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# Forming a partnership for democracy, civil society

To anyone who has been observing the NGO landscape in Korea, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation is a name that rings familiar. The 50-year-old foundation named after the first postwar German chancellor has been actively promoting the development of civil society in Korea for the past 30 years.

"The Konrad Adenauer Foundation is focused on spreading the social market economy," said Marc Ziemek, resident representative in Seoul of the foundation associated with Germany's Christian Democratic Party.

Foundations associated with political parties are a unique feature of Germany: the Friedrich Ebert Foundation is affiliated with the Social Democratic Party, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation affiliated with the Liberal Democratic Party, the Hanns Seidel Foundation with the Christian Social Union of Bavaria and the Heinrich Boll Foundation with the Green Party.

While the foundations reflect the ideological orientation of each party, they have independence in finances and personnel. The political foundations are largely financed by government funds. For example, 97.3 percent of Konrad Adenauer Foundation's funds come from public remittances.

Committed to political education, specifically education in democracy, these foundations seek to create networks between civil society organizations as well as engaging in dialogue with the elite abroad. In the case of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, about half of its 100 million euro-budget for 2005 was earmarked for international cooperation.

All German political foundations, with the exception of the Heinrich Boll Foundation, have an active presence in Korea. "Foundations do not compete with each other because of the different background and focus," said Ziemek in an interview with The Korea Herald.

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation works primarily with unions while the Hanns Seidel Foundation, located two floors up from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's office in Hannam-dong, is involved in North Korea. "The Adenauer Foundation has more room to work with diverse groups because we represent the social market ideals," explained Ziemek.

"The foundation has been adjusting to the changing needs of Korea," said Ziemek, whose father, incidentally, was the resident representative of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Korea from 1990 to 1995.

The strengthening of the peace process on the Korean Peninsula is "one of the reasons we

are still here," said Ziemek. The German foundation, together with a Korean NGO, just commenced a pilot program teaching North Korean settlers in South Korea about democracy. "This involves integration training through games and informal settings," he said.

Although East and West Germans had been in contact with each other, social problems nevertheless erupted after unification and the German experience of unification gives the foundation a unique insight into the problems — probably greater in scope and depth since the

people of two Koreas have not been in contact for more than half a century — that South and North Koreans may encounter in the future.

In July, the foundation sponsored a forum on human rights in the communist state, which was organized by the Peace Foundation, a Korean NGO.

Since 2001 — the year when diplomatic relations between Germany and North Korea were established — the Konrad Adenauer Foundation has given short-term scholarships to North Korean radio or photojournalists to train in Brandenburg in the former East Germany.

About a dozen North Korean journalists so far have at-

tended six-week journalistic training courses at the International Institute of Journalism Berlin-Brandenburg and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation has given half of them the chance to attend this training.

Promotion of the rule of law is an important goal of the foundation and since this year, two North Korean law professors have visited and learned about the German legal system, according to Ziemek.

In the Asian region, the foundation supports Asia News Network, a network of national daily newspapers published in Asian countries. ANN was founded in 1999 with the goal of improving the coverage of Asian affairs by Asian media.

There is continued strong focus on women, particularly promotion of female leaders. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, in partnership with the Community Partnership Center, a Korean NGO, holds workshops for local female parliamentarians.

A major event for the remainder of the year is the International Conference of Asian Political Parties slated for Sept. 7-10 in Seoul. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation has invited 50 parties from 26 Asian countries to attend the event, which will be co-hosted by the ruling Uri Party and the opposition Grand National Party.

The aim of the conference, held first in Manila in 2000, is to strengthen party democracy and promote networking in Asia.

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## HERALD INTERVIEW



Marc Ziemek, resident representative of Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Korea

Lee John-hwan/The Korea Herald