

Speech by FS at Italian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and Macao Gala Night 2024 (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at Italian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and Macao Gala Night 2024 today (November 15):

Ambassador Ambrosetti (Ambassador of Italy to China, Mr Massimo Ambrosetti), Consul General Ficarra (Consul General of Italy to Hong Kong and Macao, Mr Carmelo Ficarra), Mr De Rosa (President of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and Macao, Mr Davide De Rosa), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Buona sera. Good evening. It gives me great pleasure to join your gala dinner again this evening.

The exquisite Italian cuisine and wine are truly tempting, so I promise to keep my remarks brief.

Tonight, we gather to celebrate the long-standing and rewarding ties between our two economies. We are close partners on many fronts, and our collaboration continues to flourish.

Last year, Italy was Hong Kong's fourth-largest trading partner among EU (European Union) member states. Our city is home to some 170 Italian companies, spanning banking, communications, logistics, design, and a wide range of other businesses.

The "Made in Italy" label is synonymous with superior design and exceptional taste. From luxury fashion to automobiles, and from Chianti wine to gelato and chocolate, Hong Kong people just love Italian products. Italian brands and designs are literally everywhere in this city – if you also count the bags carried by the ladies – and gentlemen, too.

Speaking of design, I'm pleased to note that Italy will be the partner country for our Business of Design Week 2025. I am sure we have much to work together in the creative and cultural industries.

Looking ahead, our relations are bound to grow even stronger. Commemorating the 700th anniversary of the passing of Marco Polo and celebrating the 20th anniversary of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Italy, the recent state visit by President Mattarella to our country was highly successful, marking a renewed commitment to strengthening cultural, commercial and diplomatic ties.

As a "super connector" between the Mainland and the rest of the world,

Hong Kong will continue to create ample opportunities for Italian businesses and industries. Beyond our role as an international financial, shipping, and trade centre, we see tremendous potential for mutually rewarding collaboration in innovation and technology.

Hong Kong, together with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), is rapidly emerging as an international innovation and technology centre. We focus on four strategic areas: AI and data analytics, biotech, fintech, and new energy and new materials. We welcome Italian enterprises in these sectors to work with us to reap the tremendous benefits ahead.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Chief Executive's recent Policy Address announced further measures to underline our commitment in this pursuit, including increasing investments in emerging industries, advancing strategic infrastructure such as the Northern Metropolis, and strengthening our collaboration with neighbouring cities in the GBA.

Hong Kong is an ideal platform for Italian technology and manufacturing businesses – be they machinery, pharmaceutical, fintech or green industries – seeking to explore the vast opportunities in this part of the world.

In short, the friendship and partnership that we are building will be highly rewarding long down the road.

Last but not least, may I wish you continued success in your business endeavours in Hong Kong and beyond in the years to come.

Grazie!

