

政府總部
民政事務局

香港灣仔
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1 November 2005

The Honourable TAM Heung-man, Mandy,
Room 425, West Wing,
Central Government Offices,
Central,
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Tam,

Equal Opportunities Commission

In order to address public concern and to ensure accountability, we have asked the Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission (“the Chairperson”) to seek the approval of the Secretary for Home Affairs (who is the Principal Official responsible for the Equal Opportunities Commission under the accountability system) before embarking on any overseas duty visit. We are still discussing with the Chairperson as to how best to put this into effect.

At the Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs meeting on 20 October 2005, a Member asked under what circumstances would the Secretary for Home Affairs approve or not approve an overseas duty visit of the Chairperson. In response, I briefed Members on our intended approval procedure. Subsequently, I undertook to write to you on how the proposed procedure would work.

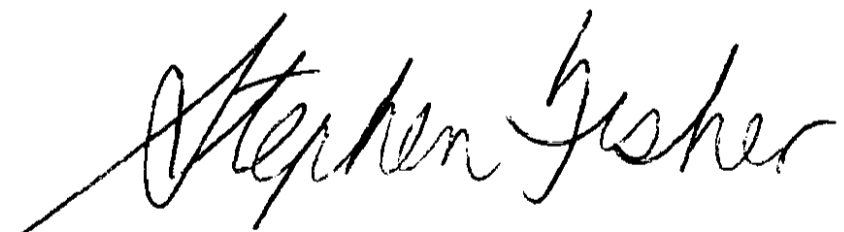
Let me first say that we have no intention of interfering with the work of the Equal Opportunities Commission. The purpose of the approval procedure is to ensure that public funds are used responsibly and properly.

To facilitate the approval process, we have proposed to the Chairperson that the Secretary for Home Affairs would approve his overseas duty visit if and when he has:

- (a) provided information on the purpose, destination and duration of the proposed visit;
- (b) confirmed that the budget earmarked for overseas duty visits by the Equal Opportunities Commission is sufficient to cover the expenses to be incurred for the proposed visit;
- (c) confirmed that the purpose of the proposed visit complies with his statutory duties; and
- (d) confirmed that the day-to-day operation of the Equal Opportunities Commission will not be affected by the proposed visit.

We are still waiting for the Chairperson's response to the above proposed approval procedure.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

(Stephen Fisher)
for Secretary for Home Affairs