

Hong Kong and Bordeaux sign MOU on Co-operation in Wine-related Businesses

The Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Commerce, Industry and Tourism), Miss Yvonne Choi, today (October 7) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation in Wine-Related Businesses (MOU) with Mr Laurent Courbu, President of the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce and Industry of France.

The MOU, signed in Bordeaux, France during Miss Choi's visit to the famous wine-producing region, is the first co-operation agreement on wine that Hong Kong signs with a wine-producing region, following the MOU that Hong Kong signed with the French Government on August 19 this year.

Miss Choi said that the Hong Kong-Bordeaux MOU provided for co-operation in a number of areas including wine-related tourism, trade and investment promotion, the transfer of technologies relating to wine storage and manpower training, together with some unique and specific deliverables particular to Bordeaux.

Elaborating the details of the agreement, Miss Choi said that the two sides would work together to organise a wine festival in Hong Kong next year, making reference to the Wine Festival in Bordeaux. A gourmet festival would be organised in parallel, so that good food and fine wines could go together.

“We will also encourage the Great Wine Capital Global Network, of which Bordeaux is a core member in concert with seven other world-renowned wine-producing regions, to hold its annual meeting in Hong Kong,” she added.

On education and manpower training, Miss Choi said Hong Kong would provide the industry's feedback on their manpower training needs to Bordeaux, thereby facilitating the planning of wine-related courses and training programmes for Hong Kong people.

In the areas of wine storage and investment promotion, the two parties have agreed to bolster technology transfer as well as information and experience sharing, she said, adding that they would also encourage exchanges with a view to building up closer partnership in promoting wine-related tourism and wine culture.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Miss Choi said the wine market in Asia, particularly that of the Mainland, offered robust potential for business.

“Hong Kong is well placed to become the regional hub for wine trading and distribution not only because of its ideal geographical location and business-friendly environment, but also because the Government, in close liaison with the wine-related industries, is being proactive in making it happen,” she said.

Hong Kong became the first free wine port among major economies with the abolition of wine duty in end February this year.

“In the first five months after duty reduction, wine imports into Hong Kong have grown by about 95% in value, relative to the same period last year. Wine imports from France have increased by as much as 116% in value during the same period.

“There have also been wine auctions with record-breaking sales and announcements by renowned companies to expand their wine trading, distribution and storage business in Hong Kong,” Miss Choi said.

“Building on this momentum, the Government has been actively pursuing measures to enhance trade and investment promotion in wine, customs facilitation, the fight against counterfeit products and co-operation with our trading partners,” she added.

“This MOU is a common endeavour of Hong Kong and Bordeaux and I have every confidence that it will bring mutual benefit to both places,” she said.

Miss Choi will fly to Paris after the signing ceremony where she will meet with French officials responsible for the wine trade and economic matters as well as representatives from the French wine industry to discuss issues of mutual concern.

Ends/Tuesday, October 7, 2008

Issued at HKT 22:30

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