

Lithuania applies to open Taiwan office

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A plaque hangs on a door at the Taiwanese Representative Office in Lithuania in Vilnius on Nov. 18 last year.

Photo: EPA-EFE

An application from Lithuania to open a representative office in Taiwan has been received, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

The ministry expressed its sincere welcome to Lithuania for opening an office in Taiwan and would assist as necessary, it said.

Confirmation of the application came after Lithuanian Minister of the Economy and Innovation Ausrine Armonaite said that her country was well prepared to open such an office.

“We are fully ready to open a Lithuanian trade office,” Armonaite told the Central News Agency. “And I just sent a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan, so that we could receive the official certificate so that we can open it officially, but the preparatory work is already being conducted. And we are fully ready now.”

Ministry deputy spokesman Tsuei Ching-lin (譚清麟) said that after Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Wu (吳敦義) on July 20 last year announced that Taiwan would open a representative office in Vilnius, Lithuania began the amendment process to set up an office in Taiwan.

The Taiwanese Representative Office opened on Nov. 18.

In late September last year, Lithuania’s parliament passed a legislative revision that gave the green light to open a representative office in countries like Taiwan with which the Baltic state does not have formal diplomatic relations.

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Armonaite said at the time that the move by parliament would allow Lithuania to explore overseas business opportunities by boosting economic ties with other countries.

Taiwan and Lithuania are at the strategic forefront of defending democracy and freedom, and have become two like-minded partners in safeguarding their shared ideals and values, the ministry said.

Both sides have supported each other amid the COVID-19 pandemic, overcoming difficulties posed by the disease, it said.

The ministry said it firmly believes that after an office has been established on each side, Taiwan and Lithuania would step up cooperation in a wide range of fields, including post-pandemic economic recovery, trade and investment, and education and scientific research, as well as supply chain security.

Lithuania has faced political and economic pressure from Beijing over its decision to allow the use of the word “Taiwanese” in the name of Taiwan’s representative office in the Baltic state.

Taiwan typically uses “Taipei Economic and Cultural Office” or “Taipei Representative Office” as names for its de facto embassies in most countries, mainly because the host country adheres to Beijing’s “one China” principle.

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