

Speech by FS at Republic of Poland Constitution Day reception (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the Republic of Poland Constitution Day reception today (May 7):

Consul General (Consul General of Poland in Hong Kong, Mr Michal Kolodziejcki), Commissioner Pan (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Pan Yundong), ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.

I'm pleased to be here with you tonight, in celebration of the Republic of Poland's Constitution Day. As the Consul General (CG) proudly noted just a few minutes ago, Poland's constitution was the "first national constitution in modern Europe".

I'm pleased as well, to meet the CG this evening. And I look forward to our first formal get-together soon – to follow up on how Hong Kong and Poland can build on our good co-operation.

Hong Kong and Poland have been good trade and investment partners. For instance, Hong Kong is Poland's fourth-largest Asian investor.

Poland, after all, is the sixth-largest economy in the European Union. It also commands a strategic location along the Silk Road Economic Belt.

I'm hopeful that our two economies, our respective businesses and investors, can expand the long-standing business ties and interests.

In that regard, I'm pleased to hear of the Consulate's efforts to boost economic co-operation, to support Polish companies looking to Hong Kong as a base for the promising markets of the Mainland and Asia in general.

I'm sure quality Polish products, furniture for example, can find their way to this part of the world through Hong Kong.

And the CG is absolutely right that the "one country, two systems" principle has made Hong Kong one of the best places to live and do business. He could take comfort that the arrangement will stay in the long run as a solemn commitment of our country. And so will our unique advantages, including the rule of law, free flow of capital, goods, information and talent, a simple and low tax system, alignment with the best international standards, and much more.

These advantages underpin Hong Kong's role as the gate opener for Polish businesses to venture into Asia. It helps that we are a core city of the fast-emerging Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, a prosperous, cluster-city development with some 87 million consumers.

Hong Kong also holds admirable connectivity with the rest of Asia and the Belt and Road countries. Not only physical connectivity enabled by world-class infrastructure, but also people-to-people bonds and networks.

Beyond business, there's the boundless pleasure of cultural co-operation between us. Polish films frequently make their way to Hong Kong, and vice-versa. And for music, there is much more than Chopin. I'm told, for example, that Polish jazz will debut next month at the "Make Music, Hong Kong" showcase, one of the special events featured annually at the French May Arts Festival.

I look forward to more fruitful exchanges between our respective artists and troupes, and creative organisations.

Culinary exchanges, too. After all, food is central to both our cultures, our people. Indeed, I understand that the chef of Soho House, tonight's venue, is Polish. I'm told he's been hard at work, preparing Polish delicacies to be served just as soon as I stop talking. Thank you very much.

