

**Deputy Minister Lin Presents Keynote Speech at the "39th Annual Conference for Overseas Chinese in Europe", Explaining the ROC Government's Mainland Policy and Cross-Strait Relations while Emphasizing "Creating a Foundation for Peace and Ushering in New Cross-Strait Era"**

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Deputy Minister Lin Chu-chia of the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) presented a keynote speech at 11:40 a.m. (Netherlands time) today (June 23) at the 39th Annual Conference for Overseas Chinese in Europe. Deputy Minister Lin stated that "cross-strait peace" is the Republic of China (ROC) government's core concept in promoting Mainland policy, and is also the most important link in building national security. The government's steady promotion and consolidation of cross-strait peace over the past five years have not only stabilized security in the Taiwan Strait and the region, but have also created a virtuous cycle of mutual improvement between cross-strait and international relations, resulting in affirmation from the majority of the Taiwanese people and also in support of the international community.

Deputy Minister Lin informed the overseas Chinese participants that the government's advocacy of maintaining the cross-strait status quo of "no unification, no independence and no use of force" under the framework of the ROC Constitution has earned the support of over 80% of the public. The current priority tasks of the government in promoting Mainland policy are to pragmatically advance mutually beneficial cross-strait relations, to continue deepening mutual trust, and to guarantee the right of exchanges between the people on both sides. Deputy Minister Lin stressed that, according to the ROC Constitution and the Act Governing Relations between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area, the positioning of cross-strait relations is "one Republic of China, two areas." The government advocates the concept of "mutual non-recognition of sovereignty and mutual non-denial of authority to govern." This is the best way to address realities, shelve disputes and promote peace and is also an important foundation for the pragmatic promotion of benign development across the Strait.

As to the results achieved by the government over the past five years in promoting institutionalized cross-strait negotiations, Deputy Minister Lin said the

government has adhered to the negotiation principle of handling "easy issues before difficult ones, urgent matters before non-urgent ones, and economic matters before political ones," and has gradually advanced institutionalized cross-strait negotiations on the foundation of the "1992 Consensus, whereby each side maintains its respective definition of one China." The Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) have now held nine rounds of high-level talks, signed 19 agreements, and reached two consensuses, thereby establishing norms for cross-strait economic and social exchanges and benefiting the daily lives of the people. Deputy Minister Lin explained to the overseas Chinese participants the significance of the Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement signed at ninth round of high-level talks held recently between the SEF and the ARATS. He further pointed out that the pact was the first free trade agreement to be concluded between the two sides based on the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) and the General Agreement on Trade in Services of the World Trade Organization, and that the Agreement would provide as an institutionalized basis for trade across the Strait, benefit businesses entering the Mainland market, and also promote Taiwan's participation in regional economic integration.

Looking ahead, Deputy Minister Lin said that public opinion is the most important driving force in cross-strait relations. The government will continue to promote cross-strait exchanges, interaction, dialogue and negotiations on the basis of mainstream public opinion, as well as work towards accomplishing the three major tasks of broadening and deepening cross-strait exchanges, establishing reciprocal institutions by the SEF and the ARATS, and comprehensively reviewing and amending the Act Governing Relations between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area. Deputy Minister Lin further stressed for the Mainland to pragmatically face up to mainstream public opinion in Taiwan and confront the reality of the objective existence of the Republic of China, he stated that this was crucial for advancing progress in cross-strait relations.

After delivering the keynote speech, Deputy Minister Lin exchanged views with the overseas Chinese participants, many of whom expressed support for the government's Mainland policy concept. Deputy Minister Lin said that the overseas Chinese community is an important pillar for the government's promotion of cross-

strait relations. He expressed hopes for the overseas Chinese community to consolidate forces in delivering the government's Mainland policy to friends in the international society, and jointly promote peace in the Taiwan Strait and region. Over 200 members and representatives from overseas Chinese groups across Europe participated and engaged enthusiastically in the conference.