

Summarized Results of the Public Opinion Survey on the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) and Mainland Investment in Taiwan

(April 8 to 11, 2009)

69.2 percent of the public believe it will be necessary for economic and trade relations between Taiwan and mainland China to grow closer, while 70 percent of the public believe it is necessary to sign a cross-strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA).

60.3 percent of the public believe that the signing of a cross-strait ECFA will be conducive to the negotiation and signing of related agreements (such as free trade agreements) with other countries.

60 percent of the public believe that the signing of a cross-strait ECFA will help to make Taiwan-made products more competitive in the Mainland market and promote Taiwan's internationalization. At the same time, over 50 percent (55.9 percent) of the public believe the agreement will have a "positive influence" on Taiwan's economy and will not dwarf Taiwan's sovereignty (53.6 percent).

On opening Taiwan to investment from mainland China, 79.9 percent of the public support a "limited opening-up" At the same time, nearly 60 percent of the public believe this will be "more advantageous" for Taiwan and have a "positive influence" on the development of cross-strait relations.

I. Survey Background and Methods

To understand the Taiwan people's views on the Cross-Strait ECFA and Mainland Investment in Taiwan, the MAC commissioned Berkeley Business Information Greater China to conduct a telephone survey of adults aged 20 to 69 in the Taiwan Area from April 8 to 11. A total of 1,067 valid samples were collected, with a sampling error of about three percent based on a 95 percent confidence level.

II. Major Findings

(1) Views on cross-strait economic and trade contacts and cooperation

Considering Taiwan's economic development, 69.2 percent of the public believe that it will be necessary for economic and trade relations between Taiwan and mainland China to grow closer over the next several years, while 21.9 percent believe it will be unnecessary. At the same time, 70 percent of the public believe that it is necessary for the ROC government to sign an ECFA with the Mainland government in order to deal with cross-strait economic and trade issues, while 23.5 percent believe it is unnecessary. In addition, as high as 83 percent of the public endorse the view that the government should continue its past policy of actively promoting economic cooperation with other countries, while less than 10 percent (9.4 percent) of the public disapprove.

(2) Views on the benefits of signing of a cross-strait ECFA

60.3 percent of the public believe that the signing of a cross-strait ECFA will be conducive to the negotiation and signing of related agreements (such as free trade agreements) with other countries, while 24.8 percent believe it will not be conducive. At the same time, 60 percent of the public agree that the signing of a cross-strait ECFA will make Taiwan products more competitive in the Mainland market and be conducive to Taiwan's internationalization.

(3) Views on the influence of the cross-strait ECFA on Taiwan

55.9 percent of the public believe that a cross-strait ECFA will have a positive influence on advancing Taiwan's economy, higher than percentages of people responding that it will have a "negative influence" (22.2 percent) or "no influence" (12.7 percent). 53.6 percent of the public believe that a cross-strait ECFA will deal with issues related to cross-strait economic relations and will not dwarf Taiwan's sovereignty, while 37.7 percent of the public believe it will dwarf Taiwan's sovereignty. Regarding the further opening of Taiwan to Mainland imports due to the signing of a cross-strait ECFA, as high as 88.6 percent of the public say they will not decrease their purchase of Taiwan goods.

(4) Views on the cross-strait negotiation items

When it comes to the current situation concerning cross-strait economic and trade contacts, the largest percentage of people regard "intellectual property right

protection" as the most pressing issue in negotiations with mainland China. The next most pressing issues in descending order are "product inspection and quarantine" (76.1 percent), "investment protection" (73.2 percent), "tariff reductions/exemptions" (66.5 percent) and "trade in services" (55.9 percent).

(5) Views on opening Taiwan to Mainland investment

Regarding Mainland investment in Taiwan, 79.9 percent of the public support a "limited opening-up" while 17.2 percent of the public believe that restrictions should not be eased at all. 48.7 percent of the public believe such investment will "increase" employment opportunities in Taiwan, higher than the percentage of people saying it will "decrease" (23.7 percent) or have "no influence" (22 percent) on employment opportunities. Regarding the impact on Taiwan and cross-strait relations, 58.8 percent of the public believe it will be "more advantageous" to Taiwan, while 25.5 percent of the public believe it will be "more disadvantageous." Moreover, 58.4 percent of the public believe that such investment will have a "positive influence" on the development of cross-strait relations, higher than the percentage of people responding that it will have a "negative influence" (20.9 percent) or "no influence" (12.8 percent).