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Presidential Election in South Korea

In South Korea (official name is the Republic of Korea) the President is head of the state and the commander-in-chief. The President is directly elected by plurality vote, and limited to a single five-year term. The President appoints a Prime Minister with the consent of the National Assembly and is also able to appoint members of the cabinet although it is not required by the Constitution. The recent presidential election was held in Dec. 2007 and Myong-Bak Lee, the candidate of Grand National Party, was elected as the 17th President and inaugurated in Feb. 2008. The Presidential election held on Wednesday, around 70 days before the end of incumbent president's term. The Election Day is designated for official holiday by law.

Preliminary Candidates Registration

The first step for the Presidential election is the registration of Preliminary candidate. Any eligible Korean citizen who wants to compete in the primary or to run for the election independently has to register to the National Election Commission as a Preliminary candidate during the registration period (The period begins 240 days before the Election Day).

Primary

Since 2002 16th Presidential race, major political parties have extensively carried out primary election for selecting presidential candidates of their own. Political parties spontaneously decide whether they hold primary or not. Even though Primary election is not a requisite, if once one competed but failed to be elected in the Primary election, he or she cannot run for the Presidency by law. This rule is intended to prevent preliminary candidates' denials of primary results and thus to obstruct floods of candidates in the race.

Candidates Registration and Presidential Campaign

People who were recommended by political parties (including winners of primary election) or recommended by certain number of citizens are eligible for Presidential Candidates. The official electoral campaign starts with candidate registration for twenty-four days. Absentee voting is possible for two days (sixth and fifth days before the Election Day) only by those who registered as absentee voter. Absentee voters turn out in their nearest poll and then the votes are sent to the offices in charge by mail. The National Election Commission (NEC) is in charge of management and supervision over all the electoral campaign process.

Election Day and Decision Rule

All citizens over 19 years old have rights to vote. On the election day people can turn out at designated (nearest) ballot place from 6am to 6pm. The candidate who earns more votes than any other candidates is elected as President.

* More detailed information on Korean Elections available at

[National Election Commission](#) (English) and [Wiki-Elections in South Korea](#) (English)