

German mention of 'Taiwan' lauded

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A German flag flutters in front of the Reichstag Building in Berlin on Oct. 19.

Photo: AFP

Use of the phrase “democratic Taiwan” by Germany’s new coalition government in official document shows that Taiwan-China issues are not about “independence” against “unification,” but about democracy against authoritarianism, Representative to Germany Shieh Jhy-wei (謝志偉) said yesterday.

Germany’s Social Democratic Party, Free Democratic Party and the Greens — known as the “traffic light coalition” for their colors — on Wednesday inked a coalition agreement following elections on Sept. 26.

The agreement, a blueprint for their governance for the next four years, mentions “Taiwan,” which is unprecedented, showing that the new German government is paying close attention to cross-strait peace and supports Taiwan’s participation in international affairs, Shieh wrote on Facebook in Mandarin.

In particular, the word “Taiwan” is modified by the adjective “*demokratisch*,” German for “democratic,” he said.

“As Taiwan’s envoy to Germany, I would like to express respect and gratitude to the new German government,” Shieh wrote.

The wording highlights that Taiwan-China issues are not about unification or independence, which is how Beijing and its proxies in Taiwan frame the debate to conceal the real problem, he said.

When the debate is reduced to a choice between unification and independence, that implies it

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is an internal affair, excluding outside intervention, which is exactly what China wants, Shieh said.

When the framing shows that there is a struggle between democracy and autocracy, it forces observers to make a values-based assessment, he said, adding that in this context, Taiwan's like-minded partners would strive to defend democracy and back the nation.

Shieh also thanked members of the Germany-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group and the German-Taiwan Association.

The association, which earlier this year was renamed from the German-Chinese Association-Friends of Taiwan, is more than 60 years old, he said.

It is lovely to work with these people to fight for Taiwan, Shieh said.

In Taipei, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also thanked the German government for its support.

The new coalition government has outlined its plans to promote rules-based trade, security in the Asia-Pacific region, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, ministry spokeswoman Joanne Ou (歐安) said in a statement.

The ministry looks forward to working with the German government to deepen mutually beneficial relations and to maintain the "status quo" across the Taiwan Strait, Ou said.

The bilateral relationship has steadily deepened, Ou said, adding that over the past four years, the two sides have signed 12 pacts.

Among them is an aviation service agreement that was signed on July 15 and took effect

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immediately, paving the way for direct flights between Taipei and Munich, she said.

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