

## Swedish MP calls for name change to Taipei office

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Swedish Member of Parliament Hampus Hagman is pushing for changing the name of the nation's trade office in Taipei to signal improved relations with "Asia's perhaps foremost democracy."

Hagman on Wednesday last week proposed renaming the Swedish Trade and Invest Council to "Sweden's Office in Taipei," following similar changes by other nations.

The Swedish Trade and Invest Council, part of Business Sweden, is owned by the Swedish government and Swedish industry.

Taiwan and Sweden share important values such as respect for democracy, human rights, the rule of law and freedom of speech, Hagman said in the motion, adding that the two nations already have strong academic and trade ties, but there is potential to deepen the relationship.

Business Sweden acts as an economic representative, but as it has expanded to provide consular services, there is reason to make it an official office, he said.

Sweden's Statement of Foreign Policy for this year said it intended to "defend and promote democracy around the world" and "build alliances with like-minded countries and organizations that want to help strengthen democracy," he said.

The statement emphasizes the need to support efforts to ensure open societies, freedom of the press and LGBT rights, all of which support his proposal to strengthen ties with Taiwan, he said.

There are also economic reasons for strengthening ties, as Taiwan has a large high-tech industry, he added.

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It is not the first time that Hagman has spoken up for Taiwan.

In a February hearing with the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, he voiced support for Taiwan's inclusion in the WHO based on the nation's contributions to the fight against COVID-19.

The UK, Australia, Japan, Poland and the Netherlands have all made similar name changes in the past decade.

In May 2012, the Australian Commerce and Industry Office changed its name to the Australian Office Taipei, followed by the UK in May 2015, when it changed the name of its office from the British Trade and Cultural Office to the British Office Taipei.

In January 2017, Japan renamed its Interchange Association to the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association.

Poland quickly followed, in June 2018 changing the name of its office from the Warsaw Trade Office to the Polish Office in Taipei.

Most recently, the Netherlands in April renamed its office from the Netherlands Trade and Investment Office to the Netherlands Office Taipei.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2020/09/22](#)