

[Translation Assignment]

- Translate the following text into Korean.

## **South Koreans set to become younger as traditional way of counting age scrapped**

By Soo-Hyang Choi  
December 8, 2022

SEOUL, Dec 8 (Reuters) – South Korea on Thursday passed laws to scrap its traditional method of counting ages and adopt the international standard – a shift which will make its citizens either 1 or 2 years younger on official documents.

Koreans are deemed to be a year old when born and a year is added every Jan. 1. This is the age most commonly cited in everyday life.

A separate system also exists for conscription purposes or calculating the legal age to drink alcohol and smoke, in which a person's age is calculated from zero at birth and a year is added on Jan. 1.

Since the early 1960s, however, South Korea has for medical and legal documents also used the international norm of calculating from zero at birth and adding a year on every birthday.

The confusing array of systems will disappear - at least on official documents - when the new laws that stipulate using only the international method of counting ages take effect in June 2023.

"The revision is aimed at reducing unnecessary socio-economic costs because legal and social disputes as well as confusion persist due to the different ways of calculating age," Yoo Sang-bum of the ruling People Power Party told parliament.

Jeong Da-eun, a 29-year-old office worker, is happy about the change, saying she has always had to think twice when asked overseas about her age.

"I remember foreigners looking at me with puzzlement because it took me so long to come back with an answer on how old I was."

"Who wouldn't welcome getting a year or two younger?" she added.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/south-koreans-set-become-younger-traditional-way-counting-age-scrapped-2022-12-08/>

[Reading]

## **All South Koreans to become younger as traditional age system scrapped**

### **June will mark end of system that deemed newborns to be a year old, with a year added every 1 January**

South Korea is to scrap its traditional method of counting ages and adopt the international standard – a change that that will knock one or two years off people’s ages on official documents but could take time to seep into daily life.

South Koreans are deemed to be a year old when they are born, and a year is added every 1 January. The unusual – and increasingly unpopular – custom means a baby born on New Year’s Eve becomes two years old as soon as the clock strikes midnight.

The complications do not end there: a separate system exists for calculating the age of men entering national service and the legal age to drink alcohol and smoke. In those cases, a person’s age is calculated from zero at birth and a year is added on New Year’s Day.

The tradition has attracted criticism from politicians who believe it makes South Korea, a big Asian economy and global technological and cultural power, appear behind the times. The president, Yoon Suk-yeol, has criticised the multiple methods for calculating ages as a drain on resources.

The confusion should end in June – at least on official documents – when laws stipulating the use of only the international method of counting ages take effect.

“The revision is aimed at reducing unnecessary socioeconomic costs because legal and social disputes as well as confusion persist due to the different ways of calculating age,” Yoo Sang-bum of the ruling People Power party told parliament.

Jeong Da-eun, a 29-year-old office worker, said she welcomed the change, since she always had to think twice when asked her age when overseas. “I remember foreigners looking at me with puzzlement because it took me so long to come back with an answer,” she said. “Who wouldn’t welcome getting a year or two younger?”

The system’s origins are unclear. One theory is that turning one year old at birth takes into account time spent in the womb – with nine months rounded up to 12. Others link it to an ancient Asian numerical system that did not have the concept of zero.

Explanations for the extra year added on 1 January are more complicated. Some experts point to the theory that ancient Koreans placed their year of birth within the Chinese 60-year calendar cycle, but, at a time when there were no regular calendars, tended to ignore the day of their birth and simply added on a whole year on the first day of the lunar calendar. The extra year on 1 January became commonplace as more South Koreans began observing the western calendar.

The national assembly, which approved the change this week, said it would “resolve the social confusion caused by the mixed use of age calculations and the resulting side effects”.

While some people are expected to continue using their “Korean age” in daily life, others said they were delighted by the prospect of turning back the clock.

“I’m getting two years younger – I’m so happy,” one tweeted. “I turned two years old so soon after I was born, as I was born in December. Finally, I’m about to get my real age back!”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/09/all-south-koreans-to-become-younger-as-traditional-age-system-scrapped>