

**Motion on “Safeguarding editorial independence
and autonomy” at the Legislative Council Meeting
of 22 January 2014**

Progress Report

At the Legislative Council meeting of 22 January 2014, the following motion was passed:

“That the recent post transfer of a veteran and influential journalist by the media organization to which he belongs has once again aroused the concern of society about the impact on freedom of the press and editorial autonomy; a recent opinion poll also indicates that more than half of the respondents consider that the phenomenon of self-censorship exists among Hong Kong news media; and a survey on the credibility of news media conducted by an academic institution even reflects that the credibility of Hong Kong media has hit a record low since the reunification; in this connection, this Council expresses concern and calls on journalists to remain steadfast in their duties, safeguard the principle of editorial independence and autonomy, and continue to give play to the functions of the Fourth Estate.”

2. This report briefs Members on the latest position.

3. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“HKSAR”) Government attaches great importance to and cherishes the freedom of the press in Hong Kong, and strives to maintain an environment in which the news media can flourish freely. On the operation of newspapers and periodicals, apart from the requirement to register under the Registration of Local Newspapers Ordinance, the HKSAR Government has not imposed any other restrictions. As regards radio and television broadcasting, there is no prior vetting of broadcast materials by the HKSAR Government. As long as the broadcasters comply with the provisions in the relevant ordinances, licences and codes of practice, editorial responsibility rests with the broadcasters. For the Internet, provided that there is no breach of existing laws, the public have the right

to use the network freely. The HKSAR Government has not asked Internet service providers to screen the information posted by network users or block the access to network information, nor has it conducted any vetting of its content.

4. As long as there is no breach of the laws, journalists can freely report on different kinds of news and comment on social issues. The HKSAR Government will continue to strive to safeguard the freedom of the press in Hong Kong as provided for under Basic Law Article 27.

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
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