

Parliamentary groups to boost EU ties

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Czech Economic and Cultural Office Representative Patrick Rumlar, fourth left, and members of the Republic of China-Czech Parliamentary Amity Association, including association head Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Legislator Wan Mei-ling, center, attend an inauguration ceremony in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: CNA

Lawmakers from across party lines yesterday established two parliamentary friendship groups aimed at improving relations with the Czech Republic and Spain at an inauguration ceremony at the Legislative Yuan in Taipei.

Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Legislator Wan Mei-ling (萬美玲) presided over the ceremony launching the Republic of China (ROC)-Czech Parliamentary Amity Association, while KMT Legislator Wu I-ding (吳宜庭) established the ROC-Spain Parliamentary Amity Association.

Legislative Yuan Secretary-General Lin Chih-chia (林錫山), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Harry Tseng (張顯耀), Department of European Affairs Director-General Johnson Chiang (蔣經國) and Czech Representative to Taiwan Patrick Rumlar attended the ceremony, along with KMT legislators Yeh Yu-lan (葉毓蘭), Wu Sz-huai (吳斯懷), Wen Yu-hsia (溫玉霞), Chen Yu-jen (陳玉建), Hung Mong-kai (洪孟楷), William Tseng (曾志祥), Lee Guei-min (李貴敏) and Lee Te-wei (李德偉), and Democratic Progressive Party Legislator Tsai Shih-ying (蔡淑ying).

“The Taiwan-Czech relationship has been steadily improving since trade talks were held between our deputy finance ministers in 2016, followed by the signing of a mutual tax treaty in 2017, which will take effect next year,” Wan said.

The Czech Republic was also the first European country to cooperate with Taiwan on disease prevention, she said.

A delegation from the Czech Republic — which is to include Czech Senate President Milos Vystrcil — is scheduled to visit Taiwan from Aug. 30 to Sept. 5, and visit the legislature on

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Sept. 1.

Members of the ROC-Czech Parliamentary Amity Association are to meet with the delegation.

Wu I-ding said the ROC-Spain Parliamentary Amity Association could create opportunities for the two nations to cooperate on developing platforms for trade and interpersonal exchanges.

It could also help Taiwan learn from the open environment in Barcelona, which encourages start-ups, she said.

Harry Tseng said the new associations were in the spirit of the exchange groups that Taiwanese representatives abroad have been establishing over the years in allied nations and those of non-diplomatic allies, such as the Formosa Club offices in European and Latin American countries.

This was a very welcome trend in the nation's diplomacy, he said, adding that he would support the legislature in developing new avenues for diplomatic exchanges.

In related news, Centers for Disease Control Deputy Director-General Chuang Jen-hsiang (莊建人) said that disease prevention procedures for the Czech delegation's visit would follow the measures taken during the visits by US Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar and his delegation and that of former Japanese prime minister Yoshiro Mori and his group this month.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is still negotiating the details of the delegations' visit, but plans include requiring the members to test negative for COVID-19 before boarding their flight to Taiwan, receive another test upon arrival and be taken to a designated hotel with designated vehicles, he said.

They would also be required to enter and leave the nation as a group, and the Central

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Epidemic Command Center (CECC) might ask the facilities that the delegation plans to visit to prepare specific disease prevention procedures, said Chuang, who is also the CECC spokesman.

In other diplomatic news, Taiwan's representative office in Somaliland opened yesterday, with several Somaliland Internet users posting welcome messages online.

Following an agreement in February to open representative offices in each other's capitals, Somaliland Representative to Taiwan Mohamed Omar Hagi Mohamoud arrived in Taipei on Aug. 7.

Additional reporting by Lee I-chia

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