



由農曆新年至今的一個多月期間，有三家旅行社突然倒閉，對業界的聲譽和形象造成一定影響。議會對此非常關注，已主動聯絡警方，要求深入調查突然倒閉的原因，看看會否涉及詐騙。

議會出外旅遊委員會最近曾討論旅遊保險的問題，認為難以執行強制旅客購買旅遊保險的計劃。議會與香港保險業聯會、保險業監理處、旅遊事務署磋商後，認為鼓勵旅客自行購買旅客保險最為可行。譬如春節時在桂林碰上意外的旅行團，幸好所有團員都買了旅客保險，所以旅行社在處理善後工作時比較妥當。至於旅行社售賣旅遊保險一事，保監處正研究增設一種專供旅行社職員考取的資格，俾使他們可以在旅客報團時出售旅遊保險；希望事件能早日解決。

早前消費者委員會動用「消費者訴訟基金」，協助旅客向一家旅行社追討賠償。此事引起業界的普遍關注，議會已要求消委會清楚界定動用基金的準則。另一方面，希望同業在行程表方面能加倍審慎，務求所作承諾都可遵行。旺季時航空公司的航班往往會有變動，加上很遲才確定航班時間，這都會給會員帶來困難。議會已把業界的困難告知消委會，對方也已答應向航空公司反映。

導遊核證制度在去年七月一日正式實施，經過八個月的寬限後，理事會已決定由今年三月一日起，嚴格執行核證制度的規定。議會職員往景點巡查時，發現有些導遊明明有導遊證，可就是不戴出來。希望會員提醒導遊，有證不戴同樣違反《導遊作業守則》，一經發現，會交由「導遊審核委員會」處理。☐

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The sudden closure of three travel agents during the past month or so has somewhat affected the reputation and image of the industry. The TIC is very concerned about that and has already asked the police to launch a thorough investigation into the closure to see whether any fraudulent activity was involved.

The TIC Outbound Committee has discussed the issue of travel insurance and come to the conclusion that a compulsory travel insurance scheme would be hard to implement. After discussion with The Hong Kong Federation of Insurers, the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance and the Tourism Commission, the TIC believes the best way is to encourage travellers to buy their own travel insurance. For example, the reason why the travel agent concerned was able to handle a recent tour accident in Guilin quite well was that all tour members had bought travel insurance. As to the sale of travel insurance by travel agents, the Commissioner Office has been considering creating a new qualification for agency staff so that they can sell travel insurance to travellers when the latter book a tour. It is hoped an early solution is forthcoming.

The Consumer Council has recently made use of its Consumer Legal Action Fund to help travellers to seek compensation from a travel agent through legal means. The matter has aroused widespread concern among members and the TIC has requested the Consumer Council to state clearly the conditions under which the Fund would be used. As far as members are concerned, however, I think they should be doubly cautious about what they say in their tour brochures and should be sure their promises can be honoured. During high season, flight schedules change frequently and airlines often confirm their flights rather late, thus causing members some difficulties. The TIC has already brought up the difficulties with the Consumer Council and it has promised to broach the matter with airlines.

The Tourist Guide Accreditation System has been effective since 1 July 2004. After an eight-month grace, the Board has decided to strictly enforce it as from 1 March 2005. When our staff make inspections at attractions, they found that some tourist guides had brought their Tourist Guide Pass with them, but chose not to wear it. Members are advised to remind their tourist guides that not wearing the Pass is also in breach of the Code of Conduct for Tourist Guides, and the cases will be referred to the Tourist Guide Deliberation Committee. ☐

Joseph Tung