

[CE starts her visit to Europe \(with photos/videos\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, started her visit programme in Europe after arriving in Brussels, Belgium yesterday (June 14, Brussels time).

Mrs Lam started the day by calling on the Chargé d'affaires of Chinese Embassy in Belgium, Mr Zhang Chi, to express her heartfelt thanks to the embassy for its continuous support in various exchanges between Hong Kong and Belgium as well as for offering consular assistance to Hong Kong people in need.

Next, Mrs Lam met with the Vice President of the European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms Federica Mogherini. She said that since the return to the Motherland, Hong Kong has successfully implemented "One Country, Two Systems", "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong" and a high degree of autonomy. Hong Kong people's freedom and rights are safeguarded under the Basic Law, and the rule of law and judicial independence are as robust as ever. She noted that Hong Kong has close ties with the European Union with a Structured Dialogue being held every year. She expressed the hope that collaboration between Hong Kong and the European Union will continue to strengthen, and in particular welcomed scientific and research institutions from the European Union to develop in Hong Kong.

Mrs Lam then attended a business luncheon co-organised by the European Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Brussels. In her speech, she briefed the guests attending the lunch on the growing and evolving relations between Hong Kong and the European Union. She said that Hong Kong is determined to become a global hub for innovation and technology and play an important role in the Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area Development. She welcomed European enterprises and start-ups to establish a presence in Hong Kong and ride on its unique advantages to explore business opportunities in Mainland China and Asia.

Attendees of the lunch included Belgian Deputy Prime Minister cum Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and European Affairs, Mr Didier Reynders, and European Commissioner for Trade, Ms Cecilia Malmström. Didier Reynders said in his speech that Belgian companies continue to appreciate Hong Kong as one of the freest economies in the world, based on the rule of law, independent judiciary, free flow of information and as an important connector to Mainland China. He said that these elements underpin the strong relation between Hong Kong and Belgium as well as the European Union. Cecilia Malmström said that Hong Kong is one of the most important partners of the European Union in the Asia-Pacific region. She praised Hong Kong's openness, and described Hong Kong as one of the most significant financial centres and

trade ports in the world. She appreciated Hong Kong's support for the strengthening of the multilateral trading system, and looked forward to working together with Hong Kong to advocate the benefits of open global trade.

In the afternoon, Mrs Lam had audience with HM King Philippe of the Belgians at the Royal Palace, and briefed him on Hong Kong's latest developments.

Mrs Lam later paid a visit to Musée Margritte. Opened in 2009 and located in the heart of Brussels, the museum brings together the world's largest collection of the renowned Belgian surrealist artist René Magritte. She said to the director of the museum that the renovated Hong Kong Museum of Art and the M+ Museum in the West Kowloon Cultural District will become world-class museums in the future. She looked forward to working with Musée Margritte to bring its collection of art works to Hong Kong for exhibition.

In the evening, Mrs Lam officiated at the cocktail event organised by Cathay Pacific Airways (CX) with the support of the Airport Authority Hong Kong. She briefed the attendees on Hong Kong's role as an aviation hub of the region, and congratulated CX for launching direct services between Hong Kong and Brussels since March, which she believed will promote trade and business as well as cultural exchange between the two places.

Mrs Lam will continue her visit to Brussels today (June 15, Brussels time).





