Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission

ACRC Korea Transparency Newsletter (May 2026)

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ACRC Announces Korea's Rights Protection Policies to the International Community

- Chairperson Jung Il Yeon participates as a speaker in the International Ombudsman Conference in Italy on May 28, presenting "Korea's Ombudsman System: Innovations and Best Practices."

(May 28, 2026, ACRC)

Chairperson Jung Il Yeon of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) is participating as a speaker at the International Ombudsman Conference held in Rome, Italy from May 28 to 29, to present "Korea's Ombudsman System: Innovations and Best Practices."

Members of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) hold the International Ombudsman Conference annually to facilitate international exchanges and cooperation among ombudsman institutions. Italy is hosting the conference for the third time, following 2023 and 2025.

* The International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) is a non-profit organization established in 1978 to promote the development of the ombudsman system and to foster exchanges and cooperation among ombudsman institutions worldwide. It has over 210 institutional and individual members from 125 countries, with its headquarters and executive committee based in Vienna, Austria.

The conference, hosted by the Ombudsman in Italy, Lazio region as a member of the IOI European Regional Board, brings together approximately 300 participants—including ombudsmen, government representatives, and experts from approximately 50 countries. As an official member of the IOI, the ACRC has received a formal invitation, with Chairperson Jung participating as a speaker.

At the conference, Chairperson Jung will present best practices of Korea's ombudsman innovations, including: the establishment of the Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau, a dedicated unit for resolving collective conflicts and repetitive grievances; the reduction of habitual and repetitive petitions through communication innovation; the expansion of field-oriented conflict mediation;

and the introduction of a pilot e-People service utilizing AI and digital innovation.

Taking this opportunity, the ACRC will also hold separate bilateral meetings with Dr. Marino Fardelli, Ombudsman of the Lazio Region and the President of the National Coordination of Italian Ombudsmen, and Ms. Teresa Anjinho, the European Ombudsman*, with a view to expanding the foundation for ombudsman cooperation with European ombudsman institutions.

* Investigates and corrects maladministration within organizations under the European Union

The Commission also plans to visit the Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority and hold discussions with its President, Dr. Giuseppe Busia, on anti-corruption policy issues of each country, to build a cooperative anti-corruption network with the relevant Italian authority.

Chairperson Jung of the ACRC stated, “In an increasingly complex administrative environment, ombudsman institutions must continuously innovate and evolve, drawing on their expertise and technological capabilities, in order to protect the rights and interests of the people.”

He added, “Leveraging AI and data, the ACRC will further advance its rights protection mechanisms for the people and continue to develop into an exemplary ombudsman institution in the international community.”

Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission

Enhancing the Credibility of National Professional License Interviews with Fair Procedures and Standards, Transparent Outcomes

- ACRC establishes "Measures to Strengthen the Management of National Professional License Interviews" and issues recommendations for Institutional Improvement

- Recommendations include specifying interview procedures and scoring criteria, expanding the scope of disclosure of interview results, and introducing a formal objection system

(May 27, 2026, ACRC)

Interviews for national professional licenses* are expected to be conducted more transparently, encompassing everything from evaluation criteria and result notification to objection procedures.

* A licensing system that grants qualifications for highly specialized professional occupations, conducted pursuant to applicable individual legislation for each national professional license. The Human Resource Development Service of Korea (HRDK) is entrusted with the administration of 37 such licenses.

To enhance the overall objectivity and credibility of national professional license interviews, the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) has established "Measures to Strengthen the Management of National Professional License Interviews" and has issued recommendations for institutional improvement to the HRDK.

The national professional license interview is a process that evaluates not only applicants' professional knowledge but also their capacity to perform occupational duties and their eligibility for the license, and has a direct bearing on the final outcome of the examination. Without sufficiently specific evaluation criteria, however, discrepancies in judgment may arise among interviewers, and candidates may fail to accept or comprehend the results.

In particular, the 2025 National Assembly's Audit of State Affairs pointed out that the item-by-item scoring criteria for national professional license

interviews were not sufficiently specific, underscoring the need to improve the fairness and credibility of interview administration.

According to the ACRC's fact-finding investigation, interviewer training was conducted on the day of the examination within a very limited period of time, which restricted interviewers' ability to thoroughly internalize the relevant instructions and evaluation criteria. Furthermore, the grounds for recusal were defined primarily around kinship, which proved insufficient to exclude persons with actual conflicts of interest.

In response, the Commission recommended that upon appointment, interviewers complete the relevant training, and that on the day of the examination, they be given sufficient time to review the evaluation criteria within the bounds of test security. The ACRC also recommended that the grounds for recusal be expanded and specified to include not only kinship but also school ties and other relationships involving actual conflicts of interest, thereby broadening the scope of recusal.

To reduce discrepancies in judgment among interviewers regarding identical responses from candidates, the ACRC further recommended the preparation of scoring criterion examples containing the intended purpose of each question, essential answer elements, and sample answers by grade level. Additionally, it recommended the establishment of a preliminary review process for grading criteria at the question development stage—involving external experts—in order to verify the specificity and validity of the criteria.

Furthermore, the ACRC recommended that when interview results are disclosed, candidates be provided with their scores for each evaluation criterion alongside the average scores of all successful candidates, enabling them to identify their weaknesses and use this information in preparing for retake examinations. It also recommended that candidates be permitted to file formal objections within a specified period following the announcement of results for matters that can be objectively verified, such as data entry errors, calculation errors, and errors in the application of the minimum passing score threshold for individual subjects.

Director General Kim Ki Sun of the Institutional Improvement Bureau stated, “Given that the national professional license examination is an important system that directly affects people’s career choices and livelihoods, it is essential to have a fair evaluation system that candidates can accept and comprehend.” He added, “Through this institutional improvement, discrepancies arising from interviewers’ subjective judgment are expected to be reduced, while candidates’ right to information and opportunities to file objections will be more robustly guaranteed.”

Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission

Policy Consultation for Central Administrative Agencies, Now Available via 110—First Step Taken in Integrating Administrative Agency Numbers

- ACRC launches pilot program for integrating government non-emergency consultation number into 110, from May 26 through the end of August

- Official websites of 15 central administrative agencies to display both their respective phone numbers and 110 simultaneously

(May 26, 2026, ACRC)

Policy consultation for central administrative agencies via telephone will be available not only through each agency's representative number, but also by calling 110.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon) is formally advancing the integration of central administrative agencies' representative numbers into 110, beginning from May 26 with the simultaneous display of agencies' representative numbers and 110 on relevant websites.

The number 110 is the dedicated contact number for the Government Call Center, established in 2007 to provide consultation services related to civil affairs and government petitions. This year, the service marks its 19th anniversary of operation.

The ACRC has been formally pursuing the project to integrate central administrative agencies' representative phone numbers into 110 since September of last year, and reported the "Execution Plan for Integrating Non-emergency Consultation Number into 110" at the cabinet meeting chaired by the President on May 6. The current pilot program is being implemented as part of this initiative, in collaboration with 15 central administrative agencies.

〈 Central Administrative Agencies Participating in the Pilot Program (15 agencies) 〉

The Board of Audit and Inspection, Fair Trade Commission, Korea AeroSpace Administration, Korea Coast Guard, Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Ministry of the Interior and Safety, National Agency for Administrative City Construction, National Human Rights Commission, Rural Development Administration, The Peaceful Unification Advisory Council

The pilot program runs from today through the end of August. During this period, general consultations regarding any of the 15 central administrative agencies will be available through 110, in addition to each agency's respective representative numbers. Both each agency's representative numbers and 110 will be displayed at the bottom of the agency's official website.

In preparation for the pilot, the ACRC has built a database for policy consultation guidance for the relevant agencies and has provided training for 110 call center staff, in order to ensure substantive consultation services.

Additionally, starting from the pilot period, an automated response system (ARS) for 110 will be introduced for four central administrative agencies, including the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. With this system, callers wishing to speak with a specialist consultant may do so by selecting the corresponding number, thereby connecting directly without having to go through a general call center agent.

〈 Agencies Subject to the Government Call Center 110 ARS (4 Agencies) 〉

#1 Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport #2 Ministry of the Interior and Safety #3 Ministry of Education #4 Fair Trade Commission #0 General Consultation for Other Ministries (Government Call Center 110)

Following the pilot, the ACRC plans to incorporate the improvements identified and phase in the integration of general consultations for the relevant central administrative agencies into 110 starting in September. As a result, the number of agencies using 110 as their representative number will increase from the current six—including the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries—to 21 by the end of this year, with a further expansion to 34 by 2028.

Chairperson Jung of the ACRC stated, "Anyone seeking consultation on matters related to central administrative agencies can now receive the necessary assistance simply by calling 110, even without knowing the specific phone number of the relevant agency." He added, "We look forward to 110—now celebrating its 19th anniversary—serving as the central hub for telephone consultation services of the Korean government."

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Agreement Reached on Making Long-Neglected Military Idle Land and Facilities Available for Local Residents

- ACRC holds on-site mediation meeting on May 14 for the disposition of idle military land and facilities in Seocheon-gun

- Relevant agencies agreed to negotiate methods of disposition by June 30, 2027

(May 14, 2026, ACRC)

A collective grievance petition demanding the return of national land and facilities in Seongnae-ri, Biin-Myeon, Seocheon-gun, South Chungcheong Province—which had been successively occupied by U.S. Forces Korea from 1963 and the Republic of Korea Air Force from 1980 before becoming idle land following the Air Force's withdrawal in 2021—has been resolved through mediation by the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon).

The ACRC held an on-site mediation meeting on May 14 at the Resident Administrative Welfare Center of Biin-myeon, chaired by Vice Chairperson and Secretary General Han Sam Seok, on the disposition of the land (14,105㎡) and facilities in the Seongnae-ri area of Biin-myeon currently owned by the Ministry of National Defense.

In 1963, the U.S. military occupied national land and facilities in Seongnae-ri, Biin-Myeon, Seocheon-gun for the purpose of air base protection, with the 5th Battery, 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery stationed there for 18 years before returning the site in 1980. The Republic of Korea Air Force subsequently took over the site and used it as official residential quarters until 2021. However, following the Air Force's withdrawal, the land and facilities have been left unattended.

During the heavy rains of 2024 and 2025, rainwater flowing down from the idle military land situated on higher ground inundated the commercial district of Biin-myeon, causing flooding of shops and homes and damage to roads, which ultimately led to the designation of the area as a special disaster area.

In response, the residents of Biin-myeon filed a collective grievance petition with the ACRC in July and August of last year, requesting that Seocheon-gun be authorized to develop the idle military land and facilities in order to prevent disaster damage and promote local development.

The ACRC conducted multiple on-site inspections and consultations with relevant agencies and local residents before formulating the final mediation proposal.

According to the mediation proposal, Seocheon-gun and the Air Force agreed to jointly conduct an on-site inspection by May 31, 2026, and to cooperate to take the necessary measures to minimize flooding damage from heavy rainfall. Seocheon-gun, the Air Force, and the ChungCheong Facility Group of the Defense Installations Agency also agreed to form a working task force by June 30, 2026, and to negotiate and decide on methods of disposition in accordance with applicable laws and regulations by June 30, 2027.

Vice Chairperson and Secretary General Han Sam Seok of the ACRC stated, “Through this mediation, it has become possible to return the idle military land to the residents of Biin-myeon for the first time in over 60 years.” He added, “This outcome is particularly significant in that it will prevent recurring flood damage from heavy rainfall, revitalize the region, and contribute to both civilian-military mutual prosperity and balanced regional development.”

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Administrative Appeals Commission Announced, "Restriction on Public Procurement Bidding Against Bribery-Providing Companies is a Justified Sanction"

- The Central Administrative Appeals Commission (CAAC) dismisses all administrative appeals filed by five companies that provided bribes to officials of a public Institution, seeking cancellation of "Sanctions against Inappropriate Business Entities"

- Administrative appeals related to corruption must be adjudicated with strict standards

(May 6, 2026, ACRC)

An administrative appeal ruling has affirmed the legitimacy of the "sanctions on inappropriate business entities"* imposed by a public institution, which restricts participation in public procurement contract bidding for companies found to have provided bribes to its officials.

* Sanction on an Inappropriate Business Entity: A system that imposes sanctions—including restrictions on participation in public procurement contract bidding—on persons who have engaged in contract fraud, bid-rigging, bribery, substandard contract performance, and similar misconduct.

The Central Administrative Appeals Commission (CAAC, Chairperson Cho So Young), operating under the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jung Il Yeon), has dismissed the administrative appeals filed by five companies seeking cancellation of the sanctions against them. The five companies had each been sanctioned pursuant to applicable laws and regulations for having provided bribes to officials of a public institution.

The five companies that filed the administrative appeals are firms engaged in marine-related research and information services. Their provision of bribes to officials of the public institution was detected by investigative authorities and confirmed by final court rulings, resulting in each company receiving a bidding qualification restriction for a period of either three or six months.

〈 Amounts of Bribery Provided and Duration of Bidding Participation Restriction 〉

Petitioner	Restriction Period	No. of Bribe Recipients	Period of Bribery	Amount of Bribe	Note
A	3 months	1	Jan. 2023 - Sep. 2023	KRW 2 Mil.	Gift vouchers
B	6 months	3	Sep. 2019 - Sep. 2024	KRW 11.8 Mil.	Cash, Gift vouchers
C	3 months	1	Feb. 2021 - Aug. 2022	KRW 2 Mil.	Cash
D	6 months	1	Apr. 2021 - Jun. 2023	KRW 17 Mil.	Cash
E	3 months	1	Jul. 2020 - Sep. 2021	KRW 3.5 Mil.	Gift vouchers

Each of the five companies filed an administrative appeal with the CAAC on different grounds, arguing respectively that: the provision of money or valuables was unrelated to any business solicitation and was made for social or customary purposes; the companies themselves never directed their employees to provide bribes at the corporate level; and the sanctions were excessive in that the amount of bribery from different years were aggregated without distinction by year.

Based on the outcomes of police investigations and court rulings, the CAAC comprehensively considered the following and determined that the sanctions against inappropriate business entities imposed on the five companies are neither unlawful nor unjust: facts recognized as criminal in a finalized criminal judgement constitute significant evidentiary material in administrative proceedings, and absent special circumstances, facts contrary to those established in the related criminal case cannot be recognized (Supreme Court Decision 2021Da243430 delivered on October 14, 2021). Since the petitioners provided bribes to public officials, resulting in the finalization of sentences—including terms of imprisonment—against the recipient officials, the petitioners qualify as “persons who have provided bribes” under applicable laws and regulations; the petitioners’ violations stem from bribery—a criminal act constituting one of the various grounds for bidding disqualification under the Act on Contracts to which the State is a Party—which is of no minor severity and is a subject of public condemnation; and the Table 2 of the Enforcement Rule on the Act on Contract to which the State is a Party prescribes different restriction periods based on the amount of bribery provided, and the sanctions

imposed in this case are fully consistent with those standards.

Chairperson Cho So Young of the CAAC stated, “In this case, each of the sanctioned companies filed administrative appeals citing business difficulties. However, the Commission takes a strict stance with regard to corruption that undermines the order of fair bidding and contracting.” She added, “Going forward, the CAAC will continue to adjudicate administrative appeals related to corruption with full rigor, in order to protect the public interest.”