Korea and Switzerland: Trade and Investment Status

Eugen Elmiger, Honorary Ambassador of Foreign Investment Promotion for Korea and CEO of Maxon Motor, expressed in his interview, hopes for forming an increasingly multi-faceted relationship between Korea and Switzerland. On that note, let’s take a closer look at where the trade and investment relationship between the two countries currently stands.

01 Korea-Switzerland Trade

Imports

Imports from Switzerland to South Korea increased by 16.4 percent from 2016 to 2017, thanks to the base effect caused by the overall drop in Korea’s imports in 2016. In 2017, Swiss imports to Korea reached USD 2.73 billion, with the main import items consisting of watches, pharmaceuticals and gold.

Exports

Korean exports to Switzerland has been characterized by fluctuations of Korea’s main exports in the past few years. Automobile and semiconductor exports to Switzerland have been on a steady rise since 2014, but in 2015, Korea’s ship exports increased by four times compared to the previous year. In 2016, Korea’s ship exports declined, leading to a decrease in overall export volume, but the temporary surge in pharmaceutical exports, which marked a whopping 305 percent increase from 2015, compensated for the fall in export figures.

In 2017, Korea’s exports to Switzerland reached USD 487.9 million, with main export categories consisting of automobiles, pharmaceuticals, watches, miscellaneous plastic products and gold.

02 Korea’s-Switzerland Investment

Inbound investment from Switzerland to Korea in 2017 stood at USD 226.3 million, primarily in the manufacturing sectors of food, gold and machinery equipment/precision medical, and in service sectors such as wholesale/retail, info-communications and finance/insurance.

Outbound investment from Korea to Switzerland in the same period stood at USD 63.4 million, predominantly in the manufacturing, wholesale/retail, and finance/insurance sectors.