

Former French Parliament Member Michel Hunault Engages in Dialogue with French Language Students, Emphasizing Democratic Values and International Cooperation

Campus focus

On April 21, Michel Hunault, Honorary Member of the French Parliament, visited Tamkang University, accompanied by former Ambassador to France and Tamkang alumnus Michel Ching-Long Lu. Hunault met with Vice President for International Affairs Prof. Hsiao-Chuan Chen and engaged in a dialogue with students from the Department of French, sharing insights on the democratic systems, values, and experiences of international cooperation in France and Europe.

During the 40-minute exchange, Hunault encouraged Taiwanese youth to speak up and actively participate in international affairs. He also promised to offer outstanding students the opportunity to visit the French Parliament. He emphasized that Taiwan and France share common ideals in democracy and human rights, expressing hope for deeper exchanges and cooperation between the two in the future.

When asked whether learning French benefits those pursuing careers in politics or public affairs, Hunault responded that while English and Chinese are dominant languages globally, learning French provides access to the cultural heritage of the Francophone world. He explained that understanding French culture is key to grasping how France has historically brought together diverse global elements to inspire new ideas and ways of thinking. He encouraged young people to study French to deepen their understanding of French culture and values. When students asked about applying for work visas, Hunault and Lu explained recent changes in France's visa policies. They advised students interested in going to France to first enter with a student visa, gain experience, and then apply for a work visa.

In his speech, Hunault thanked Lu for the invitation and reflected on his active involvement in the French Parliament and the France-Taipei

Friendship Group since 1993. Hunault further noted that Taiwan's perseverance in upholding democracy and human rights mirrors France's commitment to these principles, positioning both as beacons of democratic values worldwide. He emphasized that France's core values—"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"—are the nation's guiding spirit and serve as a model for the international community. He pointed out that French and Taiwanese societies are experiencing intense social divisions and diverse voices, with social media amplifying the influence of minority opinions. In such an environment, democratic politics must remain constantly vigilant.

When discussing the European Union, Michel Hunault stated that its establishment marked an unprecedented reconciliation in European history, with many national sovereignties transferred to the EU level. He noted that two-thirds of the French Parliament's legislative work stems from EU directives. He also reminded the audience that the European Convention on Human Rights protects every citizen's rights, and anyone can file a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights.

Hunault emphasized that good governance and anti-corruption are key to the development of modern nations, stating bluntly, "Mainland China faces serious corruption issues in the political, economic, and financial sectors in contrast, Europe and Taiwan place great importance on the rule of law and human rights." He concluded by sharing his insights on the current international political and economic landscape, including the global impact of U.S. policies and how the Russia-Ukraine war has strengthened EU unity. He encouraged students to stay informed about international trends and to make a positive impact.





