

## [HKETO Berlin highlights Hong Kong's success in fighting COVID-19 crisis \(with photo\)](#)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Berlin (HKETO Berlin) held its first-ever webinar on June 9 (Berlin time) to discuss Hong Kong's success story in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic with members of the business communities, academic and government in Central and Eastern Europe.

The panel consisted of speakers from Hong Kong and Central and Eastern European countries, including the Director of HKETO Berlin, Mr Bill Li; the Head of Investment Promotion of HKETO Berlin, Dr Chung Wing-hin; and Senior Director of the Austria-based Innovation in Politics Institute and former Austrian Ambassador to Slovakia Mr Helfried Carl.

Despite Hong Kong being an international hub for passenger transport with a high level of connectivity with the Asia-Pacific region as well as the rest of the world, the figures of about 1 100 registered COVID-19 cases and four deaths out of these cases are remarkably low. Moreover, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has rolled out targeted measures to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on various fronts.

In his presentation to the audience, Mr Li highlighted that the HKSAR Government has adopted a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to contain the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of the community, with actions that are guided by three key principles: responding promptly, staying alert to the situation, and working in an open and transparent manner. "With the lessons learnt during the times of SARS, avian flu and swine flu in the past, I dare to say that Hong Kong is one of the places in the world which is most prepared for epidemics," he continued.

"The Government has pledged HK\$287.5 billion – about 10 per cent of GDP – to help offset the economic fallout from COVID-19," Mr Li said. The Government's focus is on upholding the vitality of the economy, retaining jobs and easing the financial burdens of citizens. More than 70 measures to support various business sectors including aviation, tourism and transport have been implemented and one-off grants or subsidies for eligible businesses ranging from HK\$6,000 to HK\$3 million have already been handed out since April.

The support is not only limited to businesses, as every Hong Kong permanent resident aged 18 or above will receive a HK\$10,000 cash payout to encourage local consumption and relieve financial burdens. A 100 per cent profits tax reduction for 2019-20, waiving of business registration fees for 2020-21, a 75 per cent electricity charges subsidy for non-residential accounts for eight months and a waiver of 75 per cent of water and sewage charges for non-domestic accounts for 12 months are further steps to give relief.

With these measures in place, Hong Kong is well prepared to remain an attractive location for Central and Eastern European companies to expand to the Mainland of China and Asia at large. They will benefit from the city's entrepreneurial spirit, rich international business experience, versatile and multilingual talents, and dynamic business environment.

#### About HKETO Berlin

HKETO Berlin is the official HKSAR Government representative in commercial relations and other economic and trade matters in Poland as well as Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland.

