

立法會

Legislative Council

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Paper for the House Committee meeting on 30 May 2014

Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee

Proposed parliamentary visit to Northern Europe

Purpose

This paper invites the House Committee to consider the recommendations of the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee ("the Subcommittee") on organizing a visit by a Legislative Council ("LegCo") delegation to Finland, Norway and Denmark in Northern Europe in mid September 2014, 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.

Background

2. Formed under the House Committee, the Subcommittee coordinates all parliamentary liaison activities between LegCo and other parliamentary organizations outside Hong Kong. In developing good relationship with parliamentary organizations, members of the Subcommittee participate, on a regular basis, in receiving parliamentarians and delegations visiting Hong Kong. The Subcommittee also makes recommendation to the House Committee on sending delegations of LegCo Members on visits outside Hong Kong and organizes such visits.

3. Except for the Third LegCo, the Subcommittee had organized visits by LegCo delegations to legislatures in other jurisdictions. Past visits organized by the Subcommittee are as follows:

Places visited	Date
(a) Japan	23 to 27 February 1999
(b) Europe (London, Strasbourg and Berlin)	13 to 20 February 2000
(c) Canada (Ottawa and Toronto)	16 to 24 February 2002
(d) Singapore and Thailand	12 to 18 February 2004
(e) Central Europe (Prague, Zagreb, Rijeka and Budapest)	13 to 23 September 2009

4. From experience, the visits organized by the Subcommittee are useful in establishing and reinforcing links with other legislatures, 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. 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. Overseas MPs who received LegCo delegations during the visits sometimes will return visits to LegCo, thereby further strengthening the ties established.

Proposed visit to Northern Europe

5. The Subcommittee has discussed the parliamentary visits to be organized in the current term. The Subcommittee has also considered different proposals for visit made by individual members, including countries in Northern Europe to which no past visit had been organized by the Subcommittee. Having made reference to the information prepared by the Research Office of the Secretariat, the Subcommittee considers it worthwhile to organize a visit to Northern European countries with unicameral legislature and a grand government coalition formed by parliamentary alliances.

6. After deliberation, the Subcommittee has decided to recommend the organization of a visit to Finland, Norway and Denmark in mid September 2014 with the following objectives:

- (a) to strengthen the ties with the various legislatures concerned, foster mutual understanding and keep them informed of the latest developments in Hong Kong;
- (b) to gain information on the political landscape of these legislatures and to draw on their experiences in constitutional development, including the development of electoral system and unicameral system with a grand government coalition formed by parliamentary alliances;
- (c) to gain a better understanding of the structure and the operation of the legislatures concerned, including how they monitor the government, the way different parties in a legislature work together, and the challenges faced by these legislatures; and
- (d) to understand more about the parliamentary services in these legislatures, including how the services are managed and provided to support the work of the legislatures.

7. The Subcommittee proposes that the visit should last for 8 days tentatively from 14 to 21 September 2014 so that the delegation could return before the commencement of the new LegCo session. Subject to the House Committee's approval of the size of the delegation and the mechanism for selecting Members to join the delegation (paragraphs 13 to 15 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 Office in London and the consulates concerned in Hong Kong will also be enlisted in making arrangements for the visit.

Financial arrangements

8. The financial provision for visits to other legislatures organized by the Subcommittee is separate from the Overseas Duty Visit accounts provided to individual Members in each term. The approved budget for such visits for the 2012-2016 LegCo term is \$2 million, which covers Members' travelling expenses, accommodation costs, subsistence allowances, travel insurance and other ancillary expenses such as interpretation, souvenirs and official entertainment.

9. A preliminary estimate of the expenditure to be incurred by each participating Member for the proposed visit is about \$34,200 (for

economy class air passage), or about \$57,600 (for business class air passage). The actual expenditure will vary subject to the final visit programme, and the airfare and hotel room rates at the time of confirmation.

Proposed size of delegations and selection mechanism for the current term

Background

10. According to the decision made by The Legislative Council Commission in 1997, Members going on an overseas duty visit in their capacity as LegCo delegates should be fully sponsored. For the purpose of budget control, the number of delegates sponsored for each overseas trip should, under normal circumstances, be limited to no more than six for a parliamentary visit, and Members not selected may join the delegation on a self financing basis.

11. In the Second LegCo, the House Committee endorsed the Subcommittee's recommendations that a LegCo delegation on a parliamentary visit should comprise 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. The House Committee's proposal to expand the size of the LegCo delegation to eight fully-sponsored Members was subsequently approved by The Legislative Council Commission at its meeting on 20 February 2001.

12. In the Fourth LegCo, the House Committee endorsed the Subcommittee's recommendation that while the number of fully-sponsored Members on a parliamentary visit should remain to be eight, the number of self-financing Members should be increased to not more than seven, so that the delegation could be representative of the groupings in LegCo and interested Members not selected for a delegation could participate in the visit on a self-financing basis.

The proposal

13. Taking into account the increase of the number of Members from 60 to 70 in the Fifth LegCo, the Subcommittee proposes that the size of a LegCo delegation on a visit organized by the Subcommittee in the current term should be increased from eight to nine fully-sponsored Members. As no Member participated in any visit organized by the Subcommittee in the past on a self-financing basis, the Subcommittee

proposes that the number of self-financing Members should remain to be seven. Participating Members should attend the entire visit.

14. 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 nine fully-sponsored places and seven self-financing places should be allocated:

- (a) Members should be divided into five different groups, having regard to their affiliation and the number of Members in each group. The nine fully-sponsored places should then be allocated among the five groups of Members on a pro-rata basis. Each group of Members should decide its own way to nominate the participating Member(s). Any untaken place(s) of one group should be re-allocated to interested Members who were not selected in other groups by drawing lots;
- (b) either the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman of the Subcommittee should be a member of the delegation, if 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 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.

15. All Members were consulted on the proposed mechanism for selection of Members for visits organized by the Subcommittee in May

2013¹. The outcome of the consultation was reported to Members in October 2013². The proposed allocation of the nine fully-sponsored places for a LegCo delegation on visits organized by the Subcommittee is in **Appendix**.

Advice sought

16. The House Committee is invited to endorse the proposed visit in paragraphs 6 to 7, the size of LegCo delegations on visits organized by the Subcommittee in paragraph 13, the mechanism for selecting Members to join such delegations in the current term in paragraphs 14 to 15, and to recommend to The Legislative Council Commission that the number of fully-sponsored Members on a parliamentary visit be set at nine.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
28 May 2014

¹ LC Paper No. CB(4)655/12-13 issued on 14 May 2013

² LC paper No.CB(4)92/13-14 issued on 30 October 2013

Proposed allocation of nine fully-sponsored places of a LegCo delegation on visits organized by the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee in the Fifth LegCo

<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 Emily LAU Wai-hing* 2. Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan*	1
B	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (excluding Hon Jasper TSANG)	1. Hon CHAN Kam-lam 2. Hon TAM Yiu-chung 3. Hon WONG Ting-kwong 4. Hon Starry LEE Wai-king 5. Hon CHAN Hak-kan 6. Hon IP Kwok-him 7. Hon Steven HO Chun-yin 8. Hon CHAN Han-pan 9. Hon LEUNG Che-cheung 10. Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT 11. Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan 12. Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun#	2
	Liberal Party	13. Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan 14. Hon Vincent FANG Kang 15. Hon James TIEN Pei-chun# 16. Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming 17. Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan	
C	Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong	1. Hon LAU Wong-fat 2. Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him 3. Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung 4. Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen 5. Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun 6. Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung 7. Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok#	2

<u>Group</u>	<u>Members' grouping</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>No. of place(s) to be allocated@</u>
	Political affiliation undeclared/ Independents	8. Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long 9. Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai 10. Hon CHAN Kin-por 11. Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau 12. Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun 13. Hon NG Leung-sing 14. Hon YIU Si-wing 15. Hon IP Kin-yuen# 16. Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong 17. Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen#	
	The Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions	18. Hon POON Siu-ping	
D	Democratic Party	1. Hon Albert HO Chun-yan 2. Hon James TO Kun-sun# 3. Hon WU Chi-wai 4. Hon SIN Chung-kai 5. Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan	3
	Civic Party	6. Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah# 7. Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit 8. Hon Claudia MO 9. Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok 10. Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki 11. Hon Dennis KWOK#	
	Labour Party	12. Hon LEE Cheuk-yan 13. Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che 14. Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung#	
	People Power	15. Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip 16. Hon CHAN Chi-chuen	
	The Professional Commons	17. Hon Charles Peter MOK 18. Hon Kenneth LEUNG	

<u>Group</u>	<u>Members' grouping</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>No. of place(s) to be allocated@</u>
	Neighbourhood and Workers' Service Centre	19. Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung	
	Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood	20. Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee	
	League of Social Democrats	21. Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung	
	Neo Democrats	22. Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai	
	Political affiliation undeclared/ Independent	23. Hon WONG Yuk-man	
E	The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions	1. Hon WONG Kwok-hing 2. Hon WONG Kwok-kin 3. Hon CHAN Yuen-han 4. Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen 5. Hon KWOK Wai-keung 6. Hon TANG Ka-piu	1
	New People's Party	7. Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee 8. Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun	
	New Century Forum	9. Hon MA Fung-kwok	

Notes

* 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 she originally belongs (i.e. Group D), and be considered for nomination together with other Members in that group.

@ Each group of Members should decide its own way to nominate the participating Member(s).

Member of the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee