

LCQ17: Impact of Occupy Central movement on staging of events and tourism industry

Following is a question by the Hon Wong Ting-kwong and a written reply by the the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, in the Legislative Council today (November 20):

Question:

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development told the media earlier that since its occurrence, the Occupy Central movement had affected the events staged in Hong Kong and the desire of travellers to visit Hong Kong. For example, the Hong Kong Wine and Dine Festival (the Festival) was re-sited, with 10 per cent of its exhibitors having withdrawn from the event; the international Gran Fondo Hong Kong cycling race (the cycling race) originally scheduled for December this year was cancelled. Moreover, some members from the information technology sector indicated that individual staff members of overseas companies had cancelled their trips to Hong Kong for attending meetings due to the Occupy Central movement. The number of non-Mainland travellers to Hong Kong in the first 28 days of last month dropped by 3.7 per cent compared to the same period last year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has assessed the economic losses suffered by Hong Kong as a result of the re-siting of the Festival and the cancellation of the cycling race; whether it knows the respective numbers of events which were re-sited, suspended or even cancelled due to the Occupy Central movement, and whether it has quantified the economic losses so incurred;

(2) whether, in the light of the drop in the number of non-mainland travellers due to the Occupy Central movement, it has assessed the resultant economic losses suffered by the tourism industry; if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; whether it has assessed how long it will take for the tourism industry to recover after the Occupy Central movement ends; and

(3) as the Occupy Central movement is still going on at present, whether it knows if the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has assessed the impact of the movement on its planning and promotion of tourism activities; if HKTB has assessed, of the outcome?

Reply:

President,

The Government has been closely monitoring the impact of the Occupy Movement on different sectors. Since the start of the Occupy Movement, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau has met with representatives of the travel and hotel trades for several times to understand the impact of the Occupy Movement on the tourism industry in Hong Kong.

Our replies to the questions raised by Hon Wong Ting-kwong are as follows:

(1) The Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival was organised by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) from October 30 to November 2 at the former Kai Tak Runway. As quite a number of expenses and income items are incurred in the event, the final results of the event can only be assessed when the report is completed.

The HKTB has decided to postpone the Hong Kong Cyclothon originally scheduled for December 2014. Since most of the promotional work for the event has not yet been launched, the HKTB is not able to assess the economic impact brought about by the postponement of the event at this stage.

The events that the HKTB will organise in 2014/15 are set out in the Annex.

There is no sign showing that the events set out in the Annex would be affected by the Occupy Movement at this stage.

(2) and (3) According to the statistics of the Immigration Department, the number of non-Mainland visitor arrivals in October this year has decreased by 3.5 per cent as compared to that of the same period last year, while the number of non-Mainland visitor arrivals from November 1 to 17 has decreased by 7.5 per cent as compared to that of the same period last year. All these indicate a tendency towards a bigger drop in arrival figures. Some trade representatives expressed that since the start of the Occupy Movement, there has been cancellation of bookings for over 1 000 hotel rooms every day. The percentage of rooms with advance bookings from mid-October to November has dropped from 60 to 70 per cent over the same period last year to 40 to 50 per cent only this year. Besides, some representatives of the retail industry indicated that the business of some shops locating in nearby areas of the Occupy Movement has dropped

by 30 to 70 per cent. The travel trade is worried that if the Occupy Movement continues, it would affect the livelihood of frontline employees of the tourism industry and give a blow to the tourism industry in Hong Kong.

The overall actual impact can only be assessed upon the release of relevant economic data. The Government and the HKTB will co-operate and work hand-in-hand with the trade to step up tourism promotional efforts immediately after the Occupy Movement has ended.

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