

HAD invites organisations to apply for funding to operate support service centres for ethnic minorities

â€‹To further enhance support for ethnic minorities (EMs), the Home Affairs Department (HAD) today (February 22) invited eligible and interested non-profit-making organisations (NPOs) to apply for funding to establish and operate a support service centre for EMs (EM centre) in Kowloon Central or New Territories East.

The two new centres are required to organise language programmes, dedicated programmes for youths, orientation and familiarisation programmes for EMs newly arrived in Hong Kong, as well as integration activities and counselling and referral services, to facilitate EMs' early integration into the community. The centres are also required to set up Ethnic Minority Care Teams to provide dedicated caring services through household visits or outreach services to EMs.

Details of the project, the application criteria and the briefing session are set out in the Project Brief, which is available on the HAD website (www.had.gov.hk).

The deadline for application is 5pm on April 5.

Currently, the HAD provides multiple support services to assist ethnic minorities to integrate into the local community. The HAD has commissioned NPOs to run eight EM centres in Wan Chai, Kwun Tong, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, Tung Chung and Kwai Tsing to provide language classes, interest classes, after-school tutorial classes, youth activities, integration programmes, etc, to EMs to facilitate their integration into the community. Among these centres, the CHEER Centre in Kwun Tong also provides general interpretation and translation services between English and eight ethnic minority languages (namely Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese) in non-specialised/non-professional areas. In the 2022-23 project year, the total number of service recipients of the eight centres was over 102 000. Apart from EM centres, the HAD has also provided other support services for EMs including community support teams, ambassador schemes, District-based Programmes for Racial Harmony, Harmony Scholarships Scheme, etc. For dissemination of information, the HAD has sponsored five radio programmes in ethnic minority languages, operated a website and published guidebooks in six ethnic minority languages to facilitate EMs' early integration into the community.

In order to reach out to the ethnic minority communities more effectively and assist them to integrate into the local community, the 2023 Policy Address announced that two additional EM centres will be set up, one in Kowloon Central and the other in New Territories East, bringing the total

number of these centres to 10. Each of the centres will be invited to set up one Ethnic Minority Care Team to reach out to EM households, understand their needs and introduce public services they need.

Red flag lowered at Silverstrand Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (February 22) that since the water off Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District is now suitable for swimming, the red flag has been lowered.

The red flag was hoisted at the beach earlier on after a red tide was found.

MD announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

The Marine Department today (February 22) reminded masters, coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters to proceed at a safe speed and exercise extreme caution because restricted visibility of less than 2 nautical miles has been reported.

Appropriate sound signals shall be made when underway or at anchor. All vessels must comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea.

Also, when radar is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities, the information obtained from the equipment is rather limited and should be construed accordingly.

Visibility reports are broadcast by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) on VHF channels 02, 12, 14, 63 and 67.

In the event of an accident, a report shall be made immediately to the VTC at Tel: 2233 7801.

HKETO, Brussels hosts receptions in Belgium and Türkiye to celebrate Chinese New Year

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Brussels (HKETO, Brussels) hosted a Chinese New Year reception in Brussels, Belgium yesterday (February 20, Brussels time).

The reception has been named one of the most celebrated annual social events in town and attracted some 250 guests from officials of the European institutions, national governments, diplomatic missions, as well as senior representatives from trade and business, academia, arts and cultural sectors, media and also the Chinese community. The event was supported by the Belgium-Hong Kong Society.

The Special Representative for Hong Kong Economic and Trade Affairs to the European Union, Ms Shirley Yung said in her welcoming remarks that under the "one country, two systems" principle, "Hong Kong enjoys the unrivalled links with Mainland China while retaining our own trusted systems including common law and independent judiciary, free flow of capital, goods and information, low and simple tax regime, and an efficient and clean government."

She highlighted that such unique advantages give Hong Kong the role as a prime gateway to China and also a prime destination for businesses and talents. Just like over 9 000 overseas and Mainland companies setting up and expanding their businesses in the city, strategic enterprises and top talents from around the world are welcomed to Hong Kong to explore opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, China and the wider Asia.

The opportunity was also taken to invite various Hong Kong artists to the reception to showcase their talents and to underline Hong Kong's efforts to nurture local artists in pursuit of developing Hong Kong into an international arts and cultural hub. This year, the drawings by a Hong Kong comics artist, Pen So, curated by the Hong Kong Arts Centre (Comix Home Base) (www.hkac.org.hk) in the theme Wanderers' Land – Cityscapes in Hong Kong, were featured.

A dragon-themed and Hong Kong kung fu culture-inspired dance performance Convergence: MovINK Dragon, was also staged during the reception. Being a crossover of comics and kung fu, the action-packed performance was delivered by TS Crew, an arts group comprising members from backgrounds of Xiqu, dance,

martial arts and more. The animation which paired the dance with visual and sound effects was illustrated and directed by comics artist Felix Ip; and the performance as a whole was curated and produced by the Hong Kong Arts Centre (Comix Home Base).

HKETO, Brussels also organised two Chinese New Year receptions respectively in Ankara (February 15) and Istanbul (February 16) in Türkiye. In her remarks, Ms Shirley Yung highlighted the unique advantages of doing business in Hong Kong, especially in light of the recent conclusion of the Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement between Hong Kong and Türkiye which opens up even further opportunities for Turkish businesses in particular. The receptions attracted over 100 guests, including officials of the national governments, as well as senior representatives from trade and business, academia, cultural and creative sectors.

[Trade instructed to suspend importing and selling of raw oysters produced by Earl Huitres Geay in France](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (February 21) instructed the trade to suspend the import of raw oysters produced by Earl Huitres Geay FR 17.452.121 CE in France. The trade should also stop using or selling the product concerned immediately should they possess it.

“A spokesman for the CFS said, “The CFS was notified by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health of two food poisoning cases which involved consumption of raw oysters at two restaurants. The CFS conducted investigations at the restaurants concerned and found that the two restaurants in Tsim Sha Tsui and Sha Tin had sold raw oysters which had been produced by Earl Huitres Geay FR 17.452.121 CE in France. For the sake of prudence, the CFS has immediately instructed the trade to suspend the import into and sale within Hong Kong of all raw oysters produced by Earl Huitres Geay FR 17.452.121 CE in France.”

“The CFS has also instructed the supplier and restaurants concerned to stop supplying and selling the affected raw oysters immediately, and is tracing the distribution of the affected product. The trade should also stop using or selling the product concerned immediately should they possess it.

“The spokesman pointed out that as oysters feed by filtering a large volume of seawater, pathogens can accumulate in them if they are grown in or harvested from contaminated water. Raw or partially cooked oysters are high-risk foods. Susceptible groups, such as pregnant women, young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems or liver diseases, should

avoid eating raw oysters.

â€‹The CFS will inform the French authorities and will also notify the local trade. It will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health. An investigation is ongoing.