

TAIWAN NEWSLETTER

President Lai announces NT\$1.25 trillion in special defense spending

President Lai Ching-te convened a high-level national security meeting and announced plans to invest NT\$1.25 trillion (€34.33 billion) over eight years in a special defence budget, November 26, introducing two major action plans to safeguard democratic Taiwan in response to intensifying threats from China. The first plan focuses on upholding national sovereignty through comprehensive democratic defence, including by establishing a permanent task force to counter Beijing's attempts to eliminate Taiwan's sovereignty. The second plan aims to bolster defence capabilities whilst developing a robust defence industry. The major investment plan will develop an advanced defence system, including the



T-Dome multi-layered air defence system; look to introduce AI-integrated capabilities; and seek to enhance indigenous defence capabilities. Defence spending will exceed 3 percent of GDP next year, reaching 5 percent by 2030.

In his speech, President Lai also emphasised that democracy is not a provocation and that Taiwan's existence is no excuse for aggressors to disrupt the status quo, before calling for unity across government, political parties, and citizens.

Taiwan and Belgium advance ties

Deputy Foreign Minister François Chih-chung Wu and Secretary General of Flanders Chancellery and Foreign Office Julie Bynens hosted the second joint commission meeting in Brussels, November 20, underlining the bilateral commitment to deepening co-operation.

Officials from Taiwan's Ministries of Economics, Education, Foreign Affairs, Labour, Transportation and Communications exchanged views with Belgian counterparts on commerce and invest-

ment, education, employment and vocational training, public health, sustainable energy, and technology. They also explored potential cooperation in agriculture, cyber security, digital economy, diplomatic personnel training, and semi-conductors.



Deputy FM Wu addresses Berlin Security Conference

Deputy Foreign Minister François Chih-chung Wu called for an expanded Taiwan-Europe partnership to safeguard democracy and global stability at the Berlin Security Conference, November 19.

In his keynote speech titled "The Cross-Continental Defense of Democracy: Building Resilience and Innovation through Taiwan-European Cooperation," Wu highlighted challenges, including supply chain vulnerabilities exposed by COVID-19, economic nationalism, and Russia's war against Ukraine. He also not-

ed that expanding cooperation amongst China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea threatens free trade and democracy worldwide.

Deputy Minister Wu underscored Taiwan's importance as a cornerstone in regional security and its key role in global high-tech supply chains, warning that cross-strait conflict would devastate Indo-Pacific security and disrupt technology supply chains. He further urged unity against cognitive warfare, cyberattacks, economic coercion, and hybrid attacks from authoritarian regimes.

"Left-Handed Girl" screens in Brussels

Taiwan's submission for best international feature film at the Academy Awards, "Left-Handed Girl", will screen at Cineflagay in Brussels from December 3 to January 3. Directed by Tsou Shih-ching, the acclaimed film follows a single mother who moves to Taipei for work, opening a stand with her two daughters at a bustling night market. The feature won the Gan Foundation Award for Distribution at Cannes Critics' Week and was shortlisted at several other film festivals around the world.



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