

Promotion of creative and cultural industries high on Government agenda (with photos)

The Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Yau, visited Vienna today (October 16) to strengthen ties with this major cultural capital of Europe and network with potential cultural partners for the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD). She shared with the Austrian cultural sector, community leaders and senior officials from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture at a luncheon the HKSAR Government's determination to build Hong Kong into an international cultural and creative hub.

Speaking at the luncheon, Mrs Yau said due to its unique geographical location, Hong Kong was able to provide access to a large audience from the region for performing arts programmes and exhibitions. Hong Kong, as Asia's world city, has a cultural fusion of East and West as well as a well-educated, sophisticated and multi-cultural society, which all help make Hong Kong a distinctive cultural capital.

Mrs Yau told the Austrian audience that the HKSAR Government attached great importance to the promotion of creative and cultural industries in Hong Kong, as announced in the Chief Executive's Policy Address on October 14.

"Our single largest and most ambitious project is all about arts and culture," Mrs Yau said. She took the opportunity to update the Austrian community on the latest development of the WKCD, a massive cultural district on a prime harbourfront site.

"The Government has already committed an upfront endowment of almost 2 billion euros (HK\$21.6 billion) to implement this project. When commissioning starts in 2015, the WKCD will have various performing arts venues, including a mega performance venue, theatres, concert halls and music halls. There will also be a contemporary art museum called M+ and outdoor piazzas for people to enjoy the atmosphere," she said.

Mrs Yau encouraged the strengthening of ties between Austria and Hong Kong. Austrian participation in the cultural and arts development of Hong Kong could take the form of co-production of programmes and performances and promotion of cultural exchanges.

Later today (Austrian time) she will visit MuseumsQuartier (MQ) - one of the world's largest and most renowned cultural complexes, to enhance cultural connections between Hong Kong and Austria and learn from the successful experience of MQ for

the planning and development of WKCD.

Mrs Yau also took part in the Frankfurt Book Fair. The Hong Kong Pavilion showcased the achievements in Hong Kong's publishing world as well as the rich literary and pop art content created by Hong Kong writers and comic artists. Mrs Yau will attend a forum on the cosmopolitan culture and urban literature of Hong Kong tomorrow in Frankfurt, in support of the Frankfurt Book Fair, in which China is this year's guest of honour nation.

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