Hong Kong and the EU

The cooperation between Hong Kong and the EU is substantial and continues to grow, in part because Hong Kong provides a key channel to mainland China.

Political and economic relations

Relations between Hong Kong and the European Union (EU) are based on a high-level annual meeting called the Structured Dialogue between the EU and the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSARG). It was started in 2005 to ensure that they would maintain close contacts and develop positive relations.

The 12th Structured Dialogue took place in December 2018 in Brussels. The two sides discussed a wide range of subjects to deepen mutual understanding, and identified areas of further cooperation. They released a joint press statement.

The European Commission also produces annual reports on developments in Hong Kong, the most recent of which covers 2018.

Trade

Hong Kong is a major trading partner with the EU. The importance of Hong Kong to the EU as a trading partner is not only down to the volume of trade and investment between the two, but also because Hong Kong acts a connecting hub between China and the EU.

Bilateral Trade & Investment Relations

The EU is Hong Kong’s second largest trading partner after China. In turn, Hong Kong ranks 17th and 9th among the EU partners for trade in goods and trade in services respectively (2017 figures). In Asia, Hong Kong ranks 6th for goods and 5th for services. The EU enjoys a significant trade in goods surplus with Hong Kong (it’s fourth largest in 2017).

The EU was the third largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Hong Kong in 2016. Hong Kong is also a major investment partner for the EU; when looking at the period 2013-17 Hong Kong ranked 5th for FDI inflow to the EU and was the 7th largest recipient of EU investment. EU companies numbered 2 200, thus remaining the largest group of foreign companies established in Hong Kong.
Hong Kong as a Key Channel for EU-China Trade

Hong Kong is an important channel for trade and investment between the EU and China, the world’s largest exporter.

Hong Kong’s role as a channel to China means it offers high-value opportunities for EU companies. In fact, the EU is the leading source of foreign companies using the Hong Kong-Mainland China Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA). Because of the high potential of CEPA, the EU and Hong Kong regularly communicate on CEPA developments and explore ways to maximise the opportunities for EU companies and investors. Hong Kong is also part of the Greater Bay Area initiative – which aims at strengthening the economic cooperation and integration between Hong Kong, Macao and nine cities in China Guangdong province.

Culture and public diplomacy

Cultural and public diplomacy relations

EU diplomatic missions and cultural institutes work closely together with local partners on many people-to-people activities, including the annual EU Film Festival, the European Union Pavilion at the Hong Kong Book Fair, the EU Day of Languages, The "Make Music, Hong Kong" music festival, and many other activities such as school presentations.

In 2018, the EU Office co-organised a school competition with the Native English Teacher Section (NET) of the Education Bureau. Hong Kong school children created short films showing their vision of Europe.

The EU Office regularly hosts events focusing on human rights, including workshops on trafficking in human beings, conferences on LGBTI rights, and discussions on women's rights.

To mark the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in December 2018, the EU Office co-hosted with Justice Centre Hong Kong the "Hong Kong Human Rights Arts Prize 2018". The exhibition invites artists to reflect on human rights in Hong Kong and abroad.

Documents

EU Annual Reports on Human Rights and Democratisation
Trade and Investment Booklet
EU-HK Bilateral Trade Statistics

See also

European Commission Directorate-General for Trade
Export Helpdesk
China IPR SME Helpdesk
EU Chambers of Commerce Hong Kong
Government of Hong Kong — Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
www.eeas.europa.eu

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