

## SITI commences visit to Belgium (with photos)

â€‹The Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, began his visit to Brussels, Belgium on May 22 (Brussels time).

Professor Sun met with European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Ms Iliana Ivanova. Professor Sun pointed out that this is the first time in recent years that a Principal Official of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has met with the senior leadership of the European Union (EU), which precisely demonstrates the great importance that the HKSAR Government and the EU attach to maintaining and enhancing the bilateral relations between the two sides. Professor Sun mentioned that Hong Kong has entered into a stable social environment, which enables the city to focus its efforts on developing the economy and improving people's livelihood, and at the same time provides a better business environment for overseas and local enterprises operating in Hong Kong.

Professor Sun highlighted that the current-term HKSAR Government has been proactively establishing Hong Kong as an international innovation and technology (I&T) centre. Since taking office for nearly two years, the Government has launched and implemented a series of important initiatives in a coordinated manner along the development directions and key strategies promulgated in the Hong Kong I&T Development Blueprint, and that fostering economic development through I&T is a topic of common interest to both Hong Kong and the EU. Both sides also held discussion on how to strengthen further I&T co-operation between Hong Kong and the EU. In addition, Professor Sun sincerely invited the Commissioner to visit Hong Kong.

Upon his arrival in Brussels in the morning, Professor Sun called on the Chinese Mission to the European Union, Minister Zhu Jing, to give him an introduction on the latest situation of Hong Kong's I&T development as well as the city's continuous efforts in integrating into national I&T development. He thanked the Mission for continuing to support the HKSAR Government in its work to promote Hong Kong's advantages in I&T in Europe. Minister Zhu also briefed Professor Sun and his entourage on the recent situation in Europe and the work of the Mission.

In the afternoon, Professor Sun met with the Director General of European Association for Bioindustries (EuropaBio), Ms Claire Skentelbery, to learn more about the latest development of the biotechnology industry, in particular industrial biotechnology, in Europe. The EuropaBio is Europe's largest and most influential biotech industry group. Professor Sun elaborated on Hong Kong's edges in scientific research in the aspect of life and health, noting that the Hong Kong I&T Development Blueprint has put forward the focus to promote strategic industries such as life and health technology. To further advance the future development of the relevant fields in Hong Kong, the HKSAR Government will provide subsidies for local universities in Hong

Kong to collaborate with Mainland and overseas organisations to set up life and health technology research institutes, in a bid to facilitate relevant research and development (R&D) activities and transformation of R&D outcomes, as well as to attract leading I&T talent and research teams around the world to come to Hong Kong.

Professor Sun will depart for Paris, France, on May 23 (Paris time) to continue his visit.

