



## Headline News

### ROC President Ma hopes to strengthen EU-Taiwan partnership

On 29 September, ROC President Ma Ying-jeou held a video conference with Members of the European Parliament for the first time, saying that he is looking forward to a stronger partnership developing between the European Union and Taiwan. Over the past 7 years, Taiwan has signed 79 agreements with the EU and European countries, covering areas such as technology, education, food safety, and innovation. "I sincerely hope that based on our current cultural, economic and scientific cooperation, we can use the existing consultation mechanisms to continue to expand cooperation and enhance our partnership," he said.



President Ma said now is a good time for the EU and Taiwan to start talks on a bilateral investment agreement, which would greatly benefit both partners. "The ROC and the EU share the universal values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. I fully intend to work with the EU and its Member States to strengthen Taiwan-EU relations, fostering an even closer and more solid partnership," he concluded.

## Economic News

### Taiwan ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in global competitiveness

In a report released on 30 September by the Geneva-based

World Economic Forum (WEF), Taiwan was ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of 140 economies worldwide in global competitiveness, with mixed performances across the survey's 12 components. According to the WEF, Taiwan's performance has been stable over the past 7 years, with continuous advances made in basic requirements and efficiency enhancers. Significant progress was achieved in financial market development, labor market efficiency, and technological readiness. Improvements can still be made in the fields of business sophistication, goods markets efficiency, innovation and market size.



With a score of 5.28, up 0.03 from last year, Taiwan improved in the annual report but inched down one place in its comparative ranking. In response, National Development Council Minister Duh Tyzz-jiun said a shortage of local engineering and scientific personnel is one of the major reasons for Taiwan's decline. "The government is committed to addressing this issue by recruiting international students and industry professionals to bolster the country's talent pool, while complementing a rapidly aging workforce."

## Cross-Strait Relations

### Taiwan aiming to finalize trade pact with mainland China

On 29 September, a senior official of the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) said that Taiwan is hoping to conclude negotiations with mainland China on a trade in goods agreement

by the end of the year. The MAC will also push for the establishment of reciprocal representative offices to protect the rights and interests of Taiwanese in mainland China. Promotion of cross-Strait trade cooperation and regional economic integration will be a priority. Meanwhile, mainland China has invited Taiwanese businessmen to visit the northwestern routes that are included in China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative, in mid-October. This is a development strategy and framework that focuses on connectivity and cooperation among countries in Eurasia.

## Local Activities

### Taiwanese bakers win international competition in France

On 27 September, a duo of bakers from Taiwan won the biennial World of Bread competition, in the French city of Saint-Etienne, while also taking first prize in the artistic piece sub-category. Baker Chen Yung-hsin and his assistant Guo Jia-wen were awarded the Ambassadors' Trophy, emerging as the overall winners in a competition that required the contestants to bake 12 types of bread in several categories. France won the overall second prize, followed by Belgium, Italy, Japan and Australia. The organizers of the World of Bread competition will hold a special contest next year in Taiwan for the top six countries who won this year's competition.

