



By: TA | AP Insight

Taiwan calls for closer EU ties



Taiwan's deputy leader urged the European Union to boost security and trade ties with the self-governing island and support its democracy in the face of **growing threats** by China, in a rare address to a group of international lawmakers in Brussels on Friday.

"Peace in the Taiwan Strait is essential to global stability and economic continuity, and international opposition against unilateral changes to the status quo by force cannot be overstated," Vice President Bi-Khim Hsiao told lawmakers assembled for a China-focused conference in the European Parliament building.

While Hsiao did not formally address the whole EU Parliament — the European trade bloc does not have formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan — her visit was still likely to draw ire from Beijing.

"In an era marked by increasing fragmentation, volatility and rising authoritarianism, this gathering affirms something vital — that democracies, even when far apart, are not alone," she added to a standing ovation in a small chamber of the European Parliament.

Hsiao also called on the lawmakers from countries including Germany and Spain to collaborate more on trusted supply chains and AI technology with Taiwan, the island off China's east coast that Beijing claims as part of its **territory** and says must come under its rule.

EU members, like most countries including the United States, have no formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan and follow a "One China" policy.

But the EU and Taiwan share common democratic values as well as close trade ties, and the bloc opposes any use of military force by China to settle its dispute with Taiwan.

A reliable technology ecosystem

Hsiao also drew parallels between Taiwan suffering cyberattacks and having its undersea internet cables cut by China, and hybrid attacks faced by European nations since

Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Europe has defended freedom under fire, and Taiwan has built democracy under pressure - Bi-Khim Hsiao

"Europe has defended freedom under fire, and Taiwan has built democracy under pressure," she said.

She said that China's disruptions of global supply chains — likely a reference partly to Beijing's throttling of **rare earth** exports to the EU earlier this year — should push Brussels to forge with Taiwan "a reliable technology ecosystem rooted in trust, transparency and democratic values" like they already have for semiconductor sales.

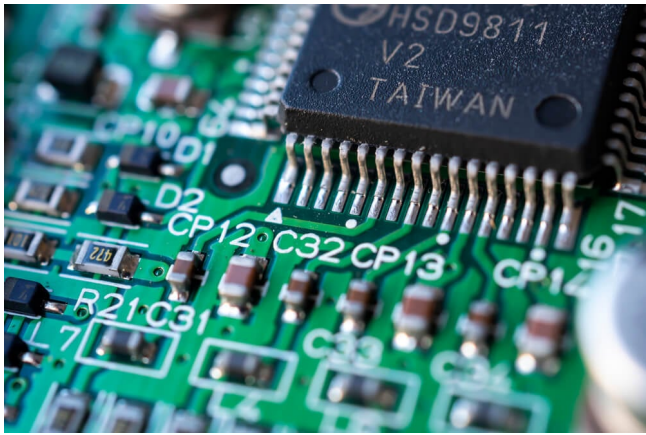
China routinely states that Taiwan's independence is a "dead end" and that annexation by Beijing is inevitable.

China's military has increased its encircling of Taiwan's skies and waters in recent years, holding **joint drills** with its warships and fighter jets on a near-daily basis near the island.

Last month Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te vowed to accelerate the building of the air defense system "**T-Dome**," or Taiwan Dome, and boost defense spending to reach 5% of Taiwan's GDP by 2030 amid growing security concerns.

Security concerns

Hsiao's visit was part of a conference organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, a global group of hundreds of lawmakers who want to strengthen coordination on China-related policy and lobby for unified international action on key China challenges.



Any conflict over Taiwan could have far more devastating impact on Europe than Russia's invasion of Ukraine, given Taiwan's leading role in semiconductor and electronics supply chains

Some 50 lawmakers from about two dozen countries attended Friday's event in Brussels.

The trip and speech were kept under wraps because of high security concerns after reports that Chinese agents plotted to ram Hsiao's car during her visit to the Czech Republic in March 2024, when she was vice president-elect.

Czech officials later said Chinese agents had followed Hsiao and planned to intimidate her physically.

Hsiao said at the time that the Chinese Communist Party's "unlawful activities" will not intimidate her from "voicing Taiwan's interests in the international community."

Ben Bland, director of the Asia-Pacific program at the London-based think tank Chatham House, wrote in an analysis last month that despite the lack of formal diplomatic relations, the EU and Taiwan can do much more to deepen ties for mutual benefit in the face of worsening U.S.-China rivalry.

Any conflict over Taiwan could have far more devastating impact on Europe than Russia's invasion of Ukraine, given Taiwan's leading role in semiconductor and electronics supply chains, he wrote.

"European nations cannot stop Beijing from squeezing Taiwan harder," Bland wrote. "But

they can help to preserve and even increase Taiwan's global connections, and share lessons in how to stay resilient."

China and Taiwan split during a civil war that brought the Communist Party to power in China in 1949. The defeated Nationalist Party forces fled to Taiwan, where they set up their own government.