



歐洲經貿辦事處

European Economic and Trade Office

**Press Release**

## **Now is the time to visit Europe**

### **Count down to 11 1 11 with Wan Wan**

On 15 December, the Representative of the European Council and the President of the European Parliament signed the decision to lift the visa requirement for Taiwanese passport holders to enter the Schengen area for short period stays. This decision will be published in today's (22 Dec 2010) Official Journal of the EU. This means that twenty days from today (11 January 2011), Taiwanese passport holders will no longer require visas to enter the EU for short period stays.

In order for the Taiwanese people to have a better understanding of the EU, famous Taiwanese cartoonist Wan Wan was invited by the European Economic and Trade Office from 16 June to 5 July this year to visit 6 EU countries. She came back amazed by her discovery and tells the Taiwanese people "Now is the time to visit Europe". She has produced a new comic journal recounting her adventures in her usual hilarious manner which she presents today to the Taiwanese public.

During her 20-day epic journey, she discovered the diversity of the EU. She saw that each European country has its own language, its own traditions, its own special food and historical heritage. She saw monuments such as the Frederiksberg Palace in Denmark, the Grand Market in Brussels, the Charles Bridge in Prague, and the Berlin Wall etc. She attended various artistic performances such as the Phantom of the Opera in London's West End, and black light show in Prague. She even had a small taste of French farm life.

And yet she also noticed how those countries were working together. For example when she travelled from Belgium to France, and from Prague to Frankfurt, she did not realise that she had already crossed international borders. There were no checkpoints, and no one that asked to see their passports on the trains. She also saw that she could use the same currency in Belgium, France, and Germany without the hassle of changing different monies. She visited the Institutions where all EU laws are discussed and decided: the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Council.



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Her new cartoon was published last week, and today's launch coincides with the publication of Taiwan's visa waiver in the Official Journal of the EU. The countdown to 11 11 may now begin with Wan Wan.

The visa exemption represents a new opportunity for Taiwanese people to discover all the EU has to offer.

The EU is a very attractive destination for tourists as Wan Wan has discovered through her recent journey **but there are many more opportunities:**

- The EU is the largest economy of the world with a GDP of \$ 16.5 trillion and a population of 500 million inhabitants. This represents the biggest business market opportunity for Taiwanese business people.
- There are around 4000 Universities in the EU, an amazing choice for Taiwanese students who want to benefit from some of the most famous educational institutions. The EU's Erasmus Mundus program also offers great opportunities for students to experience European higher education and
- The increase in Taiwanese visitors to the EU signifies a need to increase the number of flights between Taiwan and the EU.
- There are 1.3 million researchers in the EU who are ready to cooperate with Taiwanese scientists.
- There are more than 200 concert hall ready to welcome Taiwanese music groups and orchestras.

These are just some examples illustrating the benefits for both Taiwan and the EU from the visa waiver programme. There are doubtless many more advantages waiting to be explored once the programme takes effect. Therefore, to sum it up in one sentence: 'the EU welcomes you!'.