

Newsletter (Issue 028/ 2024)

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Estonian parliamentary delegation made the first-ever visit to Taiwan

A delegation from the Estonia-Taiwan Support Group of the Riigikogu led by Chairperson Kristo Enn Vaga visited Taiwan from 4 to 8 March. During their visit, the delegation had an audience with President Tsai Ing-wen and met with Speaker Han. of the Legislative Yuan, Premier of Executive Yuan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and high-ranking officials of various governmental agencies.



On March 7, President Tsai Ing-wen met with the delegation where she thanked the Estonian government and the Estonia-Taiwan Support Group for their continued support of Taiwan's international participation. The president also emphasized that Taiwan and Estonia share such common values as freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law,

and both countries can work together to help democracy develop globally. Chairman Vaga said that Estonia's foreign policy is very much values-based to strengthen ties with

democratic partners and the delegation shows solidarity with and support for Taiwan.



On March 6, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jaushieh Joseph Wu hosted a welcome dinner for the delegation and hoped the visit could pave the way for more substantive bilateral cooperation between Taiwan and Estonia. Chairperson Vaga stated that the delegation highlights the cross-party support for Taiwan, and he observes that both Taiwan and Estonia

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neighbor authoritarian powers and that the two countries, despite their geographical distance, share the core values of human rights and the rule of law. He also added that the two countries engage in close cooperation and solidarity in resisting totalitarian threats and assisting Ukraine.

(Foto Credit: Taiwan's Presidential Office & MoFA)

Vice President-elect Hsiao visited EU and CEECs



Taiwan's Vice President-elect Hsiao Bi-khim visited the European Parliament (EP) at the invitation of a cross-party group of prominent MEPs . The visit was the first time an incoming vice president of Taiwan had been invited to Europe before taking office, demonstrating that Taiwan and the European Union (EU) are like-minded partners that share the same values.

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Vice President-elect Hsiao also visited the Czech Republic, Poland, and Lithuania at the invitation of European think tanks. During her trip, she met with Chairpersons of Foreign Affairs Committees of the Baltic States, Estonia's former Prime Minister and MEP Andrus Ansip as well as European parliamentarians. She conveyed the message that Taiwan stands with European democracies and called for stronger cooperation in areas such as democratic supply chains. She also called on the European Union to reaffirm its commitment to regional stability and demonstrate its confidence in the prosperity of the region by signing an economic partnership agreement with Taiwan



Estonian cycling team first-ever visit to Taiwan for "Tour de Taiwan 2024"

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Chairperson of Estonia-Taiwan Support Group of the Riigikogu Kristo Enn Vaga accompanied the Estonian "Voltas - Tartu 2024 CCN Free Team" (Voltas - Tartu 2024 by CCN), which visited Taiwan for the first time to participate in "Tour de Taiwan 2024" from March 10-13. During their visit, the cycling team was warmly welcomed by the International Trade Department Alumni Association of the National Taichung University of Science and Technology, including Chairwoman Liu Meiji who accompanied Chairperson Vaga to watch the race and cheered for the team. "

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Biden’s administration included assistance to Taiwan as dedicated item for first time in US government budget

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The White House on March 11 issued the US president’s fiscal year 2025 budget request, which included an historic investment in Taiwan through foreign military financing (FMF) and other channels with the aim to further bolster Taiwan’s deterrence capabilities and maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

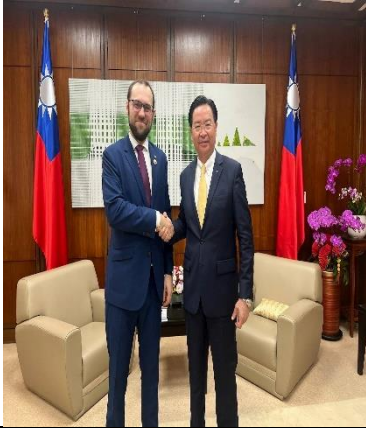
This was the first time for a specific line item on Taiwan to be included in a budget, thus reaffirming the US commitment to security assistance for Taiwan and to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The US Department of Defense has also earmarked US\$500 million to replenish US weapons inventory depleted by military aid provided to Taiwan through the presidential drawdown authority (PDA) mechanism.

US signed spending bill with provisions friendly to Taiwan

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US President Joe Biden on March 23 signed the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 for injecting financial resources into various measures and initiatives supporting Taiwan. The act includes express provisions granting Taiwan not less than US\$300 million in foreign military financing assistance, allocating US\$26 million for US Department of Defense international security cooperation programs with Taiwan, and earmarking not less than US\$4 million for the Global Cooperation and Training Framework. The act also prioritizes reforming the arms sales process to accelerate arms delivery and supports Taiwan’s international participation.

Taiwan’s Foreign Minister met Tomáš Kopečný, Czech governmental envoy for Ukraine’s reconstruction

6		<p>Czech Governmental Envoy for the Reconstruction of Ukraine, Mr. Tomáš Kopečný, visited Taiwan from March 18-19. During which he met with Foreign Minister Jaushieh Joseph Wu to exchange opinions on international aid plans for Ukraine. Mr. Kopečný thanked Taiwan for its help, stating that bilateral cooperation on Ukrainian assistance programs had resulted in access to clean drinking water for tens of thousands of Ukrainians.</p>
7	<p>China continues to send military aircraft and naval ships around Taiwan</p>	
	<p>So far in March, Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense (MND) has tracked Chinese military aircraft 277 times and naval vessels 144 times. Since September 2020, China has ramped up its use of gray zone tactics by incrementally increasing the number of military aircraft and naval ships operating around Taiwan.</p>	
8	<p>Cross-party MEPs sent joint letter to ICAO Council president and high-level EU officials expressing concern over China’s unilateral alteration of M503 air route</p>	
	<p>Vice-President of the European Parliament (EP) and Vice Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism Jan-Christoph Oetjen and 27 cross-party MEPs issued a joint letter on March 13 to President of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council Salvatore Sciacchitano voicing concern over China’s unilateral alteration of the M503 flight route and activation of the W122 and W123 eastbound flight routes.</p> <p><u>The joint letter pointed out that China deliberately waited until the completion of Taiwan’s democratic elections to unilaterally announce its intention to rescind the offset of flights on the M503 route and activate the W122 and W123 eastbound routes, without providing any concrete evidence of transportation needs to justify the change, noting that this indicated that China’s action was politically motivated. The letter further stated that the flight route changes not only jeopardized stability and security in Taiwan and the region but also complicated air traffic control in the Kinmen and Matsu areas and increased the risk of an accident.</u></p>	
9	<p>Economic power of Taiwanese women to be celebrated in New York</p>	
	<p>The 68th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) was held in New York till March 22. <u>The priority theme of CSW68 was “accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.”</u> During CSW68, Taiwan’s nongovernmental organizations promoted</p>	

	gender equality initiatives and shared Taiwan’s gender equality policies and experience through various side events.
10	Taiwan was invited to the third Summit for Democracy
	Taiwan’s Digital Minister Audrey Tang was invited to participate in the third Summit for Democracy, a U.S.-backed democracy summit, in Seoul on March 18 where he delivered an video message. In his remark, Minister Tang pointed out that Taiwan suffered disproportionately from concerted cyberattacks and democratic Taiwan is willing and able to work with all stakeholders to ensure AI develops safely and sustainably and that Taiwan is a key global supplier of the semiconductor chips critical for such technology applications.
11	Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary reiterated issues regarding Taiwan should be resolved peacefully
	With regard to China’s military threats against Taiwan, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said at a press conference on March 5 that the government of <u>Japan expected issues regarding Taiwan to be resolved peacefully and pledged to convey this position to China.</u> <u>Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi</u> said that China was rapidly boosting its military power without sufficient transparency, which was presenting an unprecedented strategic challenge to the rules-based international order. He <u>reiterated that peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait were not only tied to Japan’s security but were also critically important to the international community.</u> He also said Japan would continue to work closely with the United States and other allies to maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.
12	Like- minded countries reaffirmed the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A joint statement by Australian and Malaysian prime ministers stressing the importance of peace and stability across Taiwan Strait and that all parties have a stake in conflict prevention was issued after the second Australia-Malaysia Annual Leaders’ Meeting on March 4. The prime ministers also stressed the need for open communication, reassurance, and transparency. 2. The Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC) released a video on March 8 announcing the launch of Operation Measure the Impact of a Shock in the Taiwan Strait (Operation MIST). The video emphasized that maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait was the joint responsibility of all countries. It also called on governments worldwide to squarely face the potential impacts of a cross-strait conflict on the global economy, as well as urging them to unite to prevent such conflict from happening.

13	<p align="center">US high officials warned China’s attempts to pressure Taiwan’s allies</p>
	<p>Speaking at a hearing on US Strategy in the Pacific held by the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on March 14, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Kritenbrink said that <u>the United States was disappointed at Nauru’s switching diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China, noting that China used economic enticements and wrongfully cited and misrepresented United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758</u>. He also suggested that Taiwan’s three Pacific allies be careful when engaging with China, pointing out that China was often unable to honor its commitments, leading to negative outcomes. The United States would cooperate closely with Taiwan’s three Pacific allies to prevent China from making inroads.</p> <p>US Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs Ely Ratner also delivered an opening statement at the Senate hearing, in which he expressed concern over China’s relentless use of economic coercion and other tactics to exert pressure on Taiwan’s diplomatic allies.</p>
14	<p align="center">Taiwan rated happiest country in East Asia</p>
	<p>The U.N. World Happiness Report published on March 20 ranked Taiwan as the happiest country in East Asia, sixth happiest in Asia, and 31st happiest in the world. The report listed 143 countries and regions around the world and ranked countries based on six factors such as GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom, generosity and corruption.</p>
15	<p align="center">Taiwan most affected by disinformation</p>
	<p>Taiwan has been rated as the country most affected by disinformation for the 11th consecutive year in a study by the global research project Varieties of Democracy. According to the report, Taiwan continues to be a target of disinformation originating from China. After Taiwan, Latvia and Palestine ranked second and third respectively, while Nicaragua, North Korea, Venezuela and China.</p> <p>Each country listed in the report was given a score, and the lower the score, the greater the impact of disinformation was in that country. Taiwan’s score of 0.092 was the lowest among all countries listed, and was similar to its score last year.</p>

