

Press Release

Favourable foods, breathtaking firework, thrilling races – Hong Kong welcomes the Year of the Horse

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Berlin (HKETO Berlin) will soon celebrate the arrival of the Year of the Horse which is considered a fortunate year that brings luck and good things. The Horse gives people a ride to their destination, and hence is not only a symbol of travel, but also of speedy success.

In 2014, 31 January marked the first day of the Chinese lunar calendar. Unlike the western one, the Chinese lunar calendar is based on cycles of the moon instead of the sun. In the western calendar, time is linear; in the Chinese one, cyclical. 12 zodiac animal signs form the 12-year rotating cycle of the Chinese lunar calendar, the Year of the Horse are seventh in the cycle, following the Year of the Snake. Deeply rooted in Chinese traditions but woven with a modern touch, Hong Kong is a unique and enchanting embodiment of East and West, where linear and cyclical time co-exist.

Chinese New Year is also called the Spring Festival and marks the dawn of the new season, similar to carnival in western countries. People in Hong Kong enjoy three days of public holiday with every office and bank closed – a rather unusual occasion in China's ever-bustling global financial centre. In true Hong Kong style, the city will welcome the Year of the Horse with festive celebrations and timeless traditions, including breathtaking firework on the second day of the new year. Locals gather in aromatic temples to pray for good fortune, string up red lanterns and celebrate cheerful family reunion dinners as well as festive parades. Not the least, the traditional Chinese New Year Race Day features Hong Kong's most popular horseracing event with thrilling races and an exciting programme.

Looking ahead to the Year of the Horse, Mr Ivan K B Lee, Director of the HKETO Berlin, expresses hopes for further intensifying Hong Kong-European relations after the festivities: "The horse is considered free spirited, independent, animated and energetic, which perfectly reflects Hong Kong's can-do spirit and pro-business environment. I hope that the international business community continues to make use of Hong Kong's platform as the gateway to Asia Pacific and the "super-connector" between Mainland China and the rest of the world. My office aims to further strengthen economic and trade ties between Hong Kong and the countries under our purview by exploring new ways of co-operation in the Year of the Horse."

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In February and March, HKETO Berlin will host 11 Chinese New Year receptions in central and eastern Europe, namely Warsaw (3 February), Frankfurt (4 February), Prague (10 February), Berlin (11 February), Hamburg (12 February), Vienna (18 February), Bratislava (20 February), Munich (24 February), Ljubljana (26 February), Budapest (27 February) and Zurich (6 March).

About 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 Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland.

Photo caption:

1. Lunar New Year Fireworks enlighten Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour
2. Chinese New Year Racing Day

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