

European NGO chief expects Japan to win permanent UNSC seat

By Lee Joon-seung

SEOUL, May 26 (Yonhap) — Japan will likely win a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council despite opposition from some Asian countries, Hans Koechler, president of the International Progress Organization (IPO), said Thursday.

In an interview with Yonhap News Agency, the Austrian-born philosophy professor who has taken a lead role in garnering international non-governmental organization support for reform of the U.N., said that Japan has shown a determination to get the support of countries in the general assembly.

"Barring a veto by China, the proposal should be approved," he said. The expert could not give numbers of support for the proposed expansion of the security council but said it was sufficient.

A two-thirds vote in the U.N. General Assembly is needed for the motion to pass. The United States, China, Russia, Britain and France must also agree to the proposal or abstain from using their veto rights.

The NGO head said he is acquainted with the level of opposition to Japan gaining a permanent seat on the Security Council in countries like South Korea and China.

He said that unlike Germany which instigated a policy of "managing ones past" with everyone from the president, chancellor, ministers and public officials apologizing for actions taken by Nazi Germany, Japan does not seem to have undertaken such a process.

Koechler then said that he personally did not think that the direction being taken by the United Nations to reform the Security Council was adequate, especially since there was a lack of "democracy" involved in the proposal. He noted that the current permanent members will retain their veto rights whereas the new aspiring members, if elected to the UNSC, will be without such veto rights.

On North Korea, he said that the situation was precarious and stressed that all parties should try to resolve this problem through dialogue.

IPO is an Austrian-based organization that has consultative status within the

United Nations and boasts a membership of over 70 countries worldwide.

yonngong@yna.co.kr

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