

# EDB's clarifications regarding inaccurate media report on university exchange

Regarding the report of a non-local media organisation on the Government's plan to prohibit local universities' academic exchange with universities in Taiwan, the Education Bureau (EDB) today (December 22) clarified that such claim is unfounded and expressed regret over the inaccurate report.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "Academic freedom is an important social value treasured by Hong Kong and a cornerstone of our higher education sector's success and renown in the world. Moreover, the Government has all along upheld academic freedom and institutional autonomy, which are protected by the Basic Law. All post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong are independent and autonomous bodies that enjoy autonomy in managing their institutional affairs. The Government does not interfere with academic exchanges between the institutions and local or overseas academic organisations. As a matter of course, the institutions are responsible for ensuring that their operations meet the requirements of the law, and the interests of their students and the community as a whole."

He reiterated that the National Security Law aims to prevent, suppress and impose punishment for offences that endanger national security. The National Security Law does not affect the legitimate rights and freedoms enjoyed by the residents of Hong Kong under the Basic Law. The specific safeguards of academic freedom and institutional autonomy enshrined in Articles 34 and 137 of the Basic Law remain in full force. The National Security Law does not affect normal exchange activities between academics or post-secondary education institutions and their counterparts outside Hong Kong.