

## **Mainland Launches Flight Routes without Negotiations: MAC Solemnly Protests over Hidden Political Agenda and Disregard for Aviation Safety**

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Regarding mainland China's unilateral launch of the northbound M503 flight route and W121, W122, and W123 flight routes without negotiations between the two sides across the Taiwan Strait, the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) issued the following solemn statement on January 4:

1. Aviation safety is fundamentally important to the international community. Mainland China launched the relevant flight routes without cross-Strait communication and initiated flights on the four routes on the same day. We believe that this not only violates the negotiation results reached between the Taipei Airlines Association and China Air Transport Association in March of 2015, but it also intentionally dissembles improper political and even military agenda under the guise of civil aviation and raises concern over changes in the cross-Strait status quo. The government thus seriously regards this incident, which affects cross-Strait relations and aviation safety, and has expressed strong discontent and protest to the other side.

2. During communication between the two sides in 2015, the Mainland repeatedly pledged to only use the M503 route for one-way southbound flights and the W flight routes would not be activated until after confirmation from further negotiations. However, the Mainland's unilateral launch of the routes without negotiations between the two sides is a reckless action that runs entirely counter to international civil aviation regulations, disregards aviation safety, and disrespects Taiwan. The ROC government calls on all parties to not use these flight routes in which serious safety concerns remain.

3. Taiwan has demanded that the Mainland immediately stop related flight operations on the routes and promptly coordinate aviation authorities on both sides to initiate communication to ensure aviation safety and the welfare of the people. If the Mainland

clings obstinately to its own course, it must shoulder any serious consequences that might affect cross-Strait relations.