

Newsletter (Issue 025/ 2024)

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Website: <https://www.roc-taiwan.org/lv/index.html>

FB: Taipei Mission in the Republic of Latvia

Twitter: @Taiwan_Latvia

E-mail: lva@mofa.gov.tw

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The people of Taiwan elected the new President and new parliament

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Taiwan concluded its 16th Presidential and 11th Legislative elections on Jan. 13. The election had a turnout of 71.86%, with Mr. Lai Ching-te of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) winning the election by securing 40.05% of the total electoral votes, and will be the 16th President and Vice President of Taiwan.

According to the official data released by the Central Election Commission, Mr. Lai Ching-te won 5.586 million votes (40.05%), followed by his main competitor Mr. Hou Yu-ih of the Kuomintang (KMT), who acquired 4.671 million votes (33.49%), while Mr. Ko Wen-je of the Taiwan's People Party (TPP) obtained 3.69 million votes (26.46%). Presidential inauguration is scheduled to take place on May 20.

On the same day, eligible voters also cast their ballots to elect 113 members of the Legislative Yuan. The KMT won a relative majority of 52 seats, while the DPP and the TPP secured 51 and 8 seats respectively, and 2 seats go to the independent candidates. No party has managed to win a simple majority of 57 seats. The swearing-in ceremony of the new Parliament will be held on Feb. 1.

After the election, the European Union External Action Service (EEAS) congratulated all the Taiwanese voters participating in the democratic practices, and stated that EU and Taiwan share commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights. EU underlies the peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and remains concerned about growing tension in the region and opposes any unilateral attempt to change the status quo.

Taiwan has also noted that China, in addition to attempting to interfere in Taiwan's elections and influence the Taiwanese people's exercise of their freedom through various avenues, has instigated countries such as Somalia, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, and Palestine, to issue false statements aimed at downgrading Taiwan's sovereign status.

	<p>This completely disregard Taiwan’s long-term goodwill and contributions to the international community and its devotion to maintaining regional peace and stability. Taiwan strongly condemns China’s malevolent actions and such countries’ inappropriate deference to China, including the same tired claims made by Russia regarding the so-called “One China principle,” which are patently false and do not respect the free will of the Taiwanese people.</p>
2	<p style="text-align: center;">Lithuania parliamentary delegation paid a visit to Taiwan</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>A cross-party 11-member parliamentary delegation from Lithuania visited Taiwan on Jan. 21. The delegation was led by Mr. Matas Maldeikis, Chair of the Parliamentary Group for Relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan). During their visit, the delegation will have an audience with President Tsai Ing-wen, President-elect Lai Ching-te, and meet with President You of the Legislative Yuan and Foreign Minister Wu. They will also call on Taiwan’s National Security Council, National Development Council, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Hsinchu Science Park to exchange views on issues of mutual concern.</p> <p>(Foto Credit: Taiwan Today)</p> </div> </div>
3	<p style="text-align: center;">Taiwan’s Foreign Minister Wu interviewed by Ukraine TV channels</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>Taiwan’s Foreign Minister Jaushieh Joseph Wu gave interview to Ukraine TV channels on Jan. 10. In the interview, Minister Wu pointed that although Taiwan consistently faces threats from China, Beijing is highly unlikely to wage a war against Taiwan in the short term. Instead, China uses gray zone tactics combining military threats, economic coercion and cognitive warfare in an attempt to influence democratic progress in Taiwan. He also added that more than 90 percent of Taiwan people oppose unification with China, and that “one country, two systems” in Hong Kong lead to the country’s disapproval of the policy. The Minister stressed that self-defense capability and unity in the democratic community are key factors in deterrence of possible Chinese assault on Taiwan, and Taiwan will continue to work with other democracies to safeguard regional security.</p> <p>(Foto Credit: Taiwan Today)</p> </div> </div>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Taiwan terminated diplomatic relations with the Republic of Nauru</p>

4	<p>Taiwan’s diplomatic ally in the Pacific, Nauru, switched its diplomatic relations from Taiwan to China on the ground of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 and the “One China principle”. To safeguard national sovereignty and dignity, Taiwan decided to terminate diplomatic relations on 15 Jan. with Nauru with immediate effect, end all bilateral cooperation projects, recall staff of its embassy and Technical Mission in Nauru, and demand that Nauru close its embassy in Taiwan.</p> <p>China has long approached political figures in Nauru, conducting chequebook diplomacy to entice Nauru to switch diplomatic recognition. Nauru deferred to China’s “One China principle” and adopted false narratives stemming from an erroneous interpretation of UN General Assembly Resolution 2758. Beijing’s actions are a repudiation of democratic values and an open challenge to the international order.</p>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">Taiwan trade surplus hits record high in 2023</p> <p>According to the latest data from Taiwan’s Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA), Taiwan’s trade surplus hit an all-time high of US\$80.56 billion in 2023. This is a result of successful policies of the government’s various investment promotion projects that enhanced local supply chain resilience and boosting the overall economy. According to the MOEA, Taiwan’s exports reached US\$432.48 billion in 2023 despite high inflation and low consumption around the world. The export was third highest on record.</p>
6	<p style="text-align: center;">US-Japan-ROK Indo-Pacific Dialogue reiterated the importance of peace and stability across Taiwan Strait</p> <p>US, Japan, and Republic of Korea high officials met in Washington, DC, on January 5 for the inaugural US-Japan-ROK Indo-Pacific Dialogue. Following the meeting, <u>the three sides issued a joint statement (https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-the-trilateral-united-states-japan-republic-of-korea-indo-pacific-dialogue/) reaffirming the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait as indispensable to security and prosperity in the international community.</u> The statement noted the recent dangerous and escalatory behavior supporting unlawful claims by China in the South China Sea and reiterated opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion anywhere in the waters of the Indo-Pacific. Following their trilateral leaders’ summit of August 2023, the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea continue to publicly emphasize and support peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and reiterate their staunch opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the regional status quo by force or coercion.</p> <p><u>China has recently continued to employ gray-zone tactics to harass Taiwan, such as dispatching balloons across the median line of the Taiwan Strait and into Taiwan’s</u></p>

	<p><u>airspace</u> over consecutive days. It has also continued to engage in economic coercion, including through the suspension of preferential tariffs on a number of goods under the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), and waged various forms of cognitive warfare.</p>
7	<p>Taiwan condemns China to end tariff reduction on ECFA early-harvest products</p> <p>The Ministry of Commerce of China announced on January 9 that it was considering expanding the termination of tariff reduction arrangements on early-harvest products listed under the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA).</p> <p><u>Taiwan and China are both members of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Trade issues between the two sides should be handled through WTO mechanisms and in accordance with international standards.</u> China has unilaterally launched a trade barrier investigation, terminated tariff reductions on a number of Taiwanese imports under ECFA, and explored eliminating the preferential tariff treatment of even more products. <u>By weaponizing trade, China continues to pressure Taiwan, seeking to influence and undermine Taiwan’s democratic elections to achieve political objectives.</u></p>
8	<p>Taiwan’s Representative to the United States met with US House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson</p> <p>Taiwan’s Representative to the United States met with US House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson in Washington, DC, for the first time on January 9. In the meeting, <u>Speaker Johnson publicly declared that the United States stood with the Taiwanese people and that this was an important issue for the United States</u> and the entire world. He stated that the United States wanted to assist in defending Taiwan and deterring military provocations by the Chinese Communist Party, and reaffirmed that the US Congress stood with Taiwan and for democracy and the principles that Taiwan has been trying to advance.</p>
9	<p>Japan’s LDP Vice President stated security commitment to Taiwan</p> <p>During a political briefing in Japan on January 8, <u>Vice President of Japan’s Liberal Democratic Party Taro Aso publicly stated that, considering the rising tensions across the Taiwan Strait and the more than 20,000 Japanese expatriates residing in Taiwan, Japan would employ submarines and naval vessels to engage in military operations if armed conflict were to break out in the Taiwan Strait.</u> He also said that a Taiwan emergency would represent an existential crisis for Japan.</p>
10	<p>US Congress introduced resolutions on Taiwan’s democracy and Taiwan-US partnership</p>

US House of Representatives and Senate recently introduced resolutions (<https://www.sullivan.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/on-eve-of-taiwan-election-sullivan-and-kaine-lead-bipartisan-resolution-commending-taiwans-commitment-to-democracy>) on Taiwan's democracy and Taiwan-US partnership, stressing that the United States will strongly support the Taiwan-US partnership regardless of the outcome of Taiwan's upcoming elections, while expressing concern over China's attempts to interfere with said elections, and declare US support for Taiwan's defense and liberal democracy.

The resolution also addresses how Taiwan transitioned to a liberal democracy in the 1980s and affirms Taiwan's civil society, diverse economy, and stable political system as the basis of Taiwan's prosperity and liberty. Meanwhile, it states that the US Congress commends Taiwan for the example it has set for self-governance, not just for the Pacific region but for the world; regards the democracy of Taiwan as a great strategic strength for the free world and an indispensable component of contemporary US-Taiwan relations.