



A logo is pictured at the headquarters of the WHO in Geneva, Switzerland, on Jan. 30.

Photo: Reuters

A total of 106 lawmakers from seven European countries have sent letters urging the WHO director-general to invite Taiwan to this month's World Health Assembly (WHA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

The WHA, the decisionmaking body of the WHO, held its first-ever virtual annual meeting on May 18 and 19 with a reduced agenda due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The rest of the annual meeting is to take place from Monday to Saturday next week.

In separate letters addressed to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the parliamentarians from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia expressed their strong support for Taiwan's inclusion in the WHA meeting, especially at a time when the world is struggling with the pandemic, given Taiwan's exemplary performance in containing its COVID-19 outbreak.

A joint letter addressed to Tedros on Oct. 22 was signed by Waldemar Andzel, chairman of the Polish-Taiwanese Parliamentarian Group; Istvan Tiba, chairman of the Taiwan-Hungarian Parliamentary Friendship Association; Peter Osusky, chairman of the Slovakia-Taiwan Parliamentary Group; and Marek Benda, chairman of the Czech parliament's Czech Republic-Taiwan Friendship Group.

A separate batch of joint letters sent to Tedros from Oct. 22 to Thursday were signed by Gintaras Steponavicius, chair of the Taiwan Friendship Group of the Lithuanian parliament; Janis Vucans, chairman of the Latvian parliament's Group for Inter-parliamentary Relations with Taiwan; and Kalle Laanet, chairman of the Estonia-Taiwan Friendship Group, as well as 99 other lawmakers from the three countries, the ministry said.

The ministry thanked the lawmakers for their support and urged the WHO to allow Taiwan's

EU lawmakers back Taiwan WHA bid

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participation for the benefit of all parties involved.

Denying Taiwan participation at the WHA is a violation of the human rights of the 23 million Taiwanese and is detrimental to global cooperation in the fight against COVID-19, it said.

The ministry would continue to cooperate with like-minded countries to push for Taiwan's participation in the WHO, it added.

After the People's Republic of China took China's seat at the WHO in 1972, Taiwan has not been able to participate in the WHA, except from 2009 to 2016, when it attended as an observer at a time when cross-strait relations were warmer under the then-Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) government.

Additional reporting by Lu Yi-hsuan

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