

HKSAR Government strongly refutes statements by G7 foreign ministers and European Union

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (May 10) strongly refuted the two statements on the sixth-term Chief Executive Election held on May 8 in Hong Kong made respectively by the European Union (EU) as well as G7 foreign ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and the High Representative of the EU.

A HKSAR Government spokesman said, "We strongly oppose those unfounded criticisms and misleading comments on the Chief Executive Election contained in the two statements. Moreover, they reflect a blatant interference into the internal affairs of the HKSAR of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and are clearly out of line with international norms.

"The State Council issued a white paper entitled 'Hong Kong: Democratic Process Under the Framework of One Country, Two Systems' in December 2021. While acknowledging that Hong Kong enjoys a high degree of autonomy, it confirmed the Central Authorities' right to supervise the exercise of the autonomy. Noting that one size does not fit all, it highlighted the unwavering determination of the Central People's Government to allow democracy to develop in the city, and explained that this will be a democracy 'with Hong Kong characteristics'."

Commenting on the statements issued by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the G7 foreign ministers, the Government spokesman pointed out that under "one country, two systems" and as provided for in Article 43 of the Basic Law, the Chief Executive of the HKSAR is accountable to both the Central People's Government and the HKSAR, and the method for the selection of the Chief Executive is governed by Annex I to the Basic Law. Following the amendments to Annex I by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on March 30, 2021, with a view to improving the electoral system, all relevant local electoral laws were enacted by the Legislative Council of the HKSAR. Elections under the improved electoral system, including the sixth-term Chief Executive Election on May 8, have been conducted in strict accordance with the laws and in an open, fair and honest manner.

"Any allegation that the improved electoral system has weakened democracy in the governance of Hong Kong is misguided. On the contrary, the electoral system has broadened representation in the electorate for the Chief Executive Election through expanding the Election Committee from 1 200 members from four sectors to 1 500 members from five sectors. Those from newly included subsectors who are eligible to elect the Chief Executive come from grassroots organisations, district groups, small and medium-sized enterprises and Hong Kong members of relevant national organisations," the

Government spokesman added.

Likewise, under the improved electoral system, the Legislative Council's representativeness has been boosted. Its members are now returned by the Election Committee constituency, the functional groups in the functional constituencies and direct elections in the geographical constituencies. This enables all social sectors to be represented in a fair and balanced manner.

The Government spokesman lamented that critics of Hong Kong's electoral arrangements had chosen to totally ignore the unprecedented challenges and security risks Hong Kong faced for almost one year from the latter part of 2019 when elected members of the legislature were exploiting the political structure to engage in activities undermining national security.

The setting up of a statutory Candidate Eligibility Review Committee is to ensure that candidates in the Election Committee, Chief Executive and Legislative Council elections comply with the requirement in Article 104 of the Basic Law that they would uphold the Basic Law and swear allegiance to the HKSAR of the PRC. This constitutional requirement is commonly found in most other jurisdictions for people aspiring to take up a public office.

"It should be noted that the decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in March 2021 has not changed the ultimate aim of attaining universal suffrage in the selection of the Chief Executive under Article 45 of the Basic Law. We strongly believe that improving the electoral system, ensuring 'patriots administering Hong Kong' and safeguarding the overall interests of society are conducive to the stable development of Hong Kong's democracy," the Government spokesman added.