

Speech by FS at reception in celebration of 2024 Bastille Day (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the reception in celebration of 2024 Bastille Day this evening (July 12):

Consul General Christile Drulhe (Consul General of France in Hong Kong and Macau), Commissioner Cui Jianchun (Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Bonsoir. Good evening.

It is a great pleasure to be here tonight in celebration of Bastille Day, overflowing with French history, culture and joie de vivre in Paris and throughout the great French Republic.

This year, the celebrations take on an additional dimension, with the Olympic and Paralympic Games opening in two weeks' time in Paris. I am pleased to note that this Tuesday the Consul General also hosted the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, as well as Hong Kong athletes and support staff taking part in the Summer Olympics. The Olympic spirit is alive and well. Thank you, Consul General.

The spirit of goodwill, understanding, co-operation, and mutual benefit between France and China is also flourishing. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and France. In May, President Xi made a state visit to France, which was his third formal visit to the country, in honour of this diplomatic milestone. Speaking in Paris at the China-France Business Council's closing ceremony, President Xi encouraged both sides to, and I quote, "stay committed to the goal set by our two countries when our diplomatic ties were forged, boost our traditional friendship and practise the Olympic motto of 'Faster, Higher, Stronger -Together!'" The two sides made a good start on President Xi's appeal, signing nearly 20 bilateral co-operation agreements and four joint statements.

Hong Kong is proud to play a role in this historic year. We were proud to be part of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) mission which visited France shortly after President Xi's visit. The mission sought to present the boundless opportunities in the GBA to French businesses, and forge closer economic connections with the country. There were concrete results. Many MOUs were signed between Chinese and French institutions and companies. They include three French companies respectively engaged in innovation and technology, water and waste management, as well as engineering and construction, signing MOUs with Invest Hong Kong.

Our two economies understand well the value of collaboration and creating mutually rewarding opportunities. Last year, France was Hong Kong's third-largest trading partner among the European Union member states. And nearly 350 French companies have offices here in Hong Kong, which speak of the value French businesses place on Hong Kong as a base for exploring opportunities in China and throughout Asia. The recent measure to issue multiple-entry travel permits to non-Chinese permanent residents in Hong Kong will further facilitate the thousands of French citizens living here to travel to the GBA for business. Hong Kong's role as a multilevel bridge between our country and a world of business and investment prospects will only be fortified.

And please pardon me for one thing – I have the recurrent pleasure of mentioning how Hong Kong people love French wine, as we imported some 13 million bottles last year. In terms of value, French wine accounted for over 60 per cent of the total value of wines imported into the city. Given our love for your wine, let me assure you that, despite the deficits in recent government budgets, we are not going to reintroduce import tax on wine for revenue generation purposes.

Alongside our long-standing trade and business ties, Hong Kong and France have ample room to co-operate on technology and innovation. This year, Hong Kong set up its first pavilion at the annual VivaTech, Europe's largest annual technology and start-up event. I am happy to report that Hong Kong will scale up our participation in VivaTech next year. We have also invited VivaTech to host related exhibitions and events in Hong Kong, and are keen to see it done.

Adding to the list is the recent announcement by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the Banque de France on their collaboration on wholesale central bank digital currency. In particular, the HKMA will be the first major institution outside Europe to participate in the European test of cross-border payments on tokenised assets.

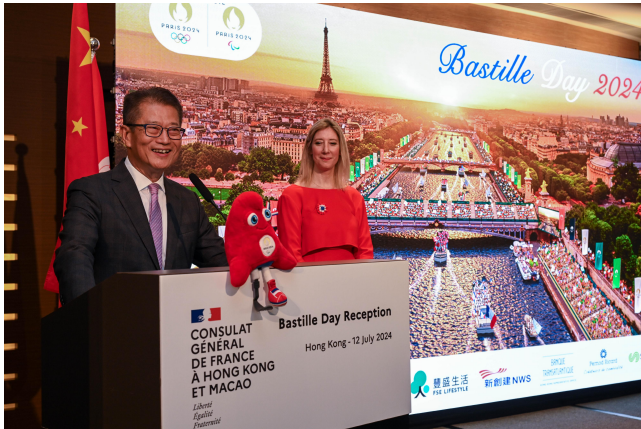
Cultural co-operation between Hong Kong and France has long played a central, and much welcomed, role in our wide-ranging relations. For instance, Le French May has become a landmark arts festival in Hong Kong, dazzling the city with a remarkable range of programmes and performances embracing French arts and culture.

Allow me to share a bit of my personal experience here which tells that the French just have the class and style for arts. In May, I took the chance to visit the Chaillot National Theatre of Dance. It is situated in the beautiful and historical Palais de Chaillot, and has an astonishing view of the Eiffel Tower. So watching a performance of contemporary dance at such a venerable venue is like understanding and enjoying France in the past, present and future.

Mesdames et Messieurs, ladies and gentlemen, all in all, we welcome more French people to come to Hong Kong – whether they are in business, technology, arts, fashion, design, sports or food and beverage. We eagerly

look forward to more co-operation between our two economies. Together, there is a bright and flourishing future that we can build together.

Consul General, our heartfelt congratulations on your celebrations of Bastille Day. Let us also wish our Chinese, Hong Kong and French athletes a most memorable and magnificent 2024 Olympics in Paris. Thank you very much.



[Speech by CE at reception in celebration of 2024 Bastille Day \(English only\)](#)

Following is the video speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the reception in celebration of 2024 Bastille Day today (July 12):

Consul General Chrstile Drulhe (Consul General of France in Hong Kong and Macau), Commissioner Cui Jianchun (Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Bonsoir. I am currently on a duty visit outside of Hong Kong, so I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this remarkable reception by video.

This reception celebrates the 235th anniversary of Bastille Day, the National Day of France. A day – and a night – of spectacular displays, overflowing with French history, culture and, most importantly, the unity of the French people.

This year also marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between France and China, our country.

In celebration of this momentous occasion, President Xi Jinping made a state visit to France this May. During his talks with His Excellency

President Emmanuel Macron, President Xi highlighted that our country stands ready to maintain strategic communication with France, and consolidate the strategic stability of bilateral relations. He remarked that China and France, as major countries with rich cultures, should accelerate people-to-people exchanges, and continue to organise successful events.

Of all the events that foster people-to-people exchanges coming up, one of the most exciting ones must be the 2024 Paris Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. The Games are set to open two weeks from today. I am glad to note that the Hong Kong, China delegation will compete in over 30 events, respectively, in the Paris Olympic Games and Paris Paralympic Games. All of us look keenly forward to the outstanding performance of our athletes, as they compete in the world-class venues in France.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are proud to have a large population of French nationals, as well as hundreds of French companies, here in Hong Kong. You add vibrancy and diversity to our business sector, cultural scenes and, simply, daily lives.

Under the unique "one country, two systems" principle, Hong Kong is the only city in the world that enjoys both the China advantage and the global advantage. We boast a simple and low tax regime, a long-standing tradition of the rule of law, and a common law system that dovetails with that of many global financial centres.

Together with our colourful nightlife, plentiful wine and dine locations, as well as proximity to country parks and beaches from the city, our world city offers unique opportunities for tourists, students, professionals, or anybody who wishes to live here. We will continue to open our doors of development to our friends from France, as well as other parts of the world.

On that note, I wish the 2024 Paris Olympic Games and Paralympic Games a resounding success. And to all of you, a happy Bastille Day, and an enjoyable evening. Thank you very much.

[FEHD combats illegal import and sale of chewing smokeless tobacco products \(with photo\)](#)

The Centre for Food Safety and the Environmental Hygiene Branch of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (July 12) conducted blitz inspections at retail outlets and detected two suspected cases of

illegal import and sale of chewing smokeless tobacco products.

FEHD officers, upon receiving intelligence, conducted blitz operations at the targeted retail outlets today to combat the illegal import and sale of chewing smokeless tobacco products. During the operations, FEHD officers found two suspected cases of illegal import and sale of chewing smokeless tobacco products and seized all products concerned for further investigation and testing. Should there be sufficient evidence, prosecution will be instituted against the persons involved. The investigation is ongoing.

A spokesman for the FEHD said that the department will continue its inspection work to combat the illegal sale of chewing smokeless tobacco products. Moreover, the FEHD will maintain close liaison and exchange of intelligence with other enforcement departments, including Hong Kong Customs, and enhance enforcement actions at various boundary control points to combat the illegal import of smokeless tobacco products.

According to the Smokeless Tobacco Products (Prohibition) Regulations (Cap. 132BW), no person shall import, manufacture, sell, possess for sale, offer or expose for sale, consign or deliver any smokeless tobacco product. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The spokesman said that the department has been closely monitoring and taking enforcement actions to combat activities in breach of the Regulations. Under the Regulations, a smokeless tobacco product refers to any product which consists of tobacco, or primarily of tobacco, intended to be taken orally, and includes chewing tobacco (whether looseleaf, firm plug, moist plug, twist or roll chewing tobacco) and moist snuff, but does not include dry snuff taken by inhalation.

All tobacco products are harmful to health. Smokeless tobacco products contain various harmful substances, including carcinogens. The spokesman appealed to persons using chewing tobacco products to quit smoking as soon as possible for their personal health. Members of the public may visit the relevant website (www.livetobaccofree.hk) or call the integrated smoking cessation hotline (1833 183) of the Department of Health for information on smoking cessation.



Missing man in Tsing Yi located

A man who went missing in Tsing Yi has been located.

Wong Yuen-leung, aged 60, went missing after he contacted his family by phone in January. His family made a report to Police on May 21.

The man was located in a hospital on Tsing Chung Koon Road in Tuen Mun today (July 12). He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

LegCo to consider Nurses Registration (Amendment) Bill 2023

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

The Legislative Council (LegCo) will hold a meeting next Wednesday (July 17) at 11am in the Chamber of the LegCo Complex. During the meeting, the Second Reading debate on the Nurses Registration (Amendment) Bill 2023 will resume. If the Bill is supported by Members and receives its Second Reading, it will stand committed to the committee of the whole Council. After the committee of the whole Council has completed consideration of the Bill and its report is adopted by the Council, the Bill will be set down for the Third Reading.

Meanwhile, the Second Reading debate on the Land (Compulsory Sale for Redevelopment) (Amendment) Bill 2023 will also resume. If the Bill is supported by Members and receives its Second Reading, it will stand committed to the committee of the whole Council. After the committee of the whole Council has completed consideration of the Bill and its report is adopted by the Council, the Bill will be set down for the Third Reading.

On Members' motions, Mr Dennis Leung will move a motion on developing local vocational and professional education and training. The motion is set out in Appendix 1. Mr Lee Chun-keung, Mr Rock Chen and Mr Tang Fei will move separate amendments to Mr Leung's motion.

Mr Tony Tse will move a motion on actively developing land and optimizing land use to promote the development of the economy and industries. The motion is set out in Appendix 2. Mr Louis Loong, Mr Stanley Ng, Ms Chan Yuet-ming, Mr Lau Kwok-fan, Ms Carmen Kan and Mr Andrew Lam will move separate amendments to Mr Tse's motion.

Members will also ask the Government 21 questions on various policy areas, six of which require oral replies.

The agenda of the above meeting can be obtained via the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk). Members of the public can watch or listen to the meeting via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website. To observe the proceedings of the meeting at the LegCo Complex, members of the public may call 3919 3399 during office hours to reserve seats.