

HKSAR Government welcomes new measure to optimise "multiple-entry" Individual Visit Endorsements

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSAR Government) today (April 13) welcomed the announcement made by the Central Government on the new measure to adjust the "multiple-entry" Individual Visit Endorsements for permanent residents of Shenzhen by replacing it with the "one trip per week" Individual Visit Endorsements with immediate effect. Starting today, the Shenzhen authority will stop issuing the "multiple-entry" Individual Visit Endorsements, which will be superseded by the "one trip per week" Individual Visit Endorsements to allow the endorsement holders to visit Hong Kong only once a week from Monday to Sunday. The new measure will not affect the "multiple-entry" Individual Visit Endorsements which have already been issued.

In view of an increasing number of Mainland residents visiting Hong Kong in recent years, Hong Kong has encountered problems with receiving capacity and parallel trading activities. The HKSAR Government has been very concerned about the issues and suggested the Central Government in June last year to replace the "multiple-entry" Individual Visit Endorsements policy with the "one trip per week" Individual Visit Endorsements to tackle them.

"We are thankful to the Central Government for its understanding and support by making the announcement this morning to adjust the policy of 'multiple-entry' Individual Visit Endorsements for permanent residents of Shenzhen upon the HKSAR Government's request. We are also grateful for the Guangdong Provincial and Shenzhen Municipal governments' consideration towards the current situation in Hong Kong," a government spokesman said.

The spokesman said based on the visitor arrival figures in 2014, with the assumption that the mode of visitors coming to Hong Kong remained unchanged, "one trip per week" Individual Visit Endorsements could reduce the number of visitor arrivals under the "multiple-entry" Individual Visit Endorsements by about 30 per cent (or about 4.6 million), which is equivalent to about 10 per cent of the Mainland visitor arrivals in 2014. Since the new measure does not affect the "multiple-entry" Individual Visit Endorsements which have already been issued, it will take time for the new measure to show full effect.

The HKSAR Government believes the new measure can fight against the activities

of parallel traders who come to Hong Kong multiple times within one week or one day. The measure will also enhance the effectiveness of the HKSAR Government in the crackdown of parallel trading activities especially those involving Mainland parallel traders and professional parallel traders, as well as lessen the impact of the substantial increase in visitor arrivals on various districts of Hong Kong.

In combating parallel trading activities, the Chief Secretary for Administration will lead various departments to continue their efforts to fight against unlawful actions related to parallel trading activities, and co-operate with the Mainland law enforcement agencies to improve the order so as to reduce the nuisance caused by parallel trading activities to the livelihood of local residents.

"Our next important job priority is to seize this opportunity to re-establish the positive image of Hong Kong as a hospitable city so as to ensure the sustainable and orderly development of Hong Kong's tourism industry and improve the structure of visitors coming to Hong Kong. As a hospitable city, we continue to welcome visitors from all over the world including those from the Mainland. Strategically, we will strive to attract more overnight visitors who generally spend more in Hong Kong. In the near future, the Hong Kong Tourism Board will make use of the \$80 million additional funding allocated by the Government to further promote Hong Kong's image as a hospitable city," the spokesman said.

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