

Slovenia to establish office in Taiwan

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Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa participates in an interview with Indian television station Doordarshan on Monday.

Photo: screen grab from Doordarshan

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday welcomed Slovenia's plan to establish a representative office in Taiwan, after Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa revealed the plan in an interview with Indian TV station Doordarshan on Monday.

Taiwan is a democratic country that respects international democratic standards and international laws, the Slovenian prime minister said in the interview.

Slovenia and Taiwan are working on "exchanging representatives," he said. "Of course, this will not be on the level of embassies. It will be on the same level as many of the EU member countries."

"When I spoke with our businessmen who are trading with Taiwan, they told me that we are trading with Taiwan, but those companies from Taiwan are also trading with mainland China... They are doing this amongst themselves, but at the same time they're opposing the same relations between Taiwan and other countries, which is ridiculous," he said.

While the naming of the Taiwanese Representative Office in Lithuania has sparked some criticism in the EU nation, Jansa said that he did not consider it an issue.

"Lithuania is not an exception. There are some slight differences in naming the missions, but this is not important," he said. "I think that any kind of proceeding pressure on Lithuania and some other countries in Europe will not benefit China's government. Good trade relations are a common interest."

After witnessing Taiwan's disease prevention measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, Jansa

said he personally called Minister of Health and Welfare Chen Shih-chung (陳時中) and they spoke via videoconference.

“Actually, we have normal relations with Taiwan,” he said.

Jansa said that he had visited Taiwan four or five times, and that he holds the view that Taiwanese should have the right to determine their future.

“If they want to join China, if it’s their free will without any pressure, without any military intervention and without any blackmailing, without strategic cheating as it is happening in Hong Kong currently, then we will support it. But if Taiwanese people want to live independently, we are here to support also this position,” he said.

“India is a crucial factor here to guarantee the balance of power and with this, the very foundation of possible peaceful solutions,” he added.

Jansa also backed Taiwan’s bid to join the WHO, saying: “I think it would also benefit China to have a neighboring country be a member of such an organization.”

Ministry spokeswoman Joanne Ou (歐陽) yesterday at a news conference in Taipei welcomed the Slovenian government’s plan to open a representative office, adding that the ministry appreciated Jansa’s “insightful” remarks.

“Prime Minister Jansa is a good friend of Taiwan and has visited the nation several times,” she said, thanking him for speaking the truth on international issues.

Taiwan and Slovenia have close economic and trade interactions, while their health ministers have shared their experiences with the pandemic via videoconference, she said.

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The government would continue to deepen the nation's relations with Slovenia and other democratic partners to develop mutually beneficial and resilient partnerships, Ou said.

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