



關於旅遊保險代理人的各種安排，終於都定下來了(見「專題(二)」)。議會在過去一年多以來，與各方不住磋商，並頂住了不少反對為旅遊業設立旅遊保險代理人的壓力，為會員爭取到最佳的安排。

為了增強會員對風險管理的認識，並減低營運風險，議會去年向中小企業發展支援基金申請撥款，並獲批港幣七十餘萬元，以進行有關研究。招標程序早前已經完成，很快會選出合適的顧問公司；希望會員與顧問公司多加合作。

近年遊學團非常流行，除了旅行社之外，一些學校或團體也會組辦。為了提高旅行社所組辦遊學團的素質，議會經過八個月的努力後，終於制訂了一套《經營遊學團守則》，將適用於今年六月一日後出發的遊學團(見第一百四十七指引)。希望《守則》可以令消費者對會員組辦的遊學團更有信心。

議會近日收到一些關於領隊服務費的投訴，出外旅遊委員會於是成立了專責小組探討這問題。小組目前還沒有結論，不過大前提是：任何結論都必須得到領隊、旅行社、消費者三方接受才行。我相信領隊只要積極做好本身的工作，為旅客提供優良的服務，旅客應該不會吝嗇服務費的。

早陣子有人提出，希望把機票納入旅遊業賠償基金的保障範圍。票務委員會經過詳細研究後，認為單買機票的風險不大，因此暫時無須把機票納入保障範圍，並建議一方面與消費者委員會聯絡，以加強對消費者的教育，另一方面與航空公司商議，以改善出票程序，務求減低消費者的風險。✎

董耀中

Arrangements concerning travel insurance agents are finally finalised (see "Special Topic (2)"). Over the past year or so, the TIC has incessantly negotiated with various parties and successfully withstood much pressure against establishing such a category of insurance agents for the travel industry. The arrangements we now have are indeed the best ones.

A subsidy of more than HK\$700,000 was granted by the SME Development Fund to the TIC last year in order for the latter to increase members' awareness of risk management and reduce their operational risks. The tendering process has just completed and a consultancy will soon be decided. Members are urged to cooperate with the consultancy to be chosen.

Very popular in recent years, study tours have been organised by, apart from travel agents, some local schools and organisations. To raise the standard of study tours organised by agents, the TIC has spent eight months working on a Code of Business Practice on Study Tours, which applies to study tours setting off after 1 June this year (see Directive No. 147). It is hoped that the Code can command consumers' confidence in study tours operated by agents.

Following a number of complaints about service charges paid to tour escorts, the Outbound Committee has set up an ad hoc group to look into the matter. Although there is no final conclusion as yet, any conclusion to be reached must be acceptable to tour escorts, travel agents and consumers at the same time. If tour escorts work hard to provide excellent service for travellers, I believe the travellers should not be so mean as not to give them any service charge.

A little while ago, it was suggested that the scope of protection of the Travel Industry Compensation Fund should be expanded to cover air tickets. The issue has already been studied by the Ticketing Committee, which was of the view that the suggestion should be put on hold for the moment since the risks involved in purchasing air tickets alone were not high. It was proposed instead that consumer education should be enhanced through cooperation with the Consumer Council on the one hand, and the procedures for issuing air tickets should be improved through negotiation with the airlines so as to lower such risks on the other. ✎

Joseph Tung