

## *Press Release*

### **Dragon boat races at Switzerland's largest festival**

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Berlin (HKETO Berlin), has sponsored the 7<sup>th</sup> dragon boat race in Zurich, a popular event in the three-day Züri Fäscht (Zurich Festival), the biggest festival held every three years in the city. At the award ceremony on July 3, the Acting Director of HKETO Berlin, Mr Harry Lin, presented trophies to the winning teams. The office also hosted a booth to promote Hong Kong to visitors and athletes.

Dragon boat races have a long tradition in Hong Kong. Nowadays, the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Carnival attracts not only the world's best dragon boat racers to the international competition in the Asian metropolis, but also hundreds of thousands of spectators who watch the boats speeding across the water in Victoria Harbour every year in June.

Dragon boat racing has its origin in China and dates back more than 2,200 years. It commemorates the death of the poet Qu Yuan, who took his life in the Miluo River because of grievances in the country. When local villagers learned of his death, they took their boats out to the river, hit the water with their paddles and beat drums to keep the corpse safe from fish. Some say that this is the origin of dragon boat racing and the Dragon Boat Festival which is a public holiday in Hong Kong.

As Asia's world city where East meets West, the city has celebrated this traditional Chinese festival by hosting the Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races since 1976. This year, more than 5,000 athletes in 200 teams from 11 countries came to Hong Kong to compete against each other at the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Carnival. The highlight of the three-day Carnival was the sight of the fierce-looking dragon boats, with ornately carved and painted dragon heads and tails, being pushed through the water by highly motivated athletes. At the waterfront, the cheerful crowd enjoyed non-stop music, live entertainment and ice-cold beer.

In Zurich, the dragon boat race is embedded in the Züri Fäscht, Switzerland's largest festival of its kind with 60 stages and more than 300 food stalls and market booths. Apart from the race, this unique event features three fireworks as well as a colourful bouquet of cultural and culinary entertainment. Züri Fäscht is supported by the local and regional governments and welcomes more than two million people.

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### *About the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Berlin*

HKETO Berlin is the official Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government representative in commercial relations and other economic and trade matters in Switzerland as well as Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

### **Photo Caption**

1. Dragon boats race in the Züri Fäscht in Zurich, Switzerland, on July 2 and 3 (Zurich time).

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