# Korean Air celebrates 50 years of service between Paris and Seoul

(From left to right) Hyunjun Shim, General Manager for France, Korean Air; Byungji Kim, Vice President of Passenger Sales, Korean Air; Il-Yul Lee, Director of the Korean Cultural Center in Paris; Jungho Choi, Executive Vice President and Head of Sales, Korean Air; Seung-hyun Moon, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to France; and Sungsik Jang, Vice President of European Regional Integration Office, Korean Air

Korean Air is celebrating the 50-year anniversary of its Seoul Incheon-Paris route, commemorating five decades of cultural, economic and tourism exchanges between Korea and France.

Launched on March 14, 1975, the route is one of the airline's longest-standing long-haul services and remains a vital link between the two nations. To mark the occasion, Korean Air hosted a surprise anniversary event at Paris-Charles de Gaulle on June 2. Passengers on flight KE902 received a commemorative gift, and the 50th passenger to check in was awarded a round-trip ticket between Paris and Seoul Incheon.

A formal reception followed on June 4 at the Korean Cultural Center in Paris, attended by more than 100 guests, including Seung-hyun Moon, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to France, partners and representatives of the Franco-Korean community. Korean Air was represented by Jungho Choi, Executive Vice President and Head of Passenger Sales, and Hyun Jun Shim, General Manager for France.

Korean Air's Paris route also reflects a long history of collaboration with European aviation. In the early 1970s, the airline became the first non-European carrier to purchase aircraft from Airbus, which was then a relatively new manufacturer supported by France, the UK, Germany and Spain, the June 5 press release said.

After careful evaluation, Korean Air placed an order for the A300 in 1974. This early partnership contributed to closer aviation ties between Korea and Europe and played a role in broadening the airline's long-haul capabilities.



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This relationship also paved the way for a cargo codeshare agreement with Air France, and supported the signing of an air services agreement between the South Korean and French governments. In October 1973, Korean Air launched cargo services to Paris to assess the viability of the route.

On March 14, 1975, the airline launched its inaugural European passenger service, connecting Seoul and Paris Orly with 215 passengers and cargo onboard. This marked the beginning of a twice-weekly scheduled service. Since 1982, the airline has operated flights to Paris Charles de Gaulle, France's main international gateway. With Paris as its first European destination, Korean Air has steadily expanded its presence across the continent, building a robust network that has strengthened Korea-European connectivity.

Over the past five decades, Korean Air has served as a vital bridge between South Korea and France, fostering economic, diplomatic and cultural exchanges. The airline's early adoption of Airbus aircraft helped foster industrial collaboration, while its cultural initiatives elevated Korea's presence on the global stage.

In 2008, Korean Air successfully advocated for the introduction of Korean-language audio guides at the Louvre Museum, setting a global precedent that inspired other major institutions such as the Orsay Museum in Paris and the British Museum in London, to follow suit. In recognition of these efforts, Korean Air became the first airline to receive a commendation from South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism that same year. The airline continues to sponsor Korean-language guides at the Louvre and Orsay museums to this day.

In its press release, Korean Air also said the airline stood by the Korean community in France during the COVID-19 pandemic in the early 2020s, maintaining its direct Incheon-Paris flights when most international routes were suspended, ensuring crucial connectivity between the two nations.

"For 50 years, Korean Air has connected Paris and Seoul with a steadfast commitment to service excellence," said Jungho Choi, Executive Vice President and Head of Passenger Sales. "This anniversary is a tribute to our loyal passengers, supportive partners, and our continuous pursuit of quality service. We look forward to continuing this remarkable journey with the French market."

Following its integration with Asiana Airlines, Korean Air plans to further enhance its offerings by introducing new routes, optimizing schedules and delivering even more tailored services to meet the evolving needs of global travelers.



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