

SOUTH KOREA: A MAJOR REGIONAL POWER

VERONICA DUMITRA CU*

ABSTRACT

South Korea has a great importance not just for its neighbours (Japan, China, and North Korea), for the region of Central Asia or for the great powers (USA, Russia), but even for Europe. We cannot neglect the country's aspiring future influence and importance around the world. The economic rising of Asia's countries will bring attention on Central and Northeast Asia. I guess that Seoul will be included in many economic and political agreements and especially on issues concerning cultural diplomacy. South Korea's economic performance, the improvement of services trade, foreign investments and its great resources prove the country's assertive role on global stage.

We cannot neglect South Korea's 'soft power' expressed by its traditions, cultural values, soap operas, music already known in almost entire Europe. The success of public diplomacy for South Korea depends on its efficacy to promote its soft power. This is the most important factor of South Korea which could make it visible among regional powers. The paper underlines that the soft power component could reassert the social dimension of South Korea, the recognition and acceptance of the country's regional power by other countries.

Keywords: South Korea, soft power, regional power, middle power, Central Asia.

The last events demonstrated South Korea's influence in the Central Asia and its significance for the great actors from the international stage. South Korea is a major player in Asia and its various partnerships and collaborations situate it among the most important powers. South Korea's role in the Central Asia may be very important for the regional security.

The paper tries to show the South Korea's status as regional power from geopolitical perspective and to illustrate the influence of the country's foreign and security policy and its future aspirations.

First, we try to define the terms regional and middle power and to highlight the difference between the concepts, then to indicate the importance of Central Asia and the relations between Central Asia and South Korea, and finally to

* Scientific Researcher, Ph.D., Institute of Sociology – Romanian Academy, Casa Academiei, Calea 13 Septembrie 13, 4th floor, sector 5, Bucharest, Romania. E-mail: veronica.dumitrascu@gmail.com