

打擊不良手法 重建旅客信心

Tackling malpractices to rebuild visitor confidence

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近期有多宗內地旅客的投訴被媒體廣泛報導，令「零團費」的問題再次引起各界關注。「零團費」這個老大難問題，並不是指內地來港團的團費是零，而是指內地組團社把旅行團交給香港接待社接待，但卻不付分毫接待費，於是引發出種種不良手法。為此議會已制訂了多項措施，以打擊這些不良手法，從而恢復內地旅客的信心。

加強處分機制

以往議會處理入境旅客的投訴時，會把涉嫌違規的旅行社和導遊分別交予規條委員會和導遊審核委員會處理。鑒於有不少投訴同時涉及旅行社和導遊，議會於是新成立了「內地來港旅行團規條委員會」，以審理同時涉及兩者的投訴個案。為確保個案得到公平的處理，委員會由議會獨立理事馬豪輝先生擔任召集人，成員共有十一名業外人士和七名業內人士；委員會審理違規個案時，業外人士必須多於業內人士。

此外，政府已批准議會大幅提高旅行社違規的最高罰款額，以加強阻嚇力。旅行社於任何兩年期間內，初次違規的最高罰款額已由港幣一萬元增加至五萬元；第二次違規由港幣五萬元增加至十萬元；第三次及以後的違規由港幣十萬元增加至二十萬元。議會網站最近也新增了「旅行社違規個案」欄，公佈被裁定違反議會規例的旅行社名稱、違反的規例及違規原因，以收阻嚇作用。

提升服務素質

除了加重懲罰外，提升業者的服務素質同樣重要。議會新成立的「內地來港旅行團事務委員會」，專責制訂規管內地來港團營運的措施，以及就「零團費」的問題研究

Recently, the extensive media coverage of several complaints from mainland visitors has renewed concern for the problem of "zero-fare" tours. This knotty old problem does not mean the tour fare of mainland tours is zero. Rather, it refers to the practice of mainland tour operators farming out package tours to Hong Kong receiving agents without paying any reception fee, thus causing a whole series of malpractices. Many measures have been introduced by the TIC to tackle those malpractices and rebuild the confidence of mainland visitors.

Improving disciplinary mechanism

In the past, visitor complaints involving travel agents and tourist guides were deliberated by the Compliance Committee and the Tourist Guide Deliberation Committee respectively. Since many cases involve both agents and guides, the TIC has set up a new committee, the Mainland China Inbound Tour Compliance Committee, to handle such cases. And to ensure fair handling of cases, it is chaired by an Independent Director, Mr Ma Ho Fai, with 11 non-trade and seven trade members. At hearings of compliance cases, non-trade members must be more than trade members.

In addition, the Government has given its approval to the TIC for a substantial increase in the maximum fines for non-compliance with the TIC's rules by agents in order to increase the level of deterrence. The maximum fines during any two-year period have been raised from HK\$10,000 to HK\$50,000 on the first occasion; from HK\$50,000 to HK\$100,000 on the second occasion; and from HK\$100,000 to HK\$200,000 on the third and any subsequent occasion of violations. Agents in breach of rules of the TIC will have their names, together with the rules violated and the reasons of violation, posted in the new "Cases of Travel Agent Violations" section on the TIC website for deterrence purposes.

Raising service quality

As important as imposition of heavier penalties is quality enhancement in services delivered by industry members. The TIC has therefore set up the Mainland China Inbound Tour

長遠的解決辦法。委員會由議會主席何栢靈先生擔任召集人，共有十名業界人士和十名業外人士。

議會正在考慮當收到內地旅客投訴時，會要求旅行社提交與內地業務夥伴所簽訂的合約，以便調查旅行社有沒有違規。此外，議會也打算發出指引，規定旅行社必須在內地旅客抵港後向他們派發詳細的行程資料，使他們可清楚瞭解本身的權益，從而得到最佳的保障。有感不少旅客投訴導遊提供的服務欠佳，議會正計劃為在職導遊開辦持續培訓課程，以提升他們的顧客服務技巧和專業操守。

登記店舖方面，議會正着手修訂登記店舖承諾書的內容，確保旅客在「十四天百分百退款保證計劃」下得到充份的保障。議會並會檢討「登記店舖記分制」，以便更有效地監管登記店舖，同時會調配更多人手巡查店舖及旅遊景點。

與旅遊當局合作

「零團費」的問題源自內地組團社，要解決的話，內地旅遊當局的配合非常重要。議會將尋求內地旅遊局的支持，以期內地當局加強對出境旅客的消費者教育工作，並收緊對出境組團社的監管。議會會繼續定期把內地來港旅客的投訴個案及旅行社的違規資料通知國家旅遊局，使內地得知香港的最新情況。此外也會與旅遊事務署、香港旅遊發展局、消費者委員會緊密合作，推廣良好的經營手法，提升香港旅遊勝地的形象。

上述措施只是剛剛推出，成效如何有待觀察。但有一點可以肯定：單憑議會一己之力，絕不能解決「零團費」的問題。業者只有摒棄所有不良手法，「零團費」的問題及其引起的種種流弊才會有消失的一天。TTC

Affairs Committee to formulate regulatory measures for mainland tours and hammer out long-term solutions to "zero-fare" tours. TIC Chairman Mr Ronnie Ho has been appointed Convenor of the Committee, which has 20 members, half of them coming from outside the trade.

The TIC is considering whether agents will be required to submit contracts with their mainland business partners for investigation purposes when visitor complaints are received. Agents may also be required to provide mainland visitors with a detailed itinerary on their arrival in Hong Kong so that the latter will understand their rights and be better protected. Since there are many complaints about substandard services provided by guides, the TIC is planning to provide in-service training for them in a bid to upgrade their customer service skills and boost their professional ethics.

As regards registered shops, the TIC is now revising the provisions of their pledges in order for visitors to be fully protected under the 14-Day, 100% Refund Guarantee Scheme. The Demerit System for Registered Shops will be reviewed for better monitoring of shops, and more spot checks at shops and tourist attractions will also be conducted.

Working with tourism authorities

The problem of "zero-fare" tours, which has stemmed from mainland tour operators, cannot be solved without the cooperation of the mainland tourism authorities. The TIC will enlist their support in promoting consumer education for outbound travellers and tightening supervision of outbound agents on the mainland. Reports on complaints filed by mainland visitors and violations by Hong Kong agents will continue to be submitted to the China National Tourism Administration on a regular basis to keep it informed of the latest situation in Hong Kong. The TIC will also work closely with local authorities such as the Tourism Commission, the Hong Kong Tourism Board and the Consumer Council to promote good business practices and enhance Hong Kong's image as a superb destination.

Whereas it remains to be seen whether the above new measures will turn out to be effective, what is certain is that the TIC alone stands no chance of eradicating the problem of "zero-fare" tours. For this problem and the many maladies arising from it to disappear one day, industry members cannot but abandon all their ruthless practices. TTC