

[HKETO, Brussels hosts receptions to celebrate arrival of Year of the Pig \(with photos\)](#)

On the occasion of the arrival of the Year of the Pig, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Brussels (HKETO, Brussels) has organised a series of Chinese New Year (CNY) receptions to celebrate the joyous festival and to update guests on the latest developments of Hong Kong. So far, CNY receptions have been held in seven European cities, namely Izmir (January 22, Izmir time), Dublin (February 1, Dublin time), The Hague (February 6, The Hague time), Milan (February 7, Milan time), Paris (February 11, Paris time), Luxembourg (February 13, Luxembourg time) and Brussels (February 19, Brussels time).

Officiating at the CNY receptions, the Special Representative for Hong Kong Economic and Trade Affairs to the European Union, Ms Shirley Lam, highlighted the successful implementation of the "one country, two systems" principle, which protects Hong Kong's fundamental strengths, as well as the high degree of autonomy and the freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong.

"Hong Kong has braved many challenges in the past and emerged even stronger than before each time. The magic that has enabled us to do so is the continuous openness of our society that allows free flow of people, information, capital and goods in and out of Hong Kong," Ms Lam said.

"In 2018 we saw a 6.4 per cent increase in the number of Mainland and overseas companies setting up in Hong Kong – the total number has now reached almost 9 000, and 17 per cent of them use Hong Kong as their regional headquarters or offices. Hong Kong's rule of law and business-friendly environment provide the greatest certainty to do business. In fact, the Heritage Foundation has just named Hong Kong as the freest economy in the world for 25 years in a row," Ms Lam continued.

Noting that more than 80 000 foreign professionals are working in Hong Kong, Ms Lam added that Hong Kong has a big pool of international talents who can be tapped by companies making investments in the city. However, Hong Kong wants to see even more talents move to Hong Kong, she said. Ms Lam also emphasised that in the coming years, Hong Kong will continue to boost its innovation and technology sector, and the city stands to play an important role in two national strategies of Mainland China.

"I am sure our services will be indispensable for foreign participants in the Belt and Road Initiative projects," Ms Lam said, referring to Hong Kong's financial and professional services, deep debt and equity capital markets, and high degree of integration with the world economy, as well as its role as an international arbitration centre. Hong Kong is also expected to be the international finance, navigation and trade centre, as well as a

transport hub, for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development.

The latest CNY reception was held in Brussels on February 19 (Brussels time). Addressing guests of honour including the European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Mr Miguel Arias Cañete, as well as over 350 government officials and representatives of business sectors, Ms Lam said Hong Kong and Belgium are close business and trading partners. Belgian companies have a presence in Hong Kong in various sectors, from banking, asset management and environmental technology to manufacturing and logistics. She welcomed more Belgian companies, big and small, as well as ambitious young Belgian entrepreneurs, to go to Hong Kong to find out the abundant opportunities offered by the city.

HKETO, Brussels seized the opportunity to provide a platform for young Hong Kong musical talents and promote Hong Kong as a culture and artistic hub by inviting the CY Leo Electronic Trio to perform at the CNY receptions in The Hague, Paris and Brussels.

In the coming weeks HKETO, Brussels will continue its series of CNY receptions and events in other European cities, including Lisbon, Barcelona, Madrid, Athens and Limassol.



