

EU lawmakers arrive on first visit

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Premier Su Tseng-chang, seventh right, meets members of a 13-person delegation from the European Parliament in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: Lee Hsin-fang, Taipei Times

The European Parliament's first delegation to Taiwan arrived yesterday in the nation for discussions on fighting disinformation, with delegation members scheduled to meet President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) today.

The 13-person delegation is visiting Taiwan on a three-day trip, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

The delegation includes seven members of the "Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation": committee president Raphael Glucksmann of France, Andrius Kubilius and Petras Austrevicius of Lithuania, Marketa Gregorova of the Czech Republic, Andreas Schieder of Austria, Georgios Kyrtos of Greece and Marco Dreosto of Italy, the ministry said.

"The delegation will discuss Taiwanese experiences in [the] fight against disinformation; attempts at interference in Taiwanese democracy, media, culture and education; as well as Taiwan's efforts to reinforce its cyberresilience," the European Parliament said in a news release.

"Taiwan uses innovative tools and involves the whole Taiwanese society to address all types of interference in its democracy, without restricting freedom of speech and media," it said.

It is the first time the European Parliament has sent an official delegation to Taiwan, which is significant, Presidential Office spokesman Xavier Chang (張中江) said in a statement, adding that Tsai would meet with them at the Presidential Office this morning.

This year, the European Parliament has passed 12 resolutions friendly to Taiwan, showing that

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Taiwan-EU relations are becoming ever closer, Chang said.

Yesterday, the delegation met with Premier Su Tseng-chang (蘇貞昌), the ministry said, adding that Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Harry Tseng (鄭文燦) was to host a banquet for them on behalf of Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Wu (吳敦義).

The delegation would attend a news conference at a hotel in Taipei tomorrow, the ministry added.

European Union Centre in Taiwan executive director Marc Cheng (鄭明和) told the Taipei Times by telephone that while other European lawmakers have visited, this group got more attention due to the timing and nature of the visit.

The special committee was just created last year, and its members are visiting Taiwan at a time when Taiwan-US-China relations are changing and after the EU released a report titled The EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, he said.

While the European Parliament is playing an increasingly important role in the bloc and can influence its budget, whether its resolutions can sway the EU's overall policies remains to be seen, he said.

Nonetheless, Taiwan-related issues are certainly grabbing more attention across Europe, he said.

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