

# Our Work in 2020

## A Peak Into HSF’s Unification Work

*HSF Korea supports the process of reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. In South Korea, this includes regional development, in which the border region (DMZ) is especially focused upon. In North Korea, HSF attempts to contribute to the peaceful development in the region through activities aiming for international integration and cooperation.*

### PyeongChang Peace Forum 2020

The Korean Peninsula has been in the spotlight of world attention in recent decades for several reasons. In the light of the heritage of the “Pyeongchang Peace Olympics”, the Pyeongchang Peace Forum 2020 took place from 9-11 February 2020. HSF Korea was invited to discuss issues on “Sport and Peace”, “Economy and Peace”, “UN SDGs and Peace” and, most of all, “Ecology and Peace” on the Korean Peninsula. Each cluster included several events that brought together Korean and international speakers to discuss the heritage of the Olympic Games in these respective fields. Dr. Bernhard Seliger, representative of HSF Korea, gave a presentation on projects of HSF Korea in the border region and in North Korea. He emphasized that HSF and partners organized direct meetings on railways between South and North Korea more than 10 times in 2019.



### Joongang Sunday Article

30 years ago, on December 2 in 1990, the first election in the newly integrated Germany took place. Although the idea of populism rose after the fall of socialism, unified Germany had a stable democracy. Celebrating the 30th anniversary of German reunification, an article on Dr. Seliger’s interview with Joongang Sunday was published on December 5. He explained the controversies after the unification since “the political background became more complex and development in former socialist countries in Eastern Europe have been quite different.” Furthermore, Dr. Seliger questioned the acceptance of North Korea’s legacy after the Korean unification comparing to the conflicts experienced by East and West Germany after reunification.

### Guest Commentary - Politics of Targeted Provocation

The article with the title "Politics of Targeted Provocation" (Orig. "Politik der gezielten Provokation", only available in German) was published in "Fuldaer Zeitung" on November 23, 2020. Dr. Bernhard Seliger wrote a guest commentary about the situation and expectations on the Korean Peninsula after the US-elections.



### Focusing on Realizable Small-Scale Projects in the DMZ

At this year’s DMZ-Forum, Dr. Bernhard Seliger was invited as a speaker in the session “DMZ as World Heritage” which took place on September 17, 2020. Dr. Bernhard Seliger talked about the problematic factors of the designation of the DMZ and further gave examples of Germany’s so-called “Neue Ostpolitik”, which pursued the strategy of a rather cultural rapprochement. Dr. Seliger stressed that different interests in the area of the DMZ are not always compatible with each other and gave the example of DMZ-tourism endangering DMZ ecological areas. Therefore, the border area should be handled with great care, taking the different perceptions and understandings into account, which also means that a designation of DMZ as UNESCO World Heritage is impractical without North Korean cooperation.



### Certificate of Appreciation

On September 18, in recognition of his 20 years of service to the continuation of the reconciliation process between South and North Korea, Young-Soo Kim, the Project Manager of HSF Korea, received the Certificate of Appreciation from the South Korea's president, Jae-In Moon. In-Young Lee, Minister for Reunification, awarded the certificate. Young-Soo Kim started his work on reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula at HSF Korea since 1999. He especially dealt with the transfer of German unification experiences in the knowledge exchange between Germany and Korea.

### Rethinking South Korea's Unification Policy

Progress in inter-Korean cooperation has come to a standstill despite the changes of recent years. Dr. Bernhard Seliger reported on the website 38North about the escalation of tensions and about possible alternative approaches to build a changed relationship between North and South. Instead of such infrastructural projects, he suggested more people-to-people initiatives that allow contact between South and North Korean citizens. Currently, South Korean government can only create new avenues for South Koreans to pursue cooperation with the North in meetings of academics and families in third countries, sponsored by nongovernmental organizations, schools and universities. Dr. Seliger turned to Germany's example after the Cold War where the slow diffusion of knowledge and trust led the way to a gradual and peaceful unification.

### Interview with Korea JoongAng Daily

Dr. Seliger was interviewed by the Korea JoongAng Daily on the 30th anniversary of German reunification. He focused on the life and experiences after the German reunification. He pointed out that the young generation no longer divides Germany into East and West Germany in their thinking and that the economic gap, which still exists 30 years after the reunification, is constantly decreasing. In this context, Dr. Seliger added that South Korea should continue its "North policy" on the road to Korean reunification. He also stressed the significant importance of constant communication and direct meetings with the DPRK.

### Preservation and Utilization of DMZ Peace Border

To promote inter-Korea exchanges and cooperation as well as regional development through the border area, the first Border Peace Forum was held on November 25. Dr. Bernhard Seliger participated as an expert in inter-Korean cooperation and environmental preservation. In the discussion, he stressed the need for communication with North Korea such as through periodic cultural meetings and cooperation under common interests like environmental preservation. Moreover, he suggested to provide incentives to the locals like the German government, paying farmers who contribute to the environment.

### North Korea's Disease Defense and Inter-Korean Cooperation

On November 25, the 33rd Korean Unification Forum took place in order to explore inter-Korean cooperation for sustainable environmental cooperation on the Korean Peninsula and the restoration of ecological communities. In this year's forum, the presenters discussed DPRK's disease defense methods and ways to draw international cooperation.

### Advisory Board of Municipality of Goyang

The first meeting of the Advisory Board of Municipality of Goyang for Exchange and Cooperation between South and North Korea took place at Goyang City Hall in March 2, 2020. 17 members of the Advisory Forum attended the meeting. Budget and project plans were discussed in the meeting. Members of the panel included Jae-Jun Lee, Mayor of Goyang City, two city councilors and experts in various fields. From HSF Korea, Mr. Young-Soo Kim participated in the panel.



### Nara Kyungjae Interview

In this year's November issue of Nara Kyunjae, Dr. Seliger was interviewed about German reunification and the inter-Korean exchange. He expressed his happiness about the 30th anniversary of the German reunification and pointed out that in the process of German reunification long and short-term factors jointly played a major role. Moreover, he emphasized the special importance of the German policy reducing the gap between East and West Germany. With regard to the Korean peninsula, Dr. Seliger noted that the difficult relationship particularly is based on the lack of inter-Korean communication and the resulting lack of trust. Therefore, he stressed that the civil exchange and facilitation of contacts with the DPRK are essential for the expansion of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation. Finally, Dr. Seliger briefly explained the efforts of HSF Korea to defuse the conflict on the Korean peninsula by supporting ecological restoration projects in the DPRK.

## 30 Years of German Unification

Commemorating the 30th anniversary of the German Unification, from September 25th to December 31st, the DMZ Museum opened the “Peace Revolution to German Unification” exhibition, co-hosted by HSF Korea. The exhibition introduced Germany’s historical experiences of unification with a history of division similar to that on the Korean Peninsula. HSF Korea offered total of 20 printouts, which explain the key events of the revolutionary process that took place before the actual successful unification prior to German unification. These events include the collapse of the East German regime, economic and social integration between East and West Germany, and also external cooperation for unification. On the second floor of Special Exhibition Hall, a re-enacted model of the border between East and West – which postulates a major monument of the Cold War – is exhibited under the theme of ‘Sympathie, The History of Division and Unification’, to let the visitors experience historical events together with actual testimonies of that time. This exhibition is funded by the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship and the Parliamentary State Secretary.



## A Path to Soft-Landing Korean Unification

On November 4, HSF Korea partnered with George Mason University Korea’s conflict resolution program to hold a workshop focusing on introducing international organizations’ work regarding Korean reunification and historical efforts made in peace

education. Felix Glenk, Project Manager of HSF Korea, stressed HSF Korea’s ongoing connection with DPRK as partners with collaborated projects on environmental conservation. The projects act as a connecting tool between the two Koreas and North East Asia regarding nature preservation. Under the same purpose, the participants recognized the need for exchange in a polarized society stressing that international cooperation and sustainable development are essential to promote peace. Participants further agreed that organizations should strengthen each other by collaborating in unison.



## 2020 Gimpo Peace Forum

On December 10, an interview of Dr. Seliger was part of 2020 Gimpo Peace Forum broadcasted live on YouTube. The forum discussed how Gimpo city should contribute to the inter-Korean exchange. Dr. Seliger stressed the importance of Gimpo city in terms of reunification on the Korean Peninsula, saying “Gimpo city is a significant region in that it is the first region to go through whatever happens in the border area as it is located near the Han River.



## Gangwon Province: Finding Directions for Unification

Dr. Bernhard Seliger was invited to present his insight on unification at the 2020 KHN Gangwon Future Development Forum held in Chuncheon on December 4. In the keynote speech, he described the common misunderstandings of German unification and important lessons for Korea. Rather than focusing on the “cost of unification,” he highlighted the socio-economic benefits of post-unification. Furthermore, Dr. Seliger focused on pre-unification time in Germany, in order to emphasize the significance of individuals’ actions and suggested possible lessons obtained from the German case that can be applied to Gangwon Province. South Korea can financially support North Korea in the fields like the inter-Korean fund, international training programs and scholarships, and environmental projects. Lastly, he advocated the idea “Small is beautiful,” as the bottom-top approach was more successful than any big-scale projects.

## 2020 East Sea International Development Forum

On November 23, 2020 East Sea International Development Forum was held and Dr. Bernhard Seliger took part in discussing cooperation strategies among Northeast Asia and had a presentation. He stated that only environmental exchange is possible since COVID-19 blocked opportunities for inter-Korean cooperation. He added HSF Korea’s prospect in terms of environmental protection and collaboration between North and South Korea.





## Memorandum of Understanding Renewal with SNU GSPA

For more than 15 years, HSF Korea and Seoul Nation University Graduate School for Public Administration (SNU GSPA) cooperate to promote German and Korean best-practice examples on administration and unification through academic exchanges. On 16 December, Dr. Bernhard Seliger and Professor Jung Kwang-Ho, the newly elected dean of SNU GSPA, signed and renewed the Memorandum of Understanding to intensify and expand the cooperation. During a subsequent discussion between the representatives of HSF and SNU, the plans and outlook for 2021 were discussed. Despite the restriction of the current global pandemic, both partners pledged to readjust ways to cooperate and find ways to turn the current challenges into opportunities. Topics such as best-practice examples by the South Korean public administration to react to global pandemics were discussed for events in the upcoming year.



## Seoul International Conference on Peace and Cooperation of the Korean Peninsula

On December 10, 2020, the Seoul International Conference on Peace and Cooperation of the Korean Peninsula

organized by The DMZ Institute of Daejin University, The Korean Association of Area Studies, The Korean Association of Border Area and Reunification Study, and Song, Younggil, Congressman of the Korean National Assembly, took place. Politicians, researchers and academics came together to discuss virtually and offline “Cooperation of the inter-Germany Border Area and Peace and Cooperation of the Korean Peninsula”. In his discussion of the paper on the “lessons from German unification” by Prof. Eun-Jeung Lee of Free University Berlin, Dr. Bernhard Seliger pointed out that “lessons” can only be drawn with the utmost care, given different geo-political, geo-economic and cultural circumstances. He underlined the importance of private exchanges as the driver for continued connectivity of East and West, a point completely lacking in Korea, and urged some reforms to promote private exchanges.



## 1st Korean-German Unification Forum

This year, Korea marked 75 years of division and 70 years since the Korean war, while Germany celebrates its 30-year anniversary of reunification. On December 18, the first 2020 German-Korean Unification Forum was held to honor the 30th anniversary of German unification and build a foundation for peaceful Korean unification. The German-Korean Unification Forum, hosted by the Korea Institute for Peace and Cooperation (KIPCO) and HSF Korea, was held to present suggestions to the Korean Peninsula referring to the case of Germany that established

peaceful unification and successful national growth. Following Prof. Dr. Ki Woong Son’s opening speech and Dr. Seliger’s welcoming speech, congratulatory speeches by Markus Ferber, chairman of the HSF, and Hartmut Koschyk, co-chairman of the German-Korean Forum, took place online. On the Korean side, Hwang Kyo-Ahn, former Prime Minister, gave a congratulatory message. Afterwards, two presentations by Jae Shin Kim, former Korean Ambassador to Germany, and Dr. Seliger followed. Participants thanked the organizers and presenters for hosting and hoped to further contribute to the Korean unification process via the forum.



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