


Press Review Hong Kong

31 August 2024 / N°248

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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Consulate General of Switzerland in Hong Kong



Contents

Switzerland / Liechtenstein	2
CUHK unveils novel remote endoscopy surgery performed by a surgeon in Switzerland	2
Liechtenstein's VP Bank to exit Hong Kong after 18 years	2
Foreign Policy / International Relations	2
EU Head of Office speaks at the Foreign Correspondents' Club	2
Outgoing EU office head says right-wing politics back home unlikely to harm Hong Kong ties	2
Request from Japan to drop ban on seafood imports rejected	2
Russian billionaire Fridman seeks to settle \$16 bln Luxembourg dispute in Hong Kong	2
HK condemns ex-governor for critical remarks, AU and UK receive 916 asylum applications	2
US think tank questions research security, citing case in Hong Kong	2
Beijing accuses US National Endowment for Democracy of 'ideological infiltration'	3
US blacklists two Hong Kong firms over Uyghur slavery	3
Government urges Hongkongers in Britain to be careful	3
30 agreements signed during Chief Executive's visit to Vietnam	3
Mainland	3
Chief Secretary for Administration concludes Beijing visit on enhancing patriotic education	3
Beijing official meets US Consul General in Hong Kong to discuss 'recent negative remarks'	3
Beijing's top man on Hong Kong says Xi letter 'a call to action' for business	3
Domestic Policy / Politics / Law	3
An influx of immigrants from mainland China and talent offset an emigration wave	3
David Neuberger withdraws from chair position in the international media freedom panel	3
Ming Pao sends note to warn columnists to be careful in their columns	3
British charity Prisoners Abroad stands by trustee role of Neuberger	4
Lawmakers suggest talent visa should have age limits and target sectors lacking skilled labour	4
300 people arrested for national security offences since enactment four years ago	4
New National Security Exhibition Gallery opens	4
Economy	4
Hong Kong's export performance will help sustain growth momentum	4
Tourism sector shows signs of improvement	4
Collapsing land sales threaten city's funding model	4
Tourism Board Chief Executive cites 'twisted perceptions' abroad as a reason for tourism decline	4
Government rejects claims of increased business risks due to New Security Laws	4
Retail sales in June declined 9.7% compared to a year ago	5
Cultural / Education / Science / Social	5
150,000 Hongkongers have moved to the UK using British National (Overseas) visas	5
Secondary students may soon be schooled in 'Xi Jinping Thought'	5
Macao	5
Macao Executive will not seek re-election, citing health reasons	5
Guangdong announces issuance of offshore debt securities in Macao	5
Visitors' spending on non-gaming products hits record high, up 15.8% on pre-COVID levels	5
New visitor record	5

Switzerland / Liechtenstein

CUHK unveils novel remote endoscopy surgery performed by a surgeon in Switzerland

A surgeon from Zurich has performed the world's first remote endoscopy procedure on a pig in Hong Kong, as researchers believe it paves the path for better and immediate surgical care in remote areas where local expertise is lacking. The procedure was conducted in May as part of a joint-study between the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) which started two years ago. [RTHK](#), Aug 26

Liechtenstein's VP Bank to exit Hong Kong after 18 years

Private banking specialist VP Bank Asia's Hong Kong office will shut down. The bank confirmed the resignations of its CEO and COO and said it would continue to focus on Asia through its Singapore office. [Nikkei Asia](#) Aug 16

Foreign Policy / International Relations

EU Head of Office speaks at the Foreign Correspondents' Club

HoO Thomas Gnocchi stressed that the EU Office would continue to voice concerns with the Hong Kong government while looking for collaboration opportunities: 'It's very important to highlight that, despite the differences and views on the political issues. There are many areas that we've been working with the Hong Kong government and authorities here,' he said. The HoO added that political changes in Hong Kong changed the city's public perception in Europe: 'It takes very little time to damage that reputation, but it takes a long time and a lot of work to build this up again.' [SCMP FCC livestream](#) Aug 21

Outgoing EU office head says right-wing politics back home unlikely to harm Hong Kong ties

The departing head of the EU office in Hong Kong, Thomas Gnocchi, has said the rise of right-wing politics in the European Parliament will not significantly alter ties as the bloc had collaborated with the city in various areas, despite their "differences on political issues". [SCMP](#), Aug 21

Request from Japan to drop ban on seafood imports rejected

Tetsushi Sakamoto, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, met with Deputy Chief Secretary Warner Cheuk on 17 August. A government statement issued by HK stated that the seafood ban will remain in light of ongoing safety concerns. The ban on Japanese seafood imports was implemented in response to Japan discharging treated nuclear waste water from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant. [SCMP](#) Aug 17

Russian billionaire Fridman seeks to settle \$16 bln Luxembourg dispute in Hong Kong

Mikhail Fridman submitted a request that a more than \$16 billion (EUR14.8 billion) arbitration dispute with Luxembourg be administered at the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre. Fridman seeks damages from Luxembourg on assets frozen in the country due to Western sanctions imposed on him in response to Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Sanctions are at the heart of this case, meaning finding a jurisdiction that has not imposed sanctions on Russia, such as Hong Kong, was key. Separately, the US Department of Treasury designated Hong Kong-based Kai Heng Long Global Energy for its role in shipping Iranian LPG worth tens of millions of dollars for Lebanese Hizballah. [Reuters](#) Aug 15

HK condemns ex-governor for critical remarks, AU and UK receive 916 asylum applications

The Hong Kong government criticized former colonial governor Chris Patten for his remarks about a British judge involved in upholding the convictions of media tycoon Jimmy Lai and six former opposition lawmakers for participating in a banned 2019 march. Patten condemned the verdict as evidence of the deteriorating rule of law in Hong Kong, specifically targeting Lord Neuberger, a British judge on Hong Kong's top court. The government accused Patten of making baseless, politically motivated attacks to undermine the judiciary, stressing that the court's decision was based on detailed legal reasoning. [TS](#) [SMCP](#) [CD](#) [RTHK](#) [HKFP](#) [SCMP](#) Aug 14, 15

US think tank questions research security, citing case in Hong Kong

Equinix plans to invest \$124 million in building its sixth data center in Hong Kong to meet growing demand in the Greater Bay Area. The facility, located in Tsuen Wan, will house 3,550 cabinets and is set to be operational by early 2026. This expansion, driven by requests from network operators and financial services firms, comes amid a surge in AI development. The new center will feature advanced cooling technologies for energy efficiency, appealing to AI service providers. Despite other tech firms reducing their presence in Hong Kong, Equinix's investment highlights its commitment to the region. [SCMP](#) Aug 13

Beijing accuses US National Endowment for Democracy of ‘ideological infiltration’

In a report published on 9 August, China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused the US-based group of ‘colluding with those who attempt to destabilise Hong Kong by providing funds and public support.’ The report named organisations including Hong Kong Watch and Amnesty International. The report added that the US group funded projects in Hong Kong totalling US\$310,000 (EUR286,400) amid the 2019 protests. [SCMP](#) Aug 10

US blacklists two Hong Kong firms over Uyghur slavery

The US has banned imports from five more Chinese companies that were accused of profiting from the slave labour of Uyghurs. The latest firms to be blacklisted included Hong Kong-based fertiliser manufacturer Rare Earth Magnesium Technology Group and its parent, Century Sunshine Group Holdings; both were accused of sourcing tainted inputs from Xinjiang. [RFA](#) Aug 8

Government urges Hongkongers in Britain to be careful

A Hong Kong government spokesperson urged Hongkongers planning to travel to the UK or already there to be careful in light of the ongoing protests and riots there. The amber travel alert, the lowest of a three-tier warning system, is currently in place. [TS RTHK](#) [SCMP](#) Aug 6

30 agreements signed during Chief Executive’s visit to Vietnam

Chief Executive John Lee hailed the ‘great synergy’ with Vietnam and announced that 30 agreements were signed with the city’s seventh-largest trading partner. The total number of agreements signed during the three-nation trip stands at 55. [SCMP](#) Aug 1

Mainland

Chief Secretary for Administration concludes Beijing visit on enhancing patriotic education

Chief Secretary Eric Chan and Convenor of the Working Group on Patriotic Education Starry Lee concluded their two-day visit to Beijing on 8 August. A government statement issued the same day said the two had learned about the Patriotic Education Law in mainland China and implementation strategies for Hong Kong ‘to enable the spirit of patriotism to take root in society and people’s hearts.’ [CD](#) Aug 8

Beijing official meets US Consul General in Hong Kong to discuss ‘recent negative remarks’

On 7 August, Cui Jianchun, Commissioner of Beijing’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hong Kong, met with Gregory May, the United States’ Consul General to Hong Kong and Macao. According to the Commissioner’s Office the two discussed ‘recent negative remarks’. On 28 July, in a CBS News interview, May said Hong Kong had ‘fundamentally changed’ with freedoms disappearing, to which Cui accused him of ‘fabricating lies, attacking and badmouthing the city’. [SCMP](#) Aug 7

Beijing’s top man on Hong Kong says Xi letter ‘a call to action’ for business

Xia Baolong, Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, urged the business sector in Hong Kong to study, take ‘practical actions’ and seize on the city’s strengths to implement a call by President Xi Jinping in a recent letter rallying entrepreneurs to contribute to the country’s reform and opening up. A senior pro-Beijing politician said that the mainland needs investment from the Hong Kong business community in the face of a weakening economy and suppression from the US and the West. [SCMP](#) Aug 6

Domestic Policy / Politics / Law

An influx of immigrants from mainland China and talent offset an emigration wave

The city recorded a new outflow of about 30,000 residents in the last 12 months to June. Net outflows first appeared from mid-2019 when the months-long protests erupted. Separately, around 20% of immigrants arriving via the ‘Top Talent Pass Scheme’-first launched in December 2022-are unemployed. [SCMP](#) Aug 15

David Neuberger withdraws from chair position in the international media freedom panel

David Neuberger, an Overseas Non-Permanent Judge at the Court of Final Appeal of Hong Kong, withdrew from his chair position in the High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom at the International Bar Association’s Human Rights Institute on 15 August. He stated he did not want his position as overseas judge to ‘take away, or distract, from the critical and impactful work of the High Level Panel.’ The Panel advises the Media Freedom Coalition. [HKFP](#) Aug 17

Ming Pao sends note to warn columnists to be careful in their columns

Chinese daily Ming Pao urged columnists to ensure their writings are ‘law-abiding’ and ‘measured’. The note sent on August 15 followed remarks from Secretary for Security Chris Tang who accused unspecified overseas columnists of intentionally misleading readers. Tang added that disclaimers of having no intent to

incite hatred are not sufficient to preclude liability. Tang spoke at an event organised by Ming Pao's parent company. [HKFP](#) Aug 16

British charity Prisoners Abroad stands by trustee role of Neuberger

The Prisoners Abroad charity will retain David Neuberger's trustee position. On 13 August, the Chief Executive of the charity stated: 'As a charity, we do not judge on whether someone is guilty or innocent.' [HKFP](#) Aug 16

Lawmakers suggest talent visa should have age limits and target sectors lacking skilled labour

The suggestions were made by lawmakers after Chief Secretary Eric Chan announced on 12 August that the government is considering to broaden the Top Talent Pass Scheme by including universities outside of top 100 global rankings. [SCMP](#) [RTHK](#) Aug 12

300 people arrested for national security offences since enactment four years ago

Statistics released by the police on 10 August show that as of 30 June of this year, 300 people have been arrested for national security-related offences since Beijing imposed the national security law - an increase of nine arrests since 8 March. About 60% have been charged so far. Cases of theft, blackmail, burglary, and deception have also risen, with the latter accounting for almost half of the crimes and causing HK\$4.48 billion (EUR 531 million) in damages. [SCMP](#) Aug 10

New National Security Exhibition Gallery opens

The national security exhibition in Tsim Sha Tsui features installations on President Xi Jinping's philosophies of governance and a lunar soil sample collected by China. At the opening ceremony of the Gallery, Chief Executive John Lee urged the public to maintain crisis awareness. Zheng Yanxiong, Director of Beijing's Liaison Office, said 'the sharp blade of the law is ever present.' [TS](#) [HKFP](#) [RTHK](#) Aug 6

Economy

Hong Kong's export performance will help sustain growth momentum

Financial secretary Paul Chan also says export performance has continued to improve in key markets such as Vietnam, Thailand and US. Adding that he expects the economy to remain stable for the rest of the year if investment sentiment improves. He added that export figures had increased year on year for three consecutive quarters, with a growth of 12.2 per cent recorded in the first half of this year, the highest since 2022. The finance chief said that while the decline in retail sales had narrowed, the figures for July did not reflect any signs of significant improvement. But Chan remained optimistic over consumer sentiment, pointing to a series of mega events for the finance industry that were set to take place in the coming months. [SCMP](#), Aug 25

Tourism sector shows signs of improvement

The Hong Kong Tourism Board shared that it recorded 3.92 million arrivals in July, with about half involving overnight stays. The figure represents a 10% increase compared to the same month last year. Roughly 80% of visitors came from the mainland. Separately, both the Construction Association and the Association of Architectural Practices urged authorities to increase advance payments for public projects as the industry is facing a tough time. [TS](#) [RTHK](#) [CD](#) [SCMP](#) [HKFP](#), Aug 16

Collapsing land sales threaten city's funding model

The government's revenue from land sales in its 2023-2024 fiscal year was the lowest since the global financial crisis. The stark slowdown is piling pressure on the government to increase its income from other sources. [Bloomberg](#), Aug 12

Tourism Board Chief Executive cites 'twisted perceptions' abroad as a reason for tourism decline

Tourism Board Executive Director Dane Cheng referred to 'twisted perceptions' of Hong Kong abroad, as well as high prices for flights and changing spending habits, as main factors for the tourism sector's slow recovery. Despite the recently increased threshold in duty-free shopping for mainland tourists, provisional numbers for June indicate a year on year drop of 9.7% in retail value. [SCMP](#) Aug 9

Government rejects claims of increased business risks due to New Security Laws

The Hong Kong government has dismissed a Forbes article, which argued that recent security laws have made the city a "riskier place to do business." The article, based on a report by the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong (CFHK) Foundation, claimed that Hong Kong facilitates sanction evasion for countries like Russia, Iran, and North Korea, and suggested the US impose sanctions on Hong Kong. The government criticized the article as misleading and defended its compliance with UN sanctions, asserting the necessity of its security laws for national protection. [HKFP](#), Aug 2

Retail sales in June declined 9.7% compared to a year ago

Sales decreased to HK\$29.9 billion (EUR3.53 billion), marking the fourth consecutive monthly contraction, as residents head north to spend despite traveller schemes intended to boost inbound tourism. Provisional figures released by the Census and Statistics Department showed that retail sales dropped 6.6% in the first half of the year compared to the same period in 2023. [TS SCMP](#) Aug 1

Cultural / Education / Science / Social

150,000 Hongkongers have moved to the UK using British National (Overseas) visas

Around 150,000 Hongkongers moved to Britain through the visa scheme between its launch in 2021 and June 2024. In the second quarter of 2024, just over 5,000 applications were received, down from the 30 000 applications in the first two quarters of the scheme's introduction. 5.4 million Hong Kong residents are estimated to be eligible for the visa. [SCMP](#) Aug 22

Secondary students may soon be schooled in 'Xi Jinping Thought'

Hong Kong secondary students may soon be taught "Xi Jinping Thought" as part of a new subject called Citizenship, Economics and Society, which emphasizes national security and identity. The curriculum guidelines suggest teaching the political ideology of China's leader to third-year students, alongside topics like socialism with Chinese characteristics. This new subject replaces Life and Society, removing previous focus on democracy and the political systems of other countries, reflecting a shift towards patriotic education aligned with China's national policies. [HKFP](#) Aug 1

Macao

Macao Executive will not seek re-election, citing health reasons

Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng announced that he will not seek another term in an election set to be held in October, citing health reasons: 'due to the fact that my health has not been fully restored, for the sake of Macao's long-term development and from the perspective of the overall situation, I have decided not to participate in the election.' Ho will be the first Chief Executive of Macao not seeking re-election. Separately, the Beijing-based Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office published an opinion piece recognising the work of the Macao government. Moreover the Electoral Affairs Commission for the Chief Executive Election noted on 11 August that the total number of voters and the overall voter turnout reached record highs. Of the 5 521 votes cast, 5,346 were deemed valid. [MB MB2 TS HKFP](#) Aug 12, 21

Guangdong announces issuance of offshore debt securities in Macao

Guangdong, through the China's Ministry of Finance, will issue 2.5 billion yuan (EUR 318.5 million) worth of offshore debt securities in Macao later this month, the fourth issuance of Guangdong bonds in Macao since 2021. [MD](#) Aug 26

Visitors' spending on non-gaming products hits record high, up 15.8% on pre-COVID levels

The Secretary for Economy and Finance said the first quarter of this year saw a record spending of 32.5 billion patacas (EUR 3.73 billion) on non-gaming items. He also announced that the Government will launch new measures to promote consumption in community areas from the fourth quarter of the year. [IAG](#) Aug 6

New visitor record

The number of single-day arrivals and departures reached 717,000 on 3 August, marking a visitor record in the city's history. [MDT MN](#) Aug 6

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