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Korea, CBP to Work Toward Mutual Trusted Traveler Recognition

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Taking another stride to facilitate lawful international travel, U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Korea Immigration Service last week signed a joint statement agreeing to work toward mutually recognized, expedited international travel initiatives, making Korea the first Asian country to commit to a trusted traveler arrangement.

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CBP Commissioner Alan D. Bersin and Korea Immigration Service Commissioner Dong-hyeon Seok following their signing of a joint statement of agreement on Global Entry.

Photo Credit: James Tourtellotte

CBP Commissioner Alan D. Bersin welcomed Korea Immigration Service Commissioner Dong-hyeon Seok and a delegation from the Korean agency to CBP's Washington, D.C., headquarters for the signing. "By declaring our joint intention to enter into a trusted traveler program that is mutually recognized," said Bersin, "we not only extend courtesies to our respective peoples, but we signal a commitment to a shared approach to immigration and border security."

CBP's Global Entry expedites CBP clearance for participating pre-approved, low-risk travelers arriving in the U.S. CBP now has more than 629,000 participants with Global Entry benefits. The Korea Immigration Smart Service, that country's trusted traveler program, has 300,000 members, according to Dong-hyeon Seok.

Expedited clearance systems mutually recognized by the two countries "will further help improve bilateral relations between Korea and the United States," said Dong-hyeon Seok via an interpreter. "I will make sure our working group officials work with your employees closely so this system can be launched as soon as possible."

The working group members from both countries are discussing possible protocols involving, for example, types of databases, data transmission, and applicant and member background checks, according to John Wagner, executive director of CBP's Admissibility and Passenger Programs.

Global Entry is now available to U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, citizens of the Netherlands and Mexico, as well as to Canadian citizens and residents through the NEXUS program. Korea is the sixth country to sign a joint statement with CBP, joining Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Mexico. CBP is also in discussions with Singapore and Japan to develop trusted traveler arrangements.

—Susan Holliday, Office of Public Affairs