

Taiwan considering PRC media swap

Written by Taipei Times

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The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) said yesterday it was considering relaxing regulations to allow Chinese media outlets to establish branches in Taipei and vice versa.

Currently, only individual Chinese reporters, not media organizations, are allowed to enter Taiwan on three-month visas. The same rule applies to Taiwanese journalists in China.

MAC Vice Chairman Liu Te-shun told a press conference yesterday that the issue would require negotiations between the Straits Exchange Foundation and its Chinese counterpart, the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait.

With the spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, Yang Yi, is scheduled to visit Taipei on Monday, Liu said he expected that both sides would exchange opinions on the issue.

Taiwan began its first media contacts with China in September 1987 when former Independence Evening Post reporters Hsu Lu and Lee Yuan-te flouted government rules by reporting from Beijing. The government barred them from leaving the country for a year after they returned.

Beijing first sent its correspondents to Taiwan in 1991 and allowed Taiwanese journalists to base themselves in China starting in 1994. In November 2000, Taiwan allowed Chinese journalists to be stationed here.

Because Beijing only allowed certain Taiwanese media outlets to send their reporters to China, Liu said the government had often expressed the hope that Beijing would respect Taiwanese correspondents' right to cover news, but the result had not been satisfactory.

Liu said that allowing Chinese media outlets to enter the local market was different from letting Chinese businesses invest here because the journalism business is unique.

Since taking office in May last year, the administration of President Ma Ying-jeou has held three high-level rounds of cross-strait talks with China, signing nine agreements.

The agreements have focused on boosting trade and investment, such as regular and direct transportation links.

To promote "Chinese culture," Ma last month proposed that both sides jointly publish a "Greater China dictionary."

The idea was echoed by the recent Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT)-Chinese Communist Party (CCP) forum. The forum agreed to push for cross-strait cultural and educational cooperation and strengthen media exchanges.

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In September, the two sides are scheduled to hold a “cultural summit” in Beijing to discuss several issues important to the promotion of cross-strait cultural exchanges.

Officials are preparing to negotiate issues such as arranging exchange visits by cultural officials, organizing exhibitions, protecting intellectual property rights and cooperating on film production.

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