

**LC Paper No. CB(2)961/09-10(02)****EOC Statement**

2010/01/27

In response to media reports on two Pakistani women being refused to open bank accounts, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) today (27 January 2010) issues the following :-

1. The EOC is most concerned about some members of the ethnic minority communities being rejected services by the banks.
2. The EOC is approaching the two young women who were refused services to see if they need assistance.
3. The EOC will write to the banks and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority to seek clarifications on their positions on this issue.
4. Under the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO), it is unlawful to give less favourable treatments on the ground of race. Race in relation to a person means the race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin of the person. Although the RDO does not apply to discrimination on the ground of “nationality” , it would amount to race discrimination if the evidence in a particular case shows that nationality is not the real reason but race is.
5. The EOC reminds all service providers including banks that people of different races should enjoy equal rights in the provision of goods, services and facilities. Where there is race discrimination, the person aggrieved may bring legal proceedings in Court or complain to the EOC for investigation and conciliation.
6. The EOC calls upon anyone who is refused services on the ground of race, gender, disability and/or family status to seek help from the EOC. We will investigate the complaints and provide necessary assistance.

For media enquiries, please contact Ms. Mariana LAW at 2106-2226.

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Equal Opportunities Commission

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