

The ROC government's steady promotion of developments in cross-strait relations and the breadth of vision and mind of President Ma's Mainland policy are the keys to peace in the Taiwan Strait

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Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Minister Lai Shin-yuan presented a speech entitled "Steady Pace and Expansive Vision: Keys to the Success of the ROC's Mainland Policy" to members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in Belgium on September 5 (local time) at the invitation of the European Parliament-Taiwan Friendship Group. Minister Lai emphasized that the government of the Republic of China (ROC) is actively establishing and consolidating an institutionalized mode of interactions with mainland China to share with the Mainland Taiwan's experience, democracy, freedom and other core values, fully demonstrating the foresight and breadth of vision and mind of Taiwan's Mainland policy. She stressed that these elements are the keys to the success of the ROC government in maintaining peace in the Taiwan Strait.

The speech at the European Parliament today was presided by Chairman of the European Parliament-Taiwan Friendship Group Charles Tannock. It was also attended by European Parliament Vice-President McMillan-Scott and Taiwan's representative to the European Union and Belgium David Y.L. Lin. Minister Lai stated in her speech that President Ma Ying-jeou was successfully reelected at the beginning of the year. Such passage of public opinion test reflects the high-level of maturity in the wisdom of the people of Taiwan. It also indicates that there is already a majority consensus in Taiwan to support the promotion of peaceful and

stable developments in cross-strait relations while defending Taiwan's identity and adhering to democratic values. In facing cross-strait relations, the position of the ROC government is to maintain the status quo of "no unification, no independence, and no use of force" in the Taiwan Strait under the framework of the ROC Constitution, and to promote institutionalized cross-strait negotiations on the basis of the "1992 Consensus of one China with respective interpretations," in which Taiwan's position is that "one China" stands for the Republic of China. These policies and actions are supported by the majority of the people in Taiwan.

Minister Lai explained to the attending members of the European Parliament that the success of the ROC government in overcoming numerous obstacles and steadily advancing forward over the past more than four years owes to two major factors, namely: the steady pace of promoting cross-strait relations and the breadth of vision and mind in President Ma's Mainland policy. Steady and cadenced promotion of cross-strait relations is critical; it is the only way to ensure that the people gradually feel the substantive benefits of cross-strait rapprochement in their daily life, and then to transform this into supporting and identifying the policy. Without public support, no proposal or position on future cross-strait relations can be stable. Furthermore, the open-mindedness of President Ma's Mainland policy is the key to Taiwan's ability to face challenges and successfully move forward.

Minister Lai further emphasized that the ROC is a democratic country, and that Taiwan is confident of its own political system and way of life. She quoted a statement by President Ma at the time of the announcement of the government's "Golden Decade, National Visions"

blueprint for cross-strait peace, in which the President emphasized "We have to promote Taiwan's soft power, lead cross-strait relations in a positive direction, share Taiwan's experience, make freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law the core values in promoting cross-strait relations, promote the mutual advancement of civil society on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and achieve lasting peace in the Taiwan Strait." The breadth of mind and vision in the ROC's Mainland policy has enabled the Mainland to witness Taiwan's core values. Moreover, since Taiwan is related to developments in the Mainland, President Ma has publicly emphasized on numerous occasions that "human rights serve as a yardstick of the distance between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait."

Minister Lai concluded her speech by noting that the "national security iron triangle" elaborated by President Ma in his inaugural address on May 20 this year included: "using cross-strait rapprochement to realize peace in the Taiwan Strait," "using viable diplomacy to establish more breathing space in the international community," and "using military strength to deter external threats." Furthermore, the Mainland policy steadily and orderly promoted by the ROC government is the best path to achieve peace in the Taiwan Strait. At this key juncture in the development of cross-strait relations, the European Union (EU) should value Taiwan's influence on mainland China more. Since President Ma took office, the EU and the European Parliament have jointly announced or passed several statements and resolutions, including support for Taiwan's participation as an observer in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) and other important international organizations and activities.

They have also expressed willingness to hold consultations with Taiwan on an economic cooperation agreement (ECA), which has great significance for Taiwan. They expressed hope that Taiwan and the EU can continue to expand and deepen cooperation and exchanges in economic, trade, environmental protection, and other areas. It is also hoped that the European Parliament will continue to provide key assistance for Taiwan's participation in the world so that the ROC, the EU, and the international community can jointly reap the cross-strait peace dividend.

Minister Lai also particularly emphasized that a profound understanding the people's feelings is the key to promoting cross-strait relations. Moreover, cross-strait mutual trust must have a social foundation, meaning that it must be rooted in public opinion. At the same time, attention must be given to fairness, justice, well-being, rights and interests sought by the people on both sides.

Over 80 members and officials of the European Parliament attended Minister Lai speech's today, including European Parliament Vice-President Edward McMillan-Scott. A total of 32 leading MEPs and caucus members from 16 countries also attended, among them were Quaestor Astrid Lulling, Chairman of the Taiwan Friendship Group Charles Tannock, Vice Chairs of the Taiwan Friendship Group Laima Andrikiene and Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler, President of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party Sir Graham Watson, Member of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group Bastiaan Belder, and Agustín Dí az de Mera Garcí a Consuegra, a member of the European People's Party and presenter of the proposal to exempt Taiwan from Schengen visa requirements. During the discussions, the lawmakers enthusiastically

asked questions and exchanged views with Minister Lai, resulting in an extension of the event time. After the event, 20 MEPs including Charles Tannock invited Minister and Representative Lin to a luncheon in the MEP restaurant.