

LEE Hye Min

Senior Advisor of KIM & CHANG

Former G20 Sherpa

Former Ambassador for International Economic Affairs
of the Republic of Korea



Hye Min Lee is a senior advisor at Kim & Chang. He advises primarily on the issues related to international trade and investment.

Ambassador (“Amb.”) Lee is a member of the Global Advisory Board of Amundi, the largest fund manager in Europe since November 2017. He also teaches as a Visiting Professor at the Graduate School of International Studies of Seoul National University from March 2018 to February 2021 and at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS) from March 2021.

Throughout his career in the Korean Government since he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in August 1980, Amb. Lee has continuously worked on international trade and investment related issues, participating in almost all the major bilateral as well as multilateral trade negotiations of Korea, including the Korea-US Section 301 negotiations, the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, the Korea-EU IPR negotiations, the Korea-China garlic disputes, and the US BSE beef disputes. In particular, he negotiated and concluded the Korea-EU Free Trade Agreement when he served as Deputy Trade Minister and Chief FTA negotiator (2008.3.-2010.6.). He also played a major role in the successful conclusion of the Korea-US Free Trade Agreement negotiations as Deputy Chief Negotiator and Director General for the KOREA-US FTA (2006.4.-2008.3.) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT).

From his long-standing experience as a trade diplomat and trade negotiator, he advises on various issues related to or arising from the implementation of Korea’s FTAs and other international trade and investment agreements.

Amb. Lee also regularly advises on the current trends and major issues of the global economy and trade. For example, he participated in three consecutive G20 Summits (Antalya Turkey 2015, Hangzhou China 2016, Hamburg Germany 2017), contributing to producing G20 leaders communiqués; as the G20 Sherpa of the President of Korea and Ambassador for International Economic Affairs from March 2015 to October 2017. He also participated in the Global Strategy Group meeting of the OECD as the head of the Korean delegation for two years (2015 and 2016).

Previously, Amb. Lee served as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to France (2012.9.-2015.3.) and to the Republic of the Philippines (2010.6.-2012.9.). After entering the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in August 1980 by passing the High Diplomatic Service Examination, he served in the Korean Mission to the European Community in Brussels (1990.3.-1993.2.), the Korean Embassy in the United States (1997.3.-2000. 2.), in Indonesia (2002.3.-2004.6.), and in the Korean Permanent Delegation to the OECD in Paris (2004.6.-2006.3.).

He also worked as the Director of North America Trade in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2000.2.-2002.2.).

For his accomplishments as the Chief FTA negotiator for the Korea-EU FTA and the Deputy Chief Negotiator for the Korea-US FTA, the Association of the International Trade Studies of Korea awarded Amb. Lee with the Grand Prize of the international trade negotiations in November 2015. This prestigious recognition is only awarded every ten years.

Amb. Lee is frequently asked to share his expertise and extensive knowledge on major international issues at leading international events. He was invited to make a keynote speech on international trade and investment at Amundi (the largest fund manager in Europe) Investment Day held in Paris in November 2015. He was also invited to make a keynote speech by UNCTAD (UN Conference in Trade and Development) as its annual high-level international investment conference on the reform of the international investment agreement regime for two consecutive years, in Nairobi in July 2016 and in Geneva in October 2017. Amb. Lee continues to participate in the annual World Policy Conference organized by France's IFRI (Institut Français des Relations Internationales) at its invitation since 2015, making a presentation on climate change and energy issues discussed by the G20 leaders. Amb. Lee also moderated the trade session of the Annual Knowledge Form of 2017 organized by the Maekyung Economic Daily of Korea. In January 2019, he wrote an issue paper of Asia Society Policy Institute under the title "Advancing the US-Korea Economic Agenda" together with Ms. Wendy Cutler, who was the Chief Negotiator of the US for the Korea-US FTA.

Amb. Lee graduated from the Department of English Language and Literature at Seoul National University in 1980, and received an M.A. in Law from the Graduate School of Law of Seoul National University in 1984. He also received an M.A. in Political Science and Law from Clermont-Ferrand University of France in 1987. Mr. Lee holds a Ph.D. in Economics at the University Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne, France.

Amb. Lee speaks fluent English and French.

Experience

- Visiting Professor, Dept of Internantional Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (2021-Present)
- Member, Global Advisory Board of Amundi (2017-Present)
- Kim & Chang (2017-Present)
- Visiting Professor, Graduate School of International Studies, Seoul National University (2018-2021)
- Distinguished Fellow, Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) (2015-2017)
- G20 Sherpa and Ambassador for International Economic Affairs (2015-2017)
- Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the French Republic (2012-2015)
- Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of the Philippines (2010-2012)
- Deputy Trade Minister and Chief FTA Negotiator, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) / Chief Negotiator of Korea for the Korea-EU FTA (2008-2010)
- Director General for KOREA-US FTA (Free Trade Agreement), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2006-2008)
- Minister-Counselor, Korean Permanent Delegation to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), France (2004-2006)
- Counselor, Korean Embassy in Indonesia (2002-2004)
- Director, North America Trade Division, Bilateral Trade Bureau, MOFAT (2000-2002)
- First Secretary, Korean Korean Embassy in the United States of America (1997-2000)
- Office of the President (1995-1996)
- First Secretary, Korean Mission to the European Community (EC) in Brussels (1990-1993)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) (1980)

Representative Activities

Awards

- Ordre National du Mérite of the French Republic (Grand Officier) (2015)
- Palmes Académiques of the French Republic (Commandeur) (2014)

Publications/Activities

- Advancing the US-Korea Economic Agenda (Co-editor, Asia Society Policy Institute, 2019.1.)
- How the International Trade and Investment Agreements Can Help to Minimize the Risks of the Emerging Markets, AMUNDI Investment Day, Paris, France (AMUNDI, 2016.11.)
- Speech on the international investments agreements (IIA), 2017 High-Level IIA Conference in Geneva (UNCTAD, 2017.10.)
- Speech on the international investment agreements (IIA), 2016 High-Level IIA Conference in Nairobi (INCTAD, 2016.7.)