

What is Taiwan?

Swedish-Taiwanese Friendship Association

The purpose of the association is to work to spread information about Taiwan and to raise an interest in its history, culture and society, to contribute to cultural exchange between the two countries and to increase mutual understanding between people in Sweden and Taiwan.

The association does not take sides in issues concerning Taiwanese domestic politics.

The association considers it self-evident that any future decision on Taiwan's political status can and will be made solely by the people in Taiwan, without economic, diplomatic or military pressure from outside.

Do you want to become a member?
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Taiwan is an island in the Pacific Ocean, between China and the Philippines, with an area slightly smaller than Switzerland, but with a population of 24 million. It is also a collective term for an area encompassing the main island of Taiwan, as well as the outlying Pescadores Islands, Kinmen, Matsu and Lanyu. Together, this is a territory governed from the capital city Taipei, known officially as the Republic of China – not to be confused with "China" (i.e. the People's Republic of China), the name of the state on the Chinese mainland.

Taiwan has been self-governed since 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party founded the People's Republic of China on the Chinese mainland. The state called the Republic of China is thus theoretically the heir of the state that was located on the Chinese Mainland between 1911 and 1949, but is in practice an independent country.



The Republic of China is a de facto independent country

The official language of Taiwan is Mandarin, and more or less everybody in Taiwan is proficient in that language today. At the same time, both Taiwanese and Hakka, as well as the 16 indigenous languages, have an official status, with their own radio and TV channels.

All the native populations of Taiwan have the right to home language education in their mother tongues. Thus, Taiwan is a multi-lingual society where Mandarin is the official state language.

Taiwan is an economically and socially developed society, with a per capita GDP (PPP) which in 2019 was slightly above that of Sweden or Denmark, and just below that of the Netherlands. It is also a stable democracy, with free elections and a multi-party system going back some 30 years. It is an example of how a multi-ethnic society can function without conflicts. It is also an example showing that pluralistic democracy can work in East Asia, also in a society which is principally ethnic Chinese.

For these reasons, Taiwan is important for all people, everywhere in the world, who value democracy and human rights.

