

DSJ promotes Hong Kong's unique strengths under "one country, two systems" in Rome (with photos)

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The Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, commenced his Europe visit programme in Rome, Italy, on March 6 (Rome time) to strengthen the collaborative relationship between Hong Kong and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT). He also introduced to the local business and legal communities about how Hong Kong's unique advantages under "one country, two systems" are conducive to cross-border trade and investment.

Mr Cheung first called on the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Italy, Mr Jia Guide, in the morning. He expressed his gratitude to the embassy for its long-standing support for the Department of Justice (DoJ) in seeking more international legal and dispute resolution institutions to set up offices in Hong Kong. He added that as the only common law jurisdiction in China, Hong Kong would proactively assist in the country's foreign-related legal affairs.

In the afternoon, he met with the Secretary-General of UNIDROIT, Professor Ignacio Tirado, and UNIDROIT's management to discuss more collaboration opportunities between UNIDROIT and Hong Kong. Both sides deliberated on the possible theme of the 2024 Asia-Pacific Private International Law Summit, such as digital assets.

The meeting discussed about deepening collaboration between UNIDROIT and Hong Kong, including having agreed to explore the setting up of a liaison office in the Hong Kong Legal Hub, which will help UNIDROIT to promote its work in the Asia-Pacific region on the one hand, and further enhance Hong Kong's status as the centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region on the other.

He then attended the conference co-organised by UNIDROIT and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Italy for local business and legal communities on promoting cross-border investment through transnational legal standards.

Delivering a keynote speech at the conference, Mr Cheung emphasised that Hong

Kong will fully leverage its unique advantages of enjoying the strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world under "one country, two systems" in better integrating into the country's overall development. He also highlighted Hong Kong's strong legal foundation and institutional advantages which would facilitate international investment and trade. He also briefed the participants on the latest situation of the implementation of the National Security Law in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, particularly on how it has restored social order and safety, and provided better protection to foreign enterprises.

He was pleased to learn that other speakers invited by UNIDROIT, including representatives of local business sectors, expressed confidence in Hong Kong's rule of law and spoke highly of its legal system which is conducive to trade development.

Mr Cheung also seized the opportunity to persuade several international law interns of UNIDROIT who were being trained there to come to work in Hong Kong after completing their studies. He was given an encouraging response.

UNIDROIT is a renowned international organisation with the mandate to modernise, harmonise and co-ordinate private and in particular commercial law between states and to formulate uniform law instruments, principles and rules for such purposes. The memorandum of understanding signed between UNIDROIT and the DoJ last year laid a strong foundation for further collaboration in the area of private international law. The inaugural Asia-Pacific Private International Law Summit held in Hong Kong in November 2022 during Hong Kong Legal Week was jointly launched by the DoJ and UNIDROIT.

Mr Cheung will depart for Vienna, Austria, today (March 7, Rome time) to continue his visit.

Ends/Tuesday, March 7, 2023