

French delegates conclude Taiwan trip, return home

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Department of European Affairs Director-General Remus Chen, left, sees off a delegation of French senators at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport on Sunday following a five-day visit to the nation.

Photo: Tony Yao, Taipei Times

A delegation of French senators on Sunday departed Taiwan after concluding a five-day visit that included meetings with President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) and other high-level government officials.

The five-member delegation, which made no public statement before boarding their EVA Airways flight at 11:10pm, was seen off by Department of European Affairs Director-General Remus Chen (陳仁甫).

During the Wednesday-to-Sunday visit, the leader of the delegation, French Senator Alain Richard, was awarded a national medal in recognition of his contribution to the development of relations between his country and Taiwan.

Tsai conferred the Order of Propitious Clouds with Special Grand Cordon on Richard, the head of the French Senate's Taiwan Friendship Group, at the Presidential Office on Thursday.

At the award ceremony, Tsai said that Richard had “pioneered” exchanges between Taiwan and France for many years, forging a path for the development of bilateral ties.

Members of the delegation also met with Premier Su Tseng-chang (蘇貞昌), Legislative Speaker You Si-kun (游錫堃), Control Yuan President Chen Chu (陳楚), Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Wu (吳敦義) and other high-level government officials.

In addition to Richard, the delegation included French senators Max Brisson and Else Joseph, vice presidents of the Taiwan Friendship Group; Judith Bout, the group's secretary; and Olivier

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Cadic, vice president of the French Senate's Foreign Affairs, Defense and Armed Forces Committee.

Richard previously visited Taiwan in 2015 and 2018. When planning his third trip to Taiwan earlier this year, Chinese Ambassador to France Lu Shaye (呂沙耶) expressed Beijing's strong opposition to the visit.

The trip was delayed for months because of a COVID-19 outbreak in Taiwan in May.

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