

Mainland Affairs Council--Press Release

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Chiu Tai-san: The First Lunar New Year Charter Flights Achieved under Safe, Comfortable and Convenient Conditions

The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) vice chairman Chiu Tai-san expressed his pleasure that the highly-anticipated and welcomed first Lunar New Year charter flights have been achieved smoothly under safe, comfortable and convenient conditions.



Taiwanese businessmen in China and their families and dependants were also happy and gratified, since they were able to return home to reunite with their relatives and friends.

On January 29, the MAC vice chairman Chiu, accompanied by officials and delegates from the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Taiwan businessmen's associations, the Taipei Airlines Association and the Travel Agent Association of R.O.C., Taiwan, made his way to the Chiang Kai-shek International Airport to welcome the Taiwan businessmen and their families and dependants upon their return to Taiwan for the Lunar New Year holiday. Chiu also held a press conference after the arrival of the first six charter flights from China to inform the public about relevant details.

Vice chairman Chiu also indicated that on the morning of January 29, 436 passengers had taken flights from Taipei to Beijing, accompanied by 31 crew members, and 1,227 passengers, accompanied by 134 crew members, flew from mainland China to Taipei. Another 46 passengers flew from Beijing to Kaohsiung, with 11 crew members. Chiu added that due to weather conditions (wind direction), different flight levels, flight frequency and variegated routes, all the flights arrived in Taipei slightly ahead of schedule. The China Southern Airlines and Xiamen Airlines flights from Guangdong were three and four minutes earlier, respectively, while the China Eastern Airlines and Shanghai Airlines flights from Shanghai were 33 minutes and 17 minutes earlier, respectively. Hainan Airlines and Air China flights from Beijing arrived 57 minutes and 33 minutes earlier, respectively. As the director of the Taipei-based Civil Aeronautics Administration, Chang Kuo-cheng explained in detail, that the flights flew over the Hong Kong flight information region had been agreed on in the Macao negotiations between China and Taiwan. No violations of this regulation occurred.

There have been media reports about passengers who were unable to board their flights immediately because of problems with their personal data. Also, according to media reports, some travelers had to fill out the relevant forms a second time before they were allowed to exit Taiwan. To elaborate on these issues, vice chairman Chiu said this was caused by the fact that the passenger name lists were forwarded to Taipei at different times, which meant that check and confirmation procedures had to be rushed. Therefore, some inconsistent passenger information appeared. Nevertheless, all these

travelers had already been allowed to board the flights and enter Taiwan after filling out the forms on the spot. As for a minority of cases involving family and dependants, for whom instant confirmation was impossible, these passengers will be granted permission to take the flights after a double-confirmation currently underway. Taiwan's government agencies will assume a thorough review of the relevant procedures at the conclusion of this year's charter flights. The MAC will invite all agencies involved to deliver reports and hold a discussion about future changes and improvements.

Finally, vice chairman Chiu pointed out that the few minor incidents that have occurred will not affect safe, comfortable, and convenient conditions which this year's Lunar New Year charter flights took place under, bringing home Taiwanese residents smoothly and reliably. The chairmen of the various Taiwan businessmen's associations also expressed their approval and satisfaction with this year's charter flights. The relevant government agencies will take this year's experience into consideration when reviewing related policies.