

CNY Welcoming Video Address by D(BL)

(February 2021, Berlin)

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for joining us at this very special welcoming of the Chinese New Year.

Last year, on the same occasion of the Chinese New Year, I remember we were sharing good wishes that we could win the fight against the pandemic soon. A year has passed, a year that has been challenging for all of us, to say the least. The spread of COVID-19 puts our health at risk in a way that the world had not experienced for decades; it limits our social contacts with families and friends, it slows down cultural exchanges and business activities, and it throws many contingents of the global community into disarray.

Despite the pandemic, we are trying our best to keep us connected. Our Office has organised several online events in the past months for audiences in Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland. On February 5, our Chief Executive Mrs Carrie Lam together with three Principal Officials were featured in an online dialogue that was jointly held by our Office and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Brussels. The dialogue highlighted new opportunities for European companies to do business with Hong Kong. Some of you may have been among those 770 entrepreneurs and business executives who had joined.

Hong Kong has all along been the ideal gateway for European companies to access the vast market in Mainland China, and in particular, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). China is the only major economy in the world that recorded a positive growth in 2020, and its future prospects are bright under its new economic model of dual circulation and the 14th Five-Year Plan. As Hong Kong continues to integrate into the national development, there will be ample opportunities for Hong Kong as well as the European enterprises that invest in the city.

This year, we are welcoming the Chinese New Year in a different way than we used to. Although we cannot meet at our annual receptions with cultural performances from Hong Kong and Chinese dishes, we still wish to share with

you the festive mood from Hong Kong all through this video message. Without further ado, I am pleased to present to you three music performances from the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, as well as some beautiful clips that were just produced in Hong Kong to usher in the Chinese New Year. Please sit back and enjoy!

This year is the year of the Metal Ox. Those with profound knowledge about the Chinese Zodiac say that this year is going to be lucky and also perfect to focus on relationships. In the Chinese Zodiac, the Ox is very hardworking and methodical, meaning that 2021 is going to be a year when hard work pays off. I am not an expert, but if you ask me, I find this all very promising and I am sure we will all be rewarded as we work together in reviving the economy.

While the pandemic might have reshaped our way of doing things in a lasting manner, we are all looking forward to resuming the normal way of social networking, travelling, doing business and so on. I am confident that we will be able to meet again shortly, to exchange ideas as well as to promote the trade and cultural ties between Hong Kong and your country.

Looking ahead, there are many new opportunities for European companies that want to expand their business to Hong Kong. In particular, Mainland China and Hong Kong are moving towards green economy, and we attach importance to quality and sustainable development with ambitious targets set on carbon neutrality. I cordially invite European enterprises to come to Hong Kong and seize these business opportunities.

Moreover, I assure you that Hong Kong will remain a metropolis where rights and freedoms are upheld and protected. Hong Kong will continue to welcome you with its unique advantages under "One Country, Two Systems", including the rule of law, judicial independence, the free flow of ideas and a low and simple tax regime.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you enjoyed these special greetings together with the festive music from Hong Kong. And I wish you all a happy, healthy and rewarding Year of the Ox. Kung Hei Fat Choi! Happy Chinese New Year!

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