

## Bundestag votes to expand Taiwan ties

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The Reichstag, which houses the Bundestag, is pictured in Berlin on Wednesday.

**Photo: Reuters**

The German Bundestag has passed a resolution calling on the government to reassess its Taiwan policy and deepen exchanges with Taipei, but ruled out the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

The Petitions Committee of Germany's new parliament, which met for the first time in October following a federal election in September, passed the resolution on Thursday.

The committee also referred an earlier motion on establishing formal diplomatic relations with the Republic of China to the German Federal Foreign Office and each parliamentary caucus.

The resolution says that since the Federal Republic of Germany and the People's Republic of China established diplomatic relations in 1972, Berlin has adhered to the "one China" policy, which excludes the possibility of forging diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

However, Germany is supportive of conducting close political, economic and social engagements with Taiwan, and expanding cooperation with Taipei is in the interests of Germany and Europe, it states.

In light of the rapidly changing international situation, the German government should re-evaluate its policy toward Taiwan, including potentially recognizing it as a sovereign state, and considering deepening exchanges and cooperation, the resolution says.

The motion asking Germany to establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan was initiated by German national Michael Kreuzberg in May 2019, and received more than 50,000 signatures in October of that year, requiring that it be sent to the Bundestag for discussion.

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The Petitions Committee held a public hearing on the motion in December 2019.

At the hearing, Petra Sigmund, director-general for Asia and the Pacific at the German Federal Foreign Office, said Taiwan and Germany share values, such as democracy and freedom, and conduct frequent exchanges in the economic, cultural and academic spheres.

Germany plans to expand ties with Taiwan, she said.

However, Germany excludes the possibility of establishing diplomatic ties with Taiwan under its “one China” policy, Sigmund said.

The petition was subsequently shelved.

Taiwan’s representative office in Germany welcomed the passage of the resolution on Thursday and thanked German lawmakers for supporting improved relations with Taiwan, saying that it looks forward to seeing the German government’s response to the motion.

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