

Call for Papers

“Democratic Resilience and Social Movements in South Korea: Challenges and Future Prospects”

9th Annual Conference of the Social Science Korean Studies Network in Europe (SoKEN)

Centre for East Asian Studies, University of Turku, Finland

9 (Thu) –10 (Fri) April 2026



The Centre for East Asian Studies (CEAS) at the University of Turku is pleased to announce that it will host the 9th Annual Conference of the European Network for Social Sciences in Korean Studies (SOKEN) on 9–10 April 2026. This year’s event will also mark the 20th anniversary of the foundation of CEAS. To commemorate this special occasion, we are honored to welcome Professor Kang Won-taek from Seoul National University, one of South Korea’s most prominent political scientists, as the keynote speaker. The conference is organized as part of the Korean Studies Seed Project, “Advancing Korean Studies in Finland: Building Foundations and Expanding Horizons,” funded by the Korean Studies Promotion Service (KSPS). The project aims to strengthen and expand the presence of Korean Studies in Finland through research collaboration and scholarly exchange.

Conference Theme

“Democratic Resilience and Social Movements in South Korea: Challenges and Future Prospects”

The current global socio-political landscape is marked by the growing influence of extreme right-wing movements that challenge democratic norms and values. Even nations long regarded as models of advanced democracy have not been immune to this reactionary wave. Against this backdrop, South Korea offers a compelling case of civic engagement and democratic resilience. The active responses of Korean citizens in times of political crisis demonstrate how democratic principles can be revitalized and defended when under threat, providing valuable lessons of global significance.

By situating South Korea’s experience within a broader comparative framework, this conference seeks to stimulate new perspectives on how democracy can be strengthened and sustained in the face of internal and external challenges. The theme highlights Korea’s pivotal role as a democracy navigating both domestic pressures and global transformations.

Call for Papers

South Korea stands as one of Asia's most dynamic democracies, facing complex domestic and international challenges. This conference seeks to explore how democratic resilience is expressed through civil society, activism, and social movements. By focusing on these dimensions, the conference aims to foster a deeper understanding of Korea's evolving political, social, and cultural landscape.

Scope and Topics

We welcome paper proposals from across the social sciences—broadly defined to include sociology, political science, anthropology, economics, communication, and related disciplines within area studies such as East Asian and Korean Studies. While the main theme centers on democracy and social movements in South Korea, we also encourage submissions that explore any aspect of contemporary Korean society.

Eligibility

The conference warmly welcomes submissions from young scholars and PhD students, as well as established academics.

Funding Support

Participants whose papers are accepted will be offered up to two nights of accommodation in Turku. In addition, modest travel funding may be available, depending on budget availability.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit an abstract of 250–300 words, along with a short bio (max. 100 words), to il.g.lee@utu.fi by 9 February 2026, 17:00 (Helsinki time). Notifications of acceptance will be sent by early March 2026.

Contact

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