

Taiwan opens 'de facto' embassy in Lithuania

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Appointed Representative to Lithuania Eric Huang, third right, and colleagues pose yesterday in front of the plaque of the newly established Taiwanese Representative Office in Lithuania.

Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Yesterday, Taiwan opened a de facto embassy in Lithuania.

“The Taiwanese Representative Office in Lithuania officially commences its operations in Vilnius on Nov. 18, 2021. This blessed opening will charter a new and promising course for bilateral relations between Taiwan and Lithuania,” the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement yesterday.

“The first representative appointed to this new office will be Mr Eric Huang (黃啟), currently our chief of mission in Latvia. His new title and responsibilities will immediately take effect on the day that he assumes his official duties in Lithuania,” it added.

There is tremendous potential for cooperation between industrial sectors, including semiconductors, lasers and financial technology, it said.

“Taiwan will cherish and promote this new friendship based on our shared values,” it added.

China demanded in August that the Baltic state withdraw its ambassador to Beijing and recalled its ambassador in Vilnius after Taiwan announced that its office in the city would be called the “Taiwanese Representative Office in Lithuania.”

The names of other Taiwan offices in Europe and the US use “Taipei,” to avoid referring to the nation itself, which angers China.

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Beijing has also been angered by Lithuania's decision to open its own representative office in Taiwan, although a definitive date has yet to be set.

China's dispute with Lithuania over Taiwan has also drawn in the US, which has offered its support to Vilnius to withstand Chinese pressure.

Many other countries maintain de facto embassies in Taipei, including several of Lithuania's fellow EU member states, as well as Britain, Australia and the US.

Meanwhile, the Lithuanian government has repeatedly affirmed its decision to open a representative office in Taiwan, despite the powerful pressure campaign put on by Beijing.

Lithuania's office in Taiwan is expected to be established early next year, Lithuanian Minister of the Economy and Innovation Ausrine Armonaite said when receiving a visiting delegation from Taiwan last month.

Former vice president Chen Chien-jen (陳建生) has been invited by Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs Gabrielius Landsbergis to attend a democracy forum in Vilnius today and tomorrow, and Chen would deliver a speech titled "Taiwan as a Litmus Case for Democracy" tomorrow, the ministry said on Monday.

Chen visited Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation in Poland before heading to Lithuania, according to the ministry.

Additional reporting by Lin Chia-nan

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