

HKSAR Government strongly opposes resolutions of European Parliament

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (January 21) deplored the so-called resolutions adopted by the European Parliament against Hong Kong, and strongly opposed the Parliament for making baseless allegations and smearing the rule of law, freedom and democratic development in Hong Kong.

A HKSAR Government spokesman said, "Regarding the suggestions by foreign politicians on the so-called 'sanctions' on HKSAR Government officials, the HKSAR Government despises the suggestions and will continue to strive to safeguard national security.

"We urge foreign politicians to immediately stop breaching international laws based on their biased political interests to intervene in Hong Kong matters, which are purely the internal affairs of the People's Republic of China.

"The improvement to the electoral system fully implements the principle of 'patriots administering Hong Kong', ensuring that members of the Legislative Council love the country and Hong Kong, and act in the interests of the country's development and the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong. The elected legislators come from different backgrounds and from across the political spectrum. Such diversity showcases the broad representation and political inclusiveness of the improved electoral system. They have been returned by the Election Committee constituency, functional constituencies and geographical constituencies through direct elections. By balancing the overall interests of Hong Kong, the interests of different sectors and districts, the election ensures balanced participation. Furthermore, open, fair, and healthy competition among candidates reflected the fairness and competitiveness of the new electoral system.

"The democratic framework implemented by Hong Kong since its return to the Motherland stems from the country's Constitution and the Basic Law. The improved electoral system is clearly set out in Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the Basic Law, which fully demonstrates its legitimacy, strengths and progressiveness. The new electoral system under the principle of 'patriots administering Hong Kong' manifests broad representation, balanced participation, political inclusiveness and fair competition, enabling voters to vote freely and make choices.

"Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are protected under the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights. Article 4 of the Hong Kong National Security Law also stipulates that such rights and freedoms shall be protected in accordance with the law in safeguarding national security in the HKSAR. According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, exercising freedom of speech and freedom of the press must comply with the

restriction of the law for reasons including protection of national security.

"Article 63 of the Basic Law expressly guarantees that all prosecutions are controlled by the Department of Justice, free from any interference. Prosecutions would be instituted only if there is sufficient admissible evidence to support a reasonable prospect of conviction and if it is in the public interest to do so. We must reiterate that no one is above the law, or has the privilege to break the law without facing legal consequences. It would be contrary to the rule of law to suggest that people or entities of certain sectors or professions could be above the law.

"We express our deep regret and must rebuke politicians of Western countries in respect of their attempt to twist facts and issue slandering remarks on the enforcement actions taken in accordance with the law. Such acts violate international laws and constitute gross interference in the affairs of Hong Kong.

"Being an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China, the HKSAR has the duty to safeguard national security. Furthermore, the HKSAR has the constitutional responsibility for enacting legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law (BL23). Article 7 of the Hong Kong National Security Law also clearly stipulates that 'the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall complete, as early as possible, legislation for safeguarding national security as stipulated in the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and shall refine relevant laws'. We will proactively take forward the relevant work in respect of the enactment of legislation on BL23.

"The legal basis for implementing 'one country, two systems' is the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law, not the Sino-British Joint Declaration. As the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has stressed time and again, the Sino-British Joint Declaration stipulated the resumption of the exercise of sovereignty by China over Hong Kong and relevant arrangements during the transition period.

"The policy of 'one country, two systems' ensures Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability and is fully implemented in Hong Kong without being bent or distorted."