

HKSAR Government says measures by European Union are “misguided”

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has today (July 29) described as "misguided" European Union's (EU) conclusions and measures in response to the enactment of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the HKSAR (the National Security Law).

"The HKSAR Government calls on EU Member States to adopt a pragmatic and rational attitude, and refrain from adopting measures that will adversely affect the long-standing mutually beneficial relations between Hong Kong and the EU," said a Government spokesman.

"We reiterate that the HKSAR is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China (PRC), a local administrative region that enjoys a high degree of autonomy under 'One Country, Two Systems' and comes directly under the Central People's Government (CPG).

"Matters relating to the HKSAR remain our Country's internal affair. No other state has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, in such internal affairs.

"To uphold and implement the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems' meets the interests of the Hong Kong people, responds to the needs of maintaining Hong Kong's prosperity and stability and serves the fundamental interests of the nation.

"The CPG has time and again made it clear that the Central Government will unswervingly implement the policy of 'One Country, Two Systems'."

The spokesman said that it was the legitimate right and duty of every state to safeguard its national security.

"The National Security Law is entirely constitutional, lawful, rational and reasonable as national security falls squarely under the purview of the Central Authorities and since, after some 23 years, the HKSAR has yet to fulfil its constitutional obligations to enact local legislation to safeguard national security," the spokesman said.

"The National Security Law will not affect the high degree of autonomy, judicial independence and the rule of law in Hong Kong. The legitimate rights and interests of Hong Kong citizens will not be affected.

"The legislation only targets an extremely small minority of persons committing the four types of crimes that seriously endanger national security under the National Security Law, and protects the lives and property, basic rights and freedoms of the vast majority of citizens."

Referring to the specific measures announced by the EU, the Government spokesman said, "The EU's intention to provide Hong Kong people with more relaxed asylum, migration and residency policy on the pretext of the enactment of the National Security Law is a blatant interference in the affairs of the HKSAR. Such moves are deeply regretted.

"Currently, the HKSAR has signed agreements on surrender of fugitive offenders (SFO) with seven EU Member States (Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Portugal). The HKSAR has established a comprehensive co-operation regime for SFO, and has all along upheld the principle of mutual assistance and reciprocity to carry out law enforcement co-operation with other members of the international community in accordance with the law with a view to fighting crime. We object to any attempt of politicising juridical co-operation, which damages the good basis of cooperation established between the two sides over the years and deviates from the purpose of juridical cooperation in safeguarding justice and the rule of law.

"The export restrictions on sensitive equipment and technologies proposed to be imposed by the EU on Hong Kong are based on groundless allegations. All law enforcement actions by the HKSAR Government are made in accordance with the law. We urge the EU to stop such political manipulation which is not in the interests of Hong Kong residents and our EU partners. We will continue to identify suitable suppliers for procurement as needed."

Hong Kong and EU Member States maintain close economic and trade relations, and have been nurturing bilateral cultural and technological co-operation in recent years.

In 2019, there were more than 2,300 companies in Hong Kong with parent companies in the EU, an increase of 7.5 per cent from 2017. According to EU statistics, the total merchandise trade between the EU and Hong Kong amounted to 48 billion euro, with the EU enjoying a trade surplus of 25.4 billion euro over Hong Kong.

In addition, over 29,000 EU nationals live in Hong Kong and a number of European Chambers of Commerce have been operating here for many years. Two international schools offer European curricula in Hong Kong.