

# HKSAR Government strongly opposes European Union's misleading comments on reform of District Councils

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (July 6) vehemently objected to the European Union's (EU) misleading comments on the reform of District Councils (DCs) and the skewed remarks about the HKSAR's democratic development. The HKSAR Government strongly urged the EU to immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong matters, which are purely China's internal affairs, and to clarify and apologise for the fallacies in its statement.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "Since 2020, a lot of the sixth-term DCs members acted against the functions of DCs, disrupted the conduct of meetings, unscrupulously took actions that were not in line with the functions of DCs as district advisory organisations, and even used DCs as a platform to challenge our country's sovereignty, advocate independence of Hong Kong and endanger national security. The chaos is a wake-up call for us. We must plug the institutional loopholes and completely exclude those anti-China and destabilising forces from the DCs to fully implement the principle of 'patriots administering Hong Kong'. Keeping political power in the hands of patriots is a political rule commonly adopted in the world."

"In order to put an end to the chaos of the sixth-term DCs and restore DCs to the right track, there is necessity and urgency to reform DCs. The purpose of improving governance at district level is to enhance the functions of DCs and reform their composition, so that DCs can return to the positioning under Article 97 of the Basic Law, which are advisory and service bodies that are not organs of political power to be consulted by the HKSAR Government on district administration and other affairs. Reforming DCs is an integral part of improving district governance. Having a variety of methods for the formation of DCs enables persons who love the country, have an affection for Hong Kong and are dedicated to serving their districts can participate in the work of DCs through a variety of channels, thereby reflecting public opinion more comprehensively and accurately. By restoring DCs to their positioning under the Basic Law, the principle of 'patriots administering Hong Kong' will be fully implemented institutionally. DCs can once again carry out their service and advisory functions, and co-operate with the HKSAR Government to implement district work. Efficacy of district governance will be enhanced, thereby achieving good governance and giving citizens a greater sense of well-being."

The spokesman supplemented, "The Sino-British Joint Declaration was mentioned in the EU's statement. But neither the Sino-British Joint Declaration nor the Basic Law contains a single word stipulating that DCs or district organisations are formed through election. To describe the DCs as part of the so-called 'democratic development' is merely an unfounded and deliberate misrepresentation. In fact, when the colonial government set up

the District Boards in the 1980s, the electoral component was much smaller than today's proposal, but there was not a word of criticism levelled at the British government from the then European Community which was the predecessor of the EU. It is obvious that the EU's statement was issued with a malicious intent to interfere in China's internal affairs by using 'democracy' as an excuse. There is no one-size-fits-all democratic system in the world. What the HKSAR needs is quality democracy that is in line with the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle and the actual circumstances of Hong Kong."

The HKSAR Government strongly urged the EU to immediately stop interfering in China's internal affairs and disseminating lies, and to focus on the internal affairs and chaos of its member states. The EU should understand carefully and justly the concept and necessity of the proposal of improving governance at district level.