

# Commissioner of Customs and Excise leads delegation to visit Belgium and France and attend Customs Co-operation Council Sessions of WCO (with photos)

The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Ms Louise Ho, from June 21 to 26 led a delegation to visit Brussels, Belgium, and Lyon, France, and attended the 141st/142nd Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) Sessions of the World Customs Organization (WCO) in Brussels.

The CCC Sessions is an annual high-level WCO meeting assembling heads and senior officials from 185 Customs administrations around the world. It provides a pivotal platform for Customs representatives to discuss and convene a broad spectrum of issues, such as e-commerce, data exchange, Green Customs, gender equality and diversity.

During the Sessions, Ms Ho signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretary-General of the WCO, Dr Kunio Mikuriya, to confirm the establishment of a WCO Regional Dog Training Centre in Hong Kong, signifying a momentous step forward for Hong Kong Customs in leading canine training in the Asia-Pacific region. At the signing ceremony, Ms Ho said that as a pioneer in global customs canine training and law enforcement affairs centre, Hong Kong Customs is preparing at full steam for the WCO 6th Global Canine Forum to be held in March next year. This will be the first time for Hong Kong to host such major international event, and esteemed canine experts all over the world will be invited to participate. ¶¶

On June 22 and 23, Ms Ho took the opportunity to meet with the Chairman of the General Authority of Customs of Qatar, Mr Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Jamal, and the Director-General of the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union of the European Commission, Mr Gerassimos Thomas, respectively, to discuss closer collaboration and explore more co-operation opportunities. Also, Ms Ho had in-depth exchanges with the Minister of the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, Mr Yu Jianhua, and the Director-General of Macao Customs Service, Mr Vong Man-chong, on co-operation between the Mainland Customs, Hong Kong Customs and Macao Customs.

In addition, Ms Ho signed Customs Co-operative Arrangements with the Deputy National Superintendent of Customs of the National Superintendency of Customs and Tax Administration of the Republic of Peru, Ms Martha Elba Garamendi Espinoza, and the Commissioner General of the Maldives Customs Service of the Republic of Maldives, Mr Abdulla Shareef, on June 23 and 24 respectively, with the aim to strengthen intelligence exchanges and information sharing, crack down cross-boundary customs crimes, and facilitate trade.

Currently, Hong Kong Customs has established 31 similar co-operative instruments with the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China and 30 overseas Customs administrations.

After the Sessions, Ms Ho today (June 26) paid a courtesy call on the Director of Organized and Emerging Crime Directorate of INTERPOL, Ms Ilana De Wild, in Lyon, France. She commended that INTERPOL has been making impressive strides in combating international crimes and pledged that the two sides will maintain close co-operation to fight against cross-boundary crimes.

Ms Ho concluded her visit and departed for Hong Kong in the afternoon on the same day.



