



Headline

President Tsai receives EP friendship group, vows to deepen Taiwan-EU relations

On February 20, President Tsai Ing-wen received a European Parliament (EP) Friendship Group Delegation, vowing to further strengthen Taiwan-EU relations via expanded



cooperation and exchanges.

The delegation, led by Member of European Parliament (MEP) and group Chairman Werner Langen, comprises MEPs Bas Belder, Eduard Kukan, Cristian dan Preda, and former MEP Georg Jarzembowski. The delegation is in the country from 17 to 22 February on an economic and political fact-finding mission.

The EP-Taiwan Friendship Group is a firm friend as demonstrated by its staunch support over the years, Tsai said. An example is the backing for Taiwan in the face of aggression from China expressed by around 20 members of the EP during a parliamentary debate last month. The MEPs also urged the EU to take concrete measures supporting Taiwan and the right of its 23 million people to determine their own future. Chairman Langen presented President Tsai with a statement signed by 155 MEPs backing Taiwan's international participation and cross-strait peace and stability.

President Tsai, who thanked Langen on behalf of the government and people of Taiwan for the statement, said it is a resounding vote of confidence in the country and the government's defense of freedom and democracy.

Economy

EP's First Public Hearing on the EU-Taiwan Bilateral Investment Agreement

On February 19, the European Parliament Committee on International Trade held its first public hearing on "EU-Taiwan trade relations". Taiwan's Bureau of Foreign Trade Director-General Yang Jen-ni, Acting Director for Asia at DG Trade, European Commission, Peter Berz and Deputy Head of Division, European External Action Service, Christophe Manet were in attendance. More than ten MEPs from different political parties spoke up, calling for the EU to take a forward-thinking approach by opening up formal discussions regarding a Taiwan-EU Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA), increasing investments from both sides, and deepening economic ties. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) welcomed these comments and expressed its thanks.



The public hearing was introduced by MEP David Martin, with MEP Laima Andrikiene giving concluding remarks. Director-General Yang pointed out that the EU is Taiwan's 5th largest trading partner, as well as Taiwan's biggest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), saying she hopes industry talks, investment working groups can provide a foundation for the two sides to deepen their cooperation.

This public hearing once more highlights the EP's friendship and support towards Taiwan, keeping up the momentum in pushing the BIA forward.

Human Rights

Taiwan's Cabinet passes same-sex marriage bill

On February 21, a bill proposed by the Ministry of Justice on same-sex

marriage in Taiwan was approved by the Cabinet, underscoring the government's commitment to promoting freedom, human rights, and the right to marry and found a family.

Comprising 27 articles, the bill serves as the legal basis for same-sex couples aged 18 and older to wed. It also covers such areas as adoption, divorce, inheritance, and medical and property rights.

President Tsai Ing-wen said the bill reflects broad-based consensus in society on the issue and is in line with the government's stance on protecting the traditional values of marriage. It further underscores the health of Taiwan's democracy and the respect and tolerance of citizens for one another, she added.

According to the Cabinet, the bill is set for fast-tracked legislative review and expected to take effect May 24 this year.

Community

Luxembourg-Taiwan Association Celebrated Lunar New Year

On February 9, the Luxembourg-Taiwan Association celebrated the Chinese New Year. The Association's President Astrid Lulling welcomed the Representative of the R.O.C. (Taiwan) to the European Union and Belgium, Ambassador Harry Tseng, as well as MEP Christophe Hansen and Parliamentarian and Mayor of Clervaux Emile Eicher.



In his speech, Ambassador Tseng appreciated the public statement of support for Taiwan by the Association following a speech by the Chinese leader Xi Jinping in which he advocated the concept of "one country, two systems" to Taiwan and threatened Taiwan with the use of force to achieve the reunification. Ambassador Tseng also explained why Taiwan cannot accept this concept which has failed in Hong Kong.