

## ‘Overseas compatriots dual citizenship age should be lowered from 65 to 40 to help national interest’

‘Overseas compatriots visa system, currently divided into Visiting Employment (H-2) and Overseas Compatriots (F-4), should be integrated’

In the first session, director Kwak Jae-seok of the Migrant Research and Training Centre, and Kim Jae-ho, senior researcher at the Dasan Economic Research Institute, gave keynote speeches. Panelists included Lee Jae-hyung, director of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Residence Management Division; Kang Sung-jin, director of the MoJ Nationality Division; Kang Jeong-hyang, director of the Korea Employment and Welfare Pension Research Institute’s Foreigner Policy Research Center; Lee Gyeong-ju, professor at Inha University Law School; and Lee Yang-bok, special professor at Korea University Law School.

In his presentation titled “Measures to Improve Laws and Systems for Compatriots in Korea,” Kwak Jae-seok, director of the Migrant Research and Training Centre, pointed out that “Compatriots residing in Korea are staying with unstable foreign worker status under the employment permit system in the 3D industries that domestic Koreans shun, but due to the lack of social integration and employment support services for these Koreans, problems, such as illegal employment and difficulties in adapting to domestic life, are occurring.”

Accordingly, Kwak suggested: “In preparation for the era of 3 million foreign residents, we must recognize the limitations of the existing policy of using overseas Koreans as a non-professional workforce supply pool as the immigration/migration policy promotion measure. We must unify the currently dual overseas Korean visa system (H2, F4) to allow for the expansion of non-professional employment.

“If this happens, the number of overseas compatriots residing in Korea could increase by about 500,000 compared to the current number,” he said, expressing his hope that, “An active overseas Korean policy will become an important growth engine for the development of the Republic of Korea as a nation facing a low birth rate and an aging population.”

Kim, senior researcher at the Dasan Economic Research Institute, garnered attention by announcing in a presentation titled “Analysis of the Impact of Lowering the Age of Allowing Multiple Citizenship for Overseas Koreans” that lowering the age of allowing



During the first session of the 2024 Dialogue with the Government, Academia, and Civic Groups on Domestic Compatriot Policy, director Kwak Jae-seok of the Migrant Research and Training Centre delivers a thematic presentation.

multiple citizenship for overseas Koreans from the current 65 to 40 would have the greatest effect on increasing the industrial workforce.

Looking at the distribution of the 872,380 overseas compatriots currently residing in Korea by their residence qualifications, the number of overseas Koreans with F-4 visas who can stay long term is 556,700, or 63 percent. In addition, the number of visitors with H-2 visas who can work short term is 96,790, or 11 percent.

“In Korea, which is facing the crisis of a low birth rate and aging society, the issue of human resource development is becoming increasingly important, and the issue of stable settlement of overseas Koreans residing in Korea and actively recognizing and utilizing them as human resources will become even more important in future immigration policy,” Kwak said.

For the research, Kim conducted a survey of overseas Koreans and experts on overseas Koreans. Based on the results of the survey, he predicted that “If the age is lowered to 40, the economically active population will increase and the socioeconomic contribution will be significantly higher, based on the results of comparing the benefits and costs from a social perspective, such as the production effect, added value effect, employment-inducing effect, contribution to social insurance and tax, welfare benefits and health insurance benefits due to the domestic residence of multiple citizenship holders.” [\[창\]](#)