

UK legislators fight for Taiwan name

Written by Taipei Times

Saturday, 09 February 2019 06:22 -



UK legislators Dennis Rogan, left, and Nigel Evans, cochairs of the British-Taiwanese All-Party Parliamentary Group, are pictured in undated photographs.

Photo: Wikipedia

A group of UK legislators urged a UK-based English-language proficiency test company to correct the designation of Taiwan on its Web site, which implies that the nation is part of China.

In a joint letter issued on Jan. 28 and addressed to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Nigel Evans and Dennis Rogan, the cochairs of the British-Taiwanese All-Party Parliamentary Group, together with 44 legislators, called on the British Council, the chief manager of the test and its global partners to change the designation of Taiwan on its Web site from “Taiwan, China” to “Taiwan.”

Calling it a surprise to learn that IELTS had made the decision to change the designation from “Taiwan” to “Taiwan, China” in October last year, the letter said the changed designation is “inaccurate and misleading,” as Taiwan has never been part of the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

The legislators said that the wrongful designation is contrary to the UK’s longstanding policy of referring to Taiwan as simply “Taiwan,” quoting a July 10 statement by British Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Mark Field.

“The change has resulted in great confusion and protest among Taiwanese people and the IELTS community. Many Taiwanese students and professionals who take the IELTS feel their rights and nationality are being sacrificed,” the letter said, adding that IELTS has offered no

UK legislators fight for Taiwan name

Written by Taipei Times

Saturday, 09 February 2019 06:22 -

public explanation for its decision.

The legislators concluded that the decision was made due to pressure from Beijing, which sees Taiwan as part of the PRC's territory.

IELTS apparently made the decision based on commercial interests, the letter said, urging the company not to bow to Chinese pressure.

"Although IELTS is a private enterprise, it should not have the terms of its business dictated by a foreign government. Succumbing to this political pressure undermines our democratic principles and harms the free operations of international business," it said.

The letter further noted that UK-Taiwan educational exchanges have significantly increased over the years, with about 12,000 Taiwanese studying in the UK as of 2017.

"For many Taiwanese students and professionals, taking the IELTS is an essential stepping stone to study and work in the UK. If IELTS were to change the designation to 'Taiwan,' it may well allow the UK to continue increasing its educational exchanges with Taiwan," it said.

The letter concluded by reiterating its call for IELTS to reconsider its decision and amend Taiwan's designation on the IELTS Web site as soon as possible.

Established in 1989, IELTS is one of the major English-language tests in the world, frequently taken by Taiwanese students before applying to study at academic institutions in Australia, the UK, Canada and New Zealand.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the move by IELTS last year, criticizing Beijing for again "blatantly interfering with private-sector commercial activities and international business operations with political means."

UK legislators fight for Taiwan name

Written by Taipei Times

Saturday, 09 February 2019 06:22 -

Source: [Taipei Times - 2019/02/09](#)