

[Housing Authority's Commercial Properties Committee members visit public housing \(with photos\)](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

The Housing Authority (HA) has been following up closely on the conversion of storerooms and exploring various ways for better utilisation of the storerooms so as to make good use of resources and address community needs. Accompanied by the Deputy Director of Housing (Estate Management), Miss Rosaline Wong, the Chairman of the HA's Commercial Properties Committee (CPC), Ms Tennessy Hui, and various CPC members today (May 9) visited Shun Lee and Shun Tin Estates in Kwun Tong to understand the latest developments of such conversions.

Members of the CPC first visited the converted flats at Lee Cheung House at Shun Lee Estate. A total of 15 public rental housing (PRH) units there, ranging from 33 square metres to 41 sq m, have been converted from storerooms and empty bays. Members said they were pleased to note that technical staff of the Housing Department (HD) had adopted various measures including optimising the fenestration area to enhance the provision of natural lighting and ventilation so as to overcome the effect of insufficient headroom. The completed units are now ready for allocation.

Members then visited the former kindergarten premises on the ground and first floors of Tin Kam House at Shun Tin Estate. They said they were pleased to learn that the ground floor of the premises would be converted into a neighbourhood elderly centre, while the first floor would be converted into six PRH units.

Members then went to Yan Tin Shopping Centre in Tuen Mun for its official opening.

Yan Tin Shopping Centre comprises 22 shops and a single operator market on two storeys, with a total lettable area of about 4 200 sq m. The shopping centre was completed in March 2018 and has opened for business gradually, featuring different trades including a supermarket, eateries, a convenience store, a pharmacy, a clinic and a self-service bank, addressing the daily needs of the residents.

The HD has been organising visits to the HA's non-domestic facilities for members of the HA's CPC from time to time to enable them to gain first-hand knowledge of their operation.



[LegCo Finance Committee meeting](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Finance Committee (FC) originally scheduled at 3pm tomorrow (May 10) in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex will start at 4pm (or an earlier time between 3.45 pm and 4pm). If the preceding House Committee meeting ends before 3.45 pm, the FC meeting will start at 3.45 pm.

Speech by FS at Europe Day Reception (English only)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the Europe Day Reception this evening (May 9):

Ms Cano (Head of the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao, Ms Carmen Cano), Commissioner Song (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Song Ru'an), consuls general, your excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.

It is a pleasure to be with you today, in honour of Europe Day – and in recognition of the bounty that peace has brought to the continent.

We celebrate, as well, the deep-rooted ties that bind Hong Kong and the European Union (EU) – 28 nations, each with a voice, an ear and a heart for the people, and the future, of Hong Kong. Indeed, 17 EU countries maintain an official representation here.

That, I'd say, is remarkable testimony to the importance we place on ensuring the continuity of those ties.

There is also a compelling financial incentive for both sides of course.

I'm pleased to note that last year, bilateral merchandise trade between Hong Kong and the EU totalled about €77 billion, up nearly 10 per cent, year on year. Indeed, the EU, as a single entity, is Hong Kong's largest trading partner, in both goods and services, after only the Mainland of China.

Our bilateral investment also speaks of the healthy relations we enjoy. Hong Kong's stock of outward direct investment in the EU totalled about €63 billion at the end of 2017.

At the same time, the EU accounted for 8.8 per cent of the inward direct investment (IDI) into Hong Kong, with an IDI stock in excess of €151 billion.

Where there is capital, companies will follow. Hong Kong, I'm pleased to report, is home to more than 2 200 EU companies. About half of them use Hong Kong as their regional headquarters or regional office.

They're here, and you're here, because Hong Kong proudly flies the flag of free trade. Earlier this year, the Heritage Foundation named Hong Kong the world's freest economy for the 25th year in a row.

You take confidence, as well, in the rule of law and our independent judiciary, in our level playing field for businesses and the low and simple tax regime we present.

It helps, too, that Hong Kong continues to create outsized business opportunities, thanks to our "one country, two systems" unique arrangement and the singular advantages it gives us.

In February, the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area was announced. It promises much for Hong Kong and the companies that partner with us.

The Plan, which emphasises complimentary development among the 11 member cities covering Hong Kong, Macao, and nine cities in the Guangdong province, calls for Hong Kong to lead the way in several sectors, including financial services and trade and transport. It also supports Hong Kong's role in innovation and technology – in helping in the Greater Bay Area's rise as an international hub in this aspect.

With a population of some 70 million people, the Greater Bay Area is larger than the Tokyo and San Francisco Bay Areas combined. Its collective GDP is about €1.4 trillion, similar to that of Korea.

By 2030, the Greater Bay Area's GDP is forecast to reach €4.1 trillion, close to that of Japan in 2017.

First, of course, we must harness the region's boundless promise. It's a challenge Hong Kong has eagerly accepted. And I invite the countries, and the companies, of the EU to join us in building the Greater Bay Area into a global economic powerhouse.

Hong Kong is also the financing, risk management and professional services hub for infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative. You can learn more about this at the fourth Belt and Road Summit, which will take place here in Hong Kong on September 11 and 12. I would like to invite you all to join us.

There are other good reasons for Hong Kong and the EU to come together, and culture is high among them.

We are blessed, year-round, with an enviable variety of arts and cultural events from all over the EU. Le French May Festival, for example, opened just a few days ago and continues right through June, packed full of art, film, theatre, dance, and of course fabulous food and wine.

Before we turn to the joy of sweets and drinks here, ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a toast: "To the people of the European Union."

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected ketamine \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 3 kilograms of suspected ketamine with an estimated market value of about \$1.9 million at Hong Kong International Airport on April 19.

Customs officers inspected a parcel arriving in Hong Kong from Belgium on April 19 and seized the batch of suspected ketamine in three milk powder bottles inside the parcel.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers yesterday (May 8) arrested two men suspected to be connected with the case in Lok Fu.

The arrested men, aged 26 and 30, have been jointly charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. They will appear at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (May 10).

Customs will maintain close contact with Hongkong Post and the logistics industries to step up action against drug trafficking through postal parcels or express courier channels.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practice at money changer

Hong Kong Customs today (May 9) arrested a sole proprietor of a money changer suspected of having applied a false trade description to the remittance service supplied, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Hong Kong Customs earlier received information alleging that a money changer in Mong Kok made a false claim to a customer that the money would be remitted to the bank accounts designated by the customer, but then failed to provide the service accordingly.

After investigation, Customs today arrested a 55-year-old female sole proprietor of the money changer.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested woman has been released on bail.

Customs officers also found that the money changer was suspected to have violated the requirements under the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance (AMLO) and failed to take all reasonable measures to mitigate money laundering and terrorist financing risks, and consequently its licensee may no longer be a fit and proper person to operate a money service.

Customs officers issued a notice in writing to the money changer to suspend its money service operator licence on April 24 with immediate effect. Customs has also reminded the money changer to process the outstanding transactions and payments in an appropriate manner.

Under the TDO, any trader who applies a false trade description to a service supplied to a consumer commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Customs reminds all licensed money service operators to comply with the requirements of the AMLO. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for seven years. Consumers are reminded to procure service from licensed money service operators. The register of licensees is accessible from the website of Customs' Money Service Operators Licensing System at eservices.customs.gov.hk/MSOS/wsrh/001s1?request_locale=en.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TDO or the AMLO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).