



**EUROPEAN UNION**

OFFICE TO HONG KONG AND MACAO

## **"ENVISIONING HONG KONG'S FUTURE AS SMART AND GREEN CITY"**

*Hong Kong, 14 May 2015*

### **Head of EU Office Vincent Piket's opening remarks**

One of the greatest challenges facing policymakers, industry and city authorities is how to design and adapt cities into smart, intelligent and sustainable environments.

The EU has developed a shared European vision of smart cities. European cities should be places of advanced social progress and environmental regeneration, as well as places of attraction and engines of economic growth based on a holistic integrated approach in which aspects of sustainability are taken into account.

Cities across Europe are forerunners in the transition towards a low carbon and resource efficient economy. They are acting for a more sustainable future, characterised by investments in innovative, integrated technologies and services such as buildings, heating/cooling, mobility, lighting, broadband communications and other utilities. Several European cities have established programmes integrating the energy, transport and ICT sectors in order to deliver more efficient services for their inhabitants.

For this to happen also in Hong Kong, we need innovation and investment – and also imagination, some "new thinking", not only in ICT but also in transport and energy.

You all have a wealth of valuable experience about what works and what doesn't work in an urban context. In conjunction with each other, you are particularly well placed to define the most urgent needs of Hong Kong. That's why today's seminar is so welcome.

Like all major cities, Hong Kong needs to remain globally competitive, help to meet the wider climate change targets and reduce air pollution, while at the same time keeping public spending in check. These pressures on Hong Kong are not going to go away. They will get more serious unless Hong Kong acts now.

For this, the main task is to make sure that technologies are integrated across the transport, energy and ICT sectors. If we can connect and combine these better, we can vastly improve Hong Kong's urban environment, using diverse technologies to increase the efficiency of how a modern city functions.

In the EU we have good examples of programmes and best practice. For instance:

In Funchal (Madeira, Portugal) improved pavements, hybrid cars and a campaign to promote cycling made the city even more appealing for tourists – and also cut CO2 emissions by 10%. In Sweden, a digital pen was used to calculate the load rate of trucks wanting to load or unload in the congested centre of Gothenburg so as to avoid any breach of emission limits.

These kinds of smart city solutions that combine transport, energy and ICT have a huge potential. And they should be explored in Hong Kong too.

The issue is that we really need to focus on deployment: only a small part of making a city ‘smart’ is a technical challenge – it is mostly a multi-disciplinary task of solving “soft” issues. It requires city officials, suppliers, policymakers, academics, researchers, industry, manufacturers and many others to come together.

Starting by analysing the most common local needs, all these relevant "players" should learn to work together, they should identify the barriers that now prevent full-scale implementation of innovative technologies and they should define concrete objectives and targets for Hong Kong to become as smart and attractive as possible.

If this seminar can contribute even a small grain to this objective, then it will have been a resounding success.

----