

[Hong Kong signs Working Holiday Scheme agreement with Italy \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong and Italy today (July 5) signed an agreement to mark the establishment of a bilateral Working Holiday Scheme (WHS) for young people of the two places.

The agreement was signed by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Dr Law Chi-kiung, and the Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Government of the Italian Republic, Mr Manlio Di Stefano, at the Central Government Offices, Tamar.

Welcoming the establishment of the scheme with Italy, Dr Law said, "We are delighted to see that the WHS has been well received by the youth. The agreement will enable young people in Hong Kong and Italy to broaden their horizons and gain living and working experience in a foreign culture, as well as further reinforce our bilateral ties."

Mr Di Stefano said, "We are glad to provide the Italian youth with this new and unique opportunity to experience living, studying and working in Hong Kong. We wish young people from Hong Kong will take advantage of the scheme to enjoy Italy as well. Investing in our youth is the best way to foster the ancient friendship between Italy and Hong Kong."

The scheme with Italy is Hong Kong's 14th bilateral WHS. Since 2001, Hong Kong has established WHS arrangements with New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, Germany, Japan, Canada, Korea, France, the United Kingdom, Austria, Hungary, Sweden and the Netherlands. So far, about 90 000 Hong Kong youths have benefited from these schemes.

Under the WHS between Hong Kong and Italy, youths from each side may apply for a visa which will allow them to stay in Italy or Hong Kong for up to 12 months. During the period, they may work to finance their stay or study short-term courses. The annual quota from each side will be 500.

Details of visa application procedures for applicants from Hong Kong will be available on the website of the Consulate General of Italy in Hong Kong at conshongkong.esteri.it/consolato_hongkong/en/ in due course.

Applicants from Italy may contact the Immigration Department of the HKSAR by telephone on 2824 6111 or obtain the necessary information from the department's website www.immd.gov.hk.

