

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2021/2041(INI)	Procedure completed
EU-Taiwan political relations and cooperation		
Subject 6.40.08 Relations with Asian countries		
Geographical area Taiwan		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Foreign Affairs	 WEIMERS Charlie	25/01/2021
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 GAHLER Michael	
		 MIKSER Sven	
		 CSEH Katalin	
		 BÜTIKOFER Reinhard	
		 BONFRISCO Anna	
		 MAUREL Emmanuel	

Key events			
29/04/2021	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
01/09/2021	Vote in committee		
09/09/2021	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0265/2021	Summary
19/10/2021	Debate in Parliament		
21/10/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0431/2021	Summary

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2021/2041(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 118
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/9/05865

Documentation gateway					
Committee draft report		PE691.427	23/04/2021	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE692.782	03/06/2021	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0265/2021	09/09/2021	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0431/2021	21/10/2021	EP	Summary

EU-Taiwan political relations and cooperation

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the report by Charlie WEIMERS (ECR, SE) on a European Parliament recommendation to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on EU-Taiwan political relations and cooperation.

Members consider that Taiwan is a key partner and democratic ally in the Indo-Pacific on its own merit as a robust democracy and technologically advanced economy that could contribute to maintaining a rules-based order in the middle of an intensifying great power rivalry. They also stated that given Taiwans location, its critical role in global high-tech supply chains, and its democratic way of life makes it strategically important for European democracies. The EU and its Member States are called on to take a proactive role in working with like-minded international partners to pursue peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and to establish partnerships with the democratic government of Taiwan.

Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA)

Against this background, the resolution recommended that the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission to work closely with the Member States to intensify EU-Taiwan political relations and to pursue a comprehensive and enhanced partnership under the guidance of the EUs One China Policy.

Stressing the importance of trade and economic relations between the EU and Taiwan, Members encouraged Taiwan to increase investments in the EU. The resolution called for urgent work to begin such as an impact assessment, public consultation and scoping exercise on a Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA) with the Taiwanese authorities in preparation for negotiations to deepen bilateral economic ties.

Chinese military pressure

Members expressed grave concern about Chinas continued military belligerence against Taiwan and pressure on it, notably through Chinas considerable investment in military capabilities, its assault exercises and frequent violations of Taiwans airspace.

According to the resolution, maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific is a core interest for the EU and its Member States. A military conflict in the Taiwan Strait would not only create significant economic disruptions affecting European interests but would also seriously undermine the rules-based order in the region, as well as democratic governance with human rights, democracy and rule of law at its core. As regards the existing tensions across the Taiwan Strait, Members insisted that any change to cross-strait relations must not be made unilaterally nor against the will of Taiwanese citizens.

Taiwans position on an international level

Members strongly advocate for Taiwans meaningful participation as an observer in meetings, mechanisms and activities of international bodies. They urged Member States and the EU institutions to support international initiatives calling for Taiwans participation in international organisations. Dialogue and cooperation with Taiwan should be encouraged in all industrial sectors and supply chains, in particular emerging industries and industries of strategic importance such as electric vehicles, robotics and smart manufacturing, as well as semiconductor technologies. The disruption to global supply chains caused by the pandemic has put Taiwan at the centre stage of the technological drive and has also made the EU realise its own vulnerabilities, highlighting the urgency of reflecting on how to reduce its dependencies on external actors.

Further recommendations include:

- encouraging Taiwan to support the EUs agenda for its green and digital transition, as well as the EUs efforts toward diversification of value and supply chains, as the pandemic has accelerated demands for both;
- further promoting current EU-Taiwan cooperation on research and innovation in the Horizon Europe Framework Programme (2021-2027);
- encouraging tourism and youth exchanges with Taiwan through initiatives such as the working holiday, the Erasmus programmes or the

Taiwan-Europe Connectivity Scholarship and exploring opportunities for cooperation in higher education and other areas with the goal of strengthening Chinese and Taiwanese expertise in Europe and contributing to a better understanding of Europe in Taiwan.

Lastly, Members commended Taiwan as an outstanding partner in promoting human rights and freedom of religion in the Indo-Pacific region.

EU-Taiwan political relations and cooperation

The European Parliament adopted by 580 votes to 26, with 66 abstentions, a recommendation to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on EU-Taiwan political relations and cooperation.

With a total amount of bilateral trade between the EU and Taiwan amounting to EUR 51 billion in 2019, Taiwan is the EU's 5th largest trading partner in Asia and its 15th largest trading partner in the world. China's continued military hostility and provocations against Taiwan pose a serious threat to the status quo between Taiwan and China, as well as to the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region and could lead to a dangerous escalation of tensions.

In 2016, the EU committed to using all available channels to encourage initiatives to promote cross-strait dialogue, cooperation and confidence-building. These aspirations have so far not been fulfilled. In October 2021, Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged to pursue reunification with Taiwan by allegedly peaceful means, which Member say raises serious doubts.

Enhanced comprehensive partnership

Members see Taiwan as a key partner and democratic ally in the Indo-Pacific region, as a robust democracy and technologically advanced economy that could help maintain a rules-based order in the middle of an intensifying great power rivalry.

In this context, Parliament recommended working with Member States to intensify political relations between the EU and Taiwan and to pursue a comprehensive and strengthened partnership in line with the EU's One China policy. It called for an urgent impact assessment, public consultation and scoping exercise on a bilateral investment agreement with the Taiwanese authorities.

In particular, Members stressed the importance of the economic and trade relationship between the EU and Taiwan, including issues related to multilateralism and the WTO, technology and public health, as well as essential cooperation on critical supplies such as semiconductors.

Chinese military pressure

Members expressed grave concern about China's continued military belligerence against Taiwan and pressure on it, notably through China's considerable investment in military capabilities, its assault exercises and frequent violations of Taiwan's airspace.

According to Members, maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific is a core interest for the EU and its Member States. A military conflict in the Taiwan Strait would not only create significant economic disruptions affecting European interests but would also seriously undermine the rules-based order in the region, as well as democratic governance with human rights, democracy and rule of law at its core. As regards the existing tensions across the Taiwan Strait, Members insisted that any change to cross-strait relations must not be made unilaterally nor against the will of Taiwanese citizens.

Taiwan's position on an international level

Parliament strongly advocated for Taiwan's meaningful participation as an observer in meetings, mechanisms and activities of international bodies. It urged Member States and the EU institutions to support international initiatives calling for Taiwan's participation in international organisations.

Dialogue and cooperation with Taiwan should be encouraged in all industrial sectors and supply chains, in particular emerging industries and industries of strategic importance such as electric vehicles, robotics and smart manufacturing, as well as semiconductor technologies. Members suggested highlighting Taiwan's central role in strategic sectors such as 5G, as Taiwan is home to the world's largest foundry and the world's largest producer of semiconductors.

Further recommendations include:

- encouraging Taiwan to support the EU's agenda for its green and digital transition, as well as the EU's efforts toward diversification of value and supply chains, as the pandemic has accelerated demands for both;
- further promoting current EU-Taiwan cooperation on research and innovation in the Horizon Europe Framework Programme (2021-2027);
- encouraging tourism and youth exchanges with Taiwan through initiatives such as the working holiday, the Erasmus programmes or the Taiwan-Europe Connectivity Scholarship and exploring opportunities for cooperation in higher education and other areas with the goal of strengthening Chinese and Taiwanese expertise in Europe and contributing to a better understanding of Europe in Taiwan.
- deepening cooperation with Taiwan in confronting disinformation from malign third countries.

Lastly, Parliament called for the name of the European Economic and Trade Office in Taiwan to European Union Office in Taiwan in order to reflect the broad scope of the reciprocal ties.