

## **CNY Reception in Ljubljana (3 March 2026)**

### **Welcome Remarks by DBL**

Deputy Prime Minister (Mr Klemen Boštjančič), Ambassador KANG Yan (康  
豐), Marjana, Ken, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon! It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to our Chinese New Year reception. We are delighted that the Deputy Prime Minister and Ambassador KANG come and celebrate the Year of the Horse with us.

2. In Chinese culture, horse is a symbol of vitality, strength, and perseverance. I am proud to share that Hong Kong has shown remarkable resilience in last year. Our economy grew by a robust 3.5%. Our stock market returned as the world's leading IPO fundraising hub, raising more than EUR 30 billion (HK\$285.8 billion) from over 110 new listings, a testament to the strength of our financial sector and investor confidence. A record-high number of 11 000 foreign and Chinese Mainland companies were located in Hong Kong in 2025, 11 per cent more than the year before.

3. Hong Kong's common law system, free flow of capital, and simple and low tax regime, make us an indispensable hub for global trade and finance. As a Special Administrative Region of China, Hong Kong stands at the intersection and serves as the bridge — connecting China with the world, and the world with China. We facilitate the dual flow of trade and investment, bringing companies from Europe to Hong Kong and the greater China and Asia markets on one hand, and helping Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong enterprises to “Go Global” as a launchpad.

4. While global tensions and lingering trade barriers have created uncertainty across many economies, Hong Kong and Slovenia governments have continued to work closely to strengthen our ties. Our Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, visited Ljubljana in last September. We are happy that both governments attach importance in reaching a Comprehensive Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement (CDTA), and the first round of negotiations has commenced in January after the visit. We look forward to concluding the CDTA soon to create a more favourable and attractive business environment for investors to establish or expand their businesses.

5. Looking ahead, I would like to highlight two significant opportunities for enhanced cooperation between Hong Kong and Slovenia.

6. **First, innovation and technology.** Hong Kong is investing heavily in innovation and technology, from artificial intelligence and life sciences to green tech and fintech. Last year, President of the National Council of Slovenia brought a business delegation to visit Chinese Mainland and with a stop in Hong Kong. We are delighted to connecting the delegates with Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks, Hong Kong's largest innovation and technology park with around 2 600 technology companies and start-ups. Hong Kong is also the only city in the world to host five universities in the top 100, and our research capabilities are expanding rapidly. Under the "Study in HK" initiative, we are committed to developing Hong Kong into an international education hub for high-calibre talents to pursue further studies and career development. Through strengthening exchanges, I am confident that we can create powerful synergies on I&T cooperation.

7. **Second, financial services and capital markets.** Hong Kong's capital markets can provide Slovenian companies with access to Asian investors. Meanwhile, Slovenian institutional investors can leverage Hong Kong as a base to explore opportunities in Chinese Mainland as well as other ASEAN countries. Listing in Hong Kong stock market and issuance of bonds can serve as a strategy to expand investor base, and further open up economy amid intensifying global trade tensions and industrial policy shifts.

8. So let us make today an opportunity to reach out, exchange ideas, and build new friendships. May the Year of the Horse brings us prosperity, stability and many more opportunities to collaborate. Thank you.

– Ends –

~625 words (~4 min)