

Statistics on Code on Access to Information for fourth quarter of 2020

The Government received a total of 2 782 requests for information under the Code on Access to Information in the fourth quarter of 2020, a spokesman for the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau said today (July 2).

The total number of requests received since the introduction of the Code in March 1995 and up to the end of December 2020 amounted to 88 909. Of these, 5 035 requests were subsequently withdrawn by the requestors and 4 515 requests covered cases in which the bureaux/departments concerned did not hold the requested information or cannot confirm or deny the existence of information. As at December 31, 2020, 419 requests were still being processed by bureaux/departments.

Among the 78 940 requests which covered information held by bureaux/departments and which the bureaux/departments had responded to, 76 407 requests (96.8 per cent) were met, either in full (74 285 requests) or in part (2 122 requests), and 2 533 requests (3.2 per cent) were refused.

Any member of the public who is dissatisfied with the response of a bureau/department under the Code may request that the matter be reviewed. He or she may also lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman.

In the fourth quarter of 2020, the Ombudsman received 23 complaints relating to requests for information. In this quarter, the Ombudsman concluded 41 complaints, among which four were substantiated, 13 were partially substantiated, five were unsubstantiated, 15 were settled after inquiries by the Ombudsman, and four were not pursued by the Ombudsman or outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. As at December 31, 2020, the Ombudsman's investigations on 30 complaints were ongoing.

"The Code has provided an effective framework for the public to seek access to information held by the Government," the spokesman said.