

立法會
Legislative Council

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Paper for the House Committee meeting on 19 January 2001

**Proposed overseas duty visit to Europe by
the Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs**

Purpose

This paper seeks the permission of the House Committee for an overseas duty visit to be made by the Panel on Constitutional Affairs from 6 to 15 June 2001.

Background

2. In the 1999-2000 legislative session, the Panel conducted public consultation on the development of the political system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). The Panel also considered the research reports prepared by the Research and Library Services Division of the Legislative Council Secretariat on systems of government in seven countries : the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and Singapore.

3. Having considered all the views received and deliberated in detail the relevant issues, the Panel presented the Report on the Development of the Political System of the HKSAR to the Council. One of the recommendations made by the Panel was that the Administration should consider implementing a more flexible contract system so that principal officials should be held politically accountable for their decisions. A motion calling upon the Government to consider the views of Members of the Council on the Panel's Report and related issues was moved for debate at the Council meeting on 14 June 2000. The motion was carried by the Council.

4. In his Policy Address delivered in October 2000, the Chief Executive (CE) announced that the Government would study how the accountability of principal officials at Secretaries and Directors of Bureaux rank for their respective policy portfolios could be enhanced. The Government would

consider devising a compatible system of appointment for these principal officials, setting out their powers and responsibilities and at the same time defining clearly their role in formulating and implementing government policies under the new system.

5. The Panel considers that CE's announcement of a new accountability system was a positive step responding to the Panel's recommendations on the development of the political system of the HKSAR. The Panel decides to conduct public consultation on the proposed accountability system in February and March 2001 with a view to analyzing the views received and making its own recommendations for the consideration of the Administration. As part of the study of the proposed system of accountability for principal officials, the Panel agrees to make reference to overseas systems by conducting a visit to some countries in Europe.

Visit programme

6. The delegation plans to visit London, Edinburgh, Paris and Berlin from 6 to 15 June 2001. These places are chosen because the United Kingdom (UK), France and Germany feature different criteria of eligibility for appointment as executive ministers or principal officials. In the UK, executive ministers are all appointed from members of the legislature. In France, the executive and legislative roles are incompatible. Hence, in the event a member of the legislature is appointed an executive minister, the member must resign from the legislature. Germany allows but does not require executive ministers to be members of the legislature.

7. The delegation will hold meetings and discussions with members of the legislatures concerned (including the speakers, members of different political parties, chairmen and members of relevant committees), ministers and senior civil servants, and other interested parties e.g. academics. The assistance of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices in London and Brussels would be enlisted in drawing up a detailed programme for the visit.

Delegation

8. The delegation will be led by Hon Andrew WONG, Chairman of the Panel. The other delegates are Hon HUI Cheung-ching, Dr Hon YEUNG Sum and Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung. The delegation will be accompanied by a staff member of the Secretariat.

Budget

9. The estimated expenditure for four Members to undertake the visit is \$321,000. A breakdown of the expenses is in the **Appendix**. The decision that four Members will be fully sponsored for the visit is made in accordance with the system of allocation of funds for Members' overseas duty visits approved by The Legislative Council Commission in 1997, subject to the outcome of the current review.

Advice sought

10. Rule 22 (u) of the House Rules provides that should any Panel consider it necessary to undertake any activities outside Hong Kong under the name of the Panel of the Council, the prior permission of the House Committee shall be sought.

11. The House Committee's permission is sought for the study visit to be undertaken by the delegation of the Panel on Constitutional Affairs.

Legislative Council Secretariat

18 January 2001

Panel on Constitutional Affairs

**Estimated budget for the overseas duty visit to
London, Edinburgh, Paris and Berlin**

Date of visit : 6 - 15 June 2001

Size of delegation : 4 Members (to be accompanied by one Secretariat staff)

Budget : HK \$ 321,000 (for 4 Members)

Items	Estimated Amount HK\$ (per Member)	Total Amount HK\$ (4 Members)
1. Air passage (business class)	43,270	173,080
2. Hotel accommodation	11,000	44,000
3. Overseas subsistence allowance	6,300	25,200
4. Travel insurance	310	1,240
5. Airport tax	620	2,480
6. Local transportation	-	36,000
7. Interpretation service	-	35,000
8. Miscellaneous	-	4,000
Total :		\$321,000