

立法會 *Legislative Council*

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Paper for the House Committee meeting on 29 May 2009

Report of the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee

Proposed visit to Eastern Europe

Purpose

This paper invites the House Committee ("HC") to consider the recommendations of the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee ("the Subcommittee") on organizing a visit by Members to the Czech Republic ("Czech"), Republic of Croatia ("Croatia") and Republic of Hungary ("Hungary") in Eastern Europe in September 2009, the size of Legislative Council ("LegCo") delegations on visits organized by the Subcommittee, and the mechanism for selecting Members to join such delegations in the current term.

Background

2. Formed under HC, the Subcommittee is responsible for promoting liaison and developing good relationship with parliamentary bodies in various territories as well as for dealing with all matters pertaining to the activities of parliamentary friendship groups. The Subcommittee also makes recommendation to HC on sending delegations of LegCo Members on visits outside Hong Kong and organizes such visits.

3. Visits organized by the Subcommittee of previous terms, as are detailed in **Appendix I**, were primarily those whose legislatures had formed friendship groups with LegCo. From experience, the visits are useful in establishing and reinforcing links with legislatures in other places, fostering better mutual understanding, keeping overseas Members of Parliaments ("MPs") as well as community and business leaders abreast of the latest developments in Hong Kong, and sustaining their interest in Hong Kong affairs. Members of the overseas parliaments who received the delegations of LegCo Members during the visits sometimes will return visits to LegCo, thereby further strengthening the ties established. The visits are also valuable experience for LegCo Members to gain first-hand information on the political and electoral systems of other countries, as well as the functions and operation of overseas legislatures, including how they monitor the government.

Proposed visit to Eastern Europe

4. The Subcommittee has discussed the parliamentary liaison activities to be organized in the current term. Members consider it worthwhile to organize a visit to countries with emerging democracy, such as those in Eastern Europe, and draw experience from how they managed the changes during the democratization process. Members have made reference to the information collated by the Secretariat on six selected places in Central and Eastern Europe, viz. the Republic of Estonia, Croatia, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Czech, which are undergoing democratic transition and consolidation.

5. After deliberation, the Subcommittee has decided to recommend the organization of a visit to Prague of Czech, Zagreb of Croatia and Budapest of Hungary, in view of the ties of these places with Hong Kong, their political systems and development, as well as their geographical proximity. It is anticipated that, through the visit, the delegation will be able to obtain first-hand information on the political and electoral systems of the countries concerned. The delegation will also gain a better understanding of the operation of the legislatures concerned, including their committee structure, the way different parties in the legislature work together, the support provided to individual MPs by their Parliamentary Service, how the Parliamentary Service is managed and financed, and the challenges faced by MPs, etc.

6. The Subcommittee proposes that the visit should last for 10 to 12 days from mid to late September 2009 (tentative dates being 13 to 23 September 2009), in order that the delegation can return in time to prepare for the new session. Subject to HC's approval of the size of and mechanism for selecting Members to join the delegation (paragraphs 8 to 11 below), applications from Members to join the visit will be invited. The programme of the visit will be drawn up in consultation with the delegation upon its formation. The assistance of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices in Berlin and Brussels and the consulates concerned in Hong Kong will also be enlisted in making arrangements for the visit.

Budget for the visit

7. The financial provision for visits to other legislatures organized by the Subcommittee is separate from the overseas duty visits accounts provided to individual Members in each term. The approved budget of the LegCo Commission for such visits for the 2009-2010 financial year is \$495,000, which will cover all the expenses incurred by Members, including air passage, hotel accommodation, subsistence allowance, in-town transport, interpretation, official entertainment and travel insurance.

Proposed size of delegations and selection mechanism for the current term

8. The Subcommittee notes that the size of the delegations on visits organized by the Subcommittee, as approved in the Second LegCo, was eight fully-sponsored Members and two self-financing Members, so that the delegation could be representative of the groupings in LegCo and of a manageable size.

9. The Subcommittee proposes that while the number of fully-sponsored Members on a visit organized by the Subcommittee in the current term should remain to be eight, the number of self-financing Members should be increased to not more than seven, so that more Members can participate in the visit.

10. The Subcommittee also proposes that the following mechanism, which is modelled on the one used for past visits, be adopted for deciding on how the eight fully-sponsored places and seven self-financing places should be allocated:

- (a) Members should be divided into four different groups, having regard to their affiliation and the number of Members in each group. The eight fully-sponsored places should then be allocated among the four groups of Members on a pro-rata basis. Each group of Members should decide its own way to nominate the participating Member(s);
- (b) either the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman of the Subcommittee should be a member of the delegation, if he or she so wishes. In case both the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Subcommittee are interested in joining the delegation, the one who is not nominated to take the place in their group may re-join the group to which he/she originally belongs, and be considered for nomination together with other Members in that group; and
- (c) to facilitate their work in the Subcommittee, members of the Subcommittee should have priority in joining the delegation on a self-financing basis. If there are more than seven Subcommittee members who wish to join, allocation should be made by drawing lots. If there are remaining places, allocation to non-Subcommittee members should also be determined by drawing lots. If the approved budget of a visit is not exceeded, the additional expenses incurred due to the addition of the self-financing Members, other than those that can be attributed to them individually (e.g. air passage, airport tax, hotel accommodation, travel insurance and visa application fee), should be sponsored.

11. Details of the proposed grouping of Members and the allocation of places among different groups are in **Appendix II**. Members have been consulted and agreed to the proposed grouping set out therein.

Advice sought

12. HC is invited to consider the proposed visit to Eastern Europe in September 2009, the size of LegCo delegations on visits organized by the Subcommittee, and the mechanism for selecting Members to join such delegations in the current term.

Legislative Council Secretariat
26 May 2009

Friendship groups formed with other legislatures and visits organized in the First and Second Legislative Council

The Legislative Council ("LegCo") has so far formed friendship groups with the following five legislatures: Australian Parliament, Canadian Parliament, European Parliament, Japanese Diet and Singaporean Parliament.

2. The visits organized by the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee in the First and Second LegCo are as follows:

<u>Places visited</u>	<u>Date</u>
(a) Singapore	12 to 15 February 1998
(b) Japan	23 to 27 February 1999
(c) Europe (London, Strasbourg and Berlin)	13 to 20 February 2000
(d) Canada (Ottawa and Toronto)	16 to 24 February 2002
(e) Singapore and Thailand	12 to 18 February 2004

3. No visit was organized by the Subcommittee in the Third LegCo.

Allocation of places among different groups of Members

<u>Group</u>	<u>Members' grouping</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>No. of place(s) to be allocated</u>
A	Chairman/Deputy Chairman of Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee	1. Hon Abraham SHEK* 2. Hon Emily LAU*	1
B	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (not including Hon Jasper TSANG)	1. Hon CHAN Kam-lam 2. Hon WONG Yung-kan 3. Hon LAU Kong-wah 4. Hon TAM Yiu-chung 5. Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming 6. Hon WONG Ting-kwong 7. Hon Starry LEE 8. Hon CHAN Hak-kan 9. Hon IP Kwok-him	1
C	Democratic Party	1. Hon Albert HO 2. Hon Fred LI 3. Hon James TO 4. Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong 5. Hon Andrew CHENG 6. Hon LEE Wing-tat 7. Hon KAM Nai-wai 8. Hon WONG Sing-chi	3
	Civic Party	9. Dr Hon Margaret NG 10. Hon Audrey EU 11. Hon Alan LEONG 12. Hon Ronny TONG 13. Hon Tanya CHAN	
	League of Social Democrats	14. Hon Albert CHAN 15. Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung 16. Hon WONG Yuk-man	
	Civic Act-up	17. Hon Cyd HO	
	Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions	18. Hon LEE Cheuk-yan	
	Neighbourhood and Workers' Service Centre	19. Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung	
	Hong Kong Social Workers' General Union	20. Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che	

<u>Group</u>	<u>Members' grouping</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>No. of place(s) to be allocated</u>
C (Cont'd)	Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood	21. Hon Frederick FUNG	
	Independent/ Political affiliation undeclared	22. Dr Hon Joseph LEE	
D	Liberal Party	1. Hon Miriam LAU 2. Hon Tommy CHEUNG 3. Hon Vincent FANG	3
	The Professionals Forum	4. Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO 5. Prof Hon Patrick LAU 6. Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG	
	The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions	7. Hon WONG Kwok-hing 8. Hon WONG Kwok-kin 9. Hon IP Wai-ming 10. Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou	
	The Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions	11. Hon LI Fung-ying	
	Independents/ Political affiliation undeclared	12. Dr Hon David LI 13. Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG 14. Dr Hon Philip WONG 15. Hon LAU Wong-fat 16. Hon Timothy FOK 17. Hon Jeffrey LAM 18. Hon Andrew LEUNG 19. Hon CHIM Pui-chung 20. Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai 21. Hon Paul CHAN 22. Hon CHAN Kin-por 23. Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau 24. Hon Mrs Regina IP 25. Hon Paul TSE 26. Dr Hon Samson TAM	

*Note: If both the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman are interested in joining the delegation, the one who is not nominated to take the place in Group A may re-join the group to which he/she originally belongs (i.e. Group C or D as appropriate), and be considered for nomination together with other Members in that group.