EU-Taiwan political relations and cooperation

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The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the report by Charlie WEIMERS (ECR, SE) on a European Parliament recommendation to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on EU-Taiwan political relations and cooperation.

Members consider that Taiwan is a key partner and democratic ally in the Indo-Pacific on its own merit as a robust democracy and technologically advanced economy that could contribute to maintaining a rules-based order in the middle of an intensifying great power rivalry. They also stated that given Taiwan's location, its critical role in global high-tech supply chains, and its democratic way of life makes it strategically important for European democracies. The EU and its Member States are called on to take a proactive role in working with like-minded international partners to pursue peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and to establish partnerships with the democratic government of Taiwan.

Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA)

Against this background, the resolution recommended that the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission to work closely with the Member States to intensify EU-Taiwan political relations and to pursue a comprehensive and enhanced partnership under the guidance of the EU's One China Policy.

Stressing the importance of trade and economic relations between the EU and Taiwan, Members encouraged Taiwan to **increase investments** in the EU. The resolution called for urgent work to begin such as an impact assessment, public consultation and scoping exercise on a Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA) with the Taiwanese authorities in preparation for negotiations to deepen bilateral economic ties.

Chinese military pressure

Members expressed grave concern about China's continued military belligerence against Taiwan and pressure on it, notably through China's considerable investment in military capabilities, its assault exercises and frequent violations of Taiwan's airspace.

According to the resolution, **maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific is a core interest for the EU** and its Member States. A military conflict in the Taiwan Strait would not only create significant economic disruptions affecting European interests but would also seriously undermine the rules-based order in the region, as well as democratic governance with human rights, democracy and rule of law at its core. As regards the existing tensions across the Taiwan Strait, Members insisted that any change to cross-strait relations must not be made unilaterally nor against the will of Taiwanese citizens.

Taiwan's position on an international level

Members strongly advocate for Taiwan's meaningful participation as an observer in meetings, mechanisms and activities of international bodies. They urged Member States and the EU institutions to support international initiatives calling for Taiwan's participation in international organisations. Dialogue and cooperation with Taiwan should be encouraged in all industrial sectors and supply chains, in particular emerging industries and industries of strategic importance such as electric vehicles, robotics and smart manufacturing, as well as semiconductor technologies. The disruption to global supply chains caused by the pandemic has put **Taiwan at the centre stage of the technological drive** and has also made

the EU realise its own vulnerabilities, highlighting the urgency of reflecting on how to reduce its dependencies on external actors.

Further recommendations include:

- encouraging Taiwan to support the EU's agenda for its green and digital transition, as well as the EU's efforts toward diversification of value and supply chains, as the pandemic has accelerated demands for both;

- further promoting current EU-Taiwan cooperation on research and innovation in the Horizon Europe Framework Programme (2021-2027);

- encouraging tourism and youth exchanges with Taiwan through initiatives such as the working holiday, the Erasmus programmes or the Taiwan-Europe Connectivity Scholarship and exploring opportunities for cooperation in higher education and other areas with the goal of strengthening Chinese and Taiwanese expertise in Europe and contributing to a better understanding of Europe in Taiwan.

Lastly, Members commended Taiwan as an outstanding partner in promoting human rights and freedom of religion in the Indo-Pacific region.