.



This Peace Road Unification March included a floral tribute by youth student delegations from 35 countries in Europe and the Middle East, including France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Albania, Austria, Turkey, Iran, and Israel. The event proceeded with a congratulatory speech by Song Gwang-seok, co-chairman of Peace Road Korea, a reading of the congratulatory speech on behalf of Kim Young-ho, Minister of Unification, a main address, recitation of peace messages, singing of the unification song, ringing of the 'Peace Bell', launching of peace paper airplanes, floral tribute at the memorial altar, and a Peace Road march.

In his congratulatory speech, Song Gwang-seok, co-chairman of the 2024 Peace Road Korea, emphasized, "Peace Road events are held in various countries around the world. Particularly in Korea, every year the world tour group runs 800 km from Busan to here at Imjingak. Sometimes there are difficulties in crossing high mountains, but Peace Road has never been interrupted and has always been completed. Especially two years ago, Peace Road was held in Berlin, and we hope that this year, 2024, two years later, will mark a historic starting point for removing the barbed wire fence on the Korean Peninsula."

In the main address, Gukson Capone, Co-chair of Peace Road Europe, stated, "Recently, due to the Israel-Palestine war, the situation in Ukraine, and North Korea's nuclear threats, expectations for peace are growing more than ever globally. Particularly, as the Korean Peninsula is one of the only divided country in the world, the significance of peace on the Korean Peninsula directly connecting to world peace is being emphasized. I hope everyone remembers that all our efforts today, wishing for peace on the Korean

Peninsula, will serve as a foundation for the Korean Peninsula to overcome the pain of division and be revived as a land of harmony and peace."

Katharina Bae, a youth student representative, emphasized in her peace message, "Humanity has longed for a peaceful world throughout its long history, but even today in the 21st century, we are still unable to escape from conflicts and disputes. Therefore, we, the participants of the Peace Road 2024 Unification March World Departure Ceremony, strongly sympathize with the Peace Road vision of opening an era of global peace and urge the participation of people worldwide for the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula."



Meanwhile, on August 17, a peace march wishing for 'Peace and Unification of the Korean Peninsula' was held in Gapyeong, Gyeonggi Province, with about 400 young students from Europe, the Middle East, and Korea participating.

The 'Peace Road Unification March' started in 2013 under the name 'Korea-Japan 3800 km Bicycle Unification March'.



In 2014, 14 countries participated, and from 2015, it expanded into a global project with various methods of participation such as marching, cycling, and driving from over 160 countries. It has established itself as a 'Peace Festival' where people around the world wish for the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula.