

HKSAR Government strongly opposes European Commission Report

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (May 20) expressed strong opposition to the remarks in the report on Hong Kong issued by the European Commission (EU) and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the Report).

"We strongly oppose the various unfounded criticisms and misleading comments against the HKSAR Government in the Report. The HKSAR is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China (PRC), is 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). The HKSAR Government urges again the EU to respect the international law and basic norms governing international relations, and to stop interfering into the internal affairs of China through Hong Kong affairs."

Legislative Council General Election

"We strongly oppose the misleading accusations against the 2021 Legislative Council General Election (LCGE). The LCGE is an important election held after the improvements to the electoral system of the HKSAR which fully implements the principle of 'patriots administering Hong Kong'. The election was conducted in accordance with the law, and was open, fair, honest and efficient. The seventh-term Legislative Council was formed smoothly through elections. With over 1.3 million voters cast their ballots to elect 90 members from 153 candidates of different backgrounds and political views, it manifests the broad representation, political inclusiveness, balanced participation and fair competition of the new electoral system."

National Security Law

"We take great exceptions to the unfounded allegations against the National Security Law. Following the implementation of the National Security Law, chaos stopped and order has been restored in Hong Kong. The National Security Law ensures the resolute, full and faithful implementation of the 'one country, two systems' principle under which the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy, and also clearly stipulates that human rights shall be respected and protected in safeguarding national security in the HKSAR. The rights and freedoms, including the freedoms of speech, of the press, of publication, of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration, enjoyed by residents of the HKSAR under the Basic Law and the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applicable to Hong Kong shall be protected in accordance with the law. The four categories of offences endangering

national security stipulated under the National Security Law are clearly defined. Law-abiding people will not unwittingly violate the law."

"The HKSAR Government reiterates that all law enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies under the National Security Law, or indeed any local legislation, are based on evidence, strictly according to the law and for the acts of the persons or entities concerned, and have nothing to do with their political stance, background or occupation."

"Article 63 of the Basic Law stipulates that prosecutions in the HKSAR are made by the Department of Justice, free from any interference. Prosecutorial decisions are based on an objective assessment of all admissible evidence, applicable laws and the Prosecution Code, without political considerations. Prosecutions would only commence if there is sufficient admissible evidence to support a reasonable prospect of conviction. No one should interfere with independent prosecutorial decisions which are carried out strictly in accordance with the law."

Judicial Independence

"The HKSAR has all along been unwaveringly committed to the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, which underpins the city's success as an international business and financial centre. Judicial independence in Hong Kong after the implementation of the National Security Law remains as robust as ever. The independence of the judiciary is constitutionally guaranteed under the Basic Law. That the courts of the HKSAR can exercise independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication free from any interference, has been enshrined under the Basic Law as set out in Articles 2, 19 and 85. Article 92 of the Basic Law also clearly stipulates that judges and other members of the judiciary of the HKSAR shall be chosen on the basis of their judicial and professional qualities."

Press Freedom

"Since the city returned to the Motherland, the HKSAR Government has been firmly committed to safeguarding the freedoms of the press and speech, both of which are protected under the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights."

"The HKSAR Government must also point out that the media landscape in Hong Kong is as vibrant as ever. A total of 210 media organisations, be they based locally, in the Mainland or overseas, are registered with the HKSAR Government News and Media Information System of the Information Services Department at present, showing an increase after the implementation of the National Security Law. As always, the media can exercise their right to monitor the HKSAR Government's work, and their freedom of commenting on or even criticising government policies remains uninhibited as long as this is not in violation of the law."