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South Korea and Estonia to collaborate in healthcare through use of AI

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MoU signed to provide empirical support and foster talent development for AI healthcare companies



The Ministry of SMEs and Startups, in Korea, held director-general-level discussions with the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs in Tallinn, Estonia's capital, recently. The talks took place to discuss using Estonia's genomic information and medical data.

Through the BioBank project, genomic information from over 200,000 individuals has been collected. These standardised medical data sets form the basis for Estonia's leadership in healthcare innovation in Europe.

In South Korea, the entire population is enrolled in national health insurance, generating a significant amount of public medical data annually through continuous health check-up records. However, companies can only utilise this data partially due to the lack of regulatory framework and social consensus regarding the use of medical data.

During the discussions, KIM Hong-ju, Director General of Economic Zones Innovation Planning, South Korea and Jaanika Merilo, Head of eHealth strategy of Estonia, discussed procedures and methods to support tenant companies in Gangwon's Global Innovation Special Zone for Healthcare in utilising Estonia's genomic information. They also agreed to seek mutual governmental interest and support for joint R&D projects between tenant companies in the Gangwon special zone and the University of Tartu in Estonia.

Moreover, there were discussions about support measures for Korean AI healthcare startups looking to collaborate with Health Founders, a health tech-focused accelerator, and universities and companies in Estonia. Health Founders, the first health tech-specific accelerator in the Baltic Sea region, identifies and supports startups in the health tech sector by integrating them with Estonia's health information system.

Also, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between HEO Jang-hyeon, Head of Gangwon Technopark, the dedicated agency for Gangwon's Global Innovation Special Zone for AI healthcare, and Andrus Kurvits, Director of Tartu Science Park, a regional innovation agency in Estonia. This MoU aims to provide empirical support and foster talent development for AI healthcare companies.