

議會與會員的橋樑：屬會

Bridge between TIC and members: Association Members


本刊記者 Staff reporter

議會有時收到一些新會員的查詢，表示不明白為甚麼要先加入一個屬會，然後才可以加入議會。說真的，這個問題不好回答，因為既涉及歷史的因素，也關係到組織分工的問題。

議會一九七八年成立，八八年政府修訂《旅行代理商條例》，賦予議會監管外遊旅行社的權力。議會為了加以配合，在同年註冊成為有限公司，而由那時起就已經有六個屬會了；至於先加入屬會，再加入議會的規定，也自那時起就在會章之中。後來另外兩個屬會在九十年代初相繼加入，此後屬會的數目就一直維持不變。

以上就是歷史的因素，至於組織分工的問題，則比較複雜。按會章規定，議會共有三類會員：屬會(商會會員)、基本會員、普通會員，而基本會員和普通會員的主要分別是後者不可以組辦旅行團。可是，旅行社的業務千差萬別，只分成兩類，有時難免未能照顧旅行社的不同需要。

本來，假如議會坐擁巨萬，把會員按業務性質分成多個類別，再因應每個類別的需求提供妥貼的服務，那樣或許無須倚重屬會。但現實是議會資源有限，僅是維護業界和消費者的利益就已經不易了。加上經常要與政府多個部門緊密聯繫，與各地的旅遊組織時相往來，又要答覆傳媒形形色色的查詢等等，因而難以一一體察會員的個別需要。

在這種情況下，八個各具特色的屬會不僅可以輔助議會照顧不同會員的需要，也可以藉着各種活動，瞭解會員的訴求，再向議會反映，成為議會和會員的橋樑。每個屬會都有代表在理事會，會員有甚麼意見，大可告知屬會，再由屬會代表直接告訴理事會。當然，不是說會員不可以直接和議會溝通，但溝通渠道難道不是多多益善嗎？

New members occasionally ask why they have to join an Association Member (AM) before joining the TIC. Frankly, this is quite difficult to answer because it involves not only a historical dimension, but also the matter of division of labour.

Founded in 1978, the TIC was entrusted with the task of regulating outbound agents when the Travel Agents Ordinance was amended in 1988. To facilitate the task, the TIC was incorporated in the same year, at which time there were already six AMs. And the requirement that a travel agent must first join an AM to qualify for TIC membership can also be traced to that time. Two more AMs were later admitted in the early 1990s and their total number has remained the same since then.

As to the matter of division of labour, it is a little more complex. The TIC has three categories of member: AM, Ordinary Member and Affiliate Member. One of the main differences between Ordinary and Affiliate Members is that the latter are not allowed to operate package tours. However, given the wide variety of travel agents, sorting them into two categories may sometimes render the TIC unable to meet their individual needs.

Of course, if the TIC were to have unlimited resources, its members might then be sorted into various categories and members of each category could be provided with tailor-made services. In this idealised situation, the AMs might not be needed. In reality, however, the TIC's resources are far from unlimited and to protect the interests of trade members and consumers is already not an easy task, not to mention such other work as keeping close contact with the Government and tourism organisations worldwide, and answering media enquiries. As such, the TIC may be unable to attend to the individual needs of members at times.

Under such circumstances, the eight AMs can help the TIC to meet the needs of its members and relay their concerns to the TIC, thus acting as a bridge between the TIC and its members. As all AMs are represented on the TIC Board, if members wish to have their voices heard directly by the TIC Board, they may just bring up their views with the AM representatives. It is not to say members cannot communicate with the TIC directly, but surely no one would complain there are too many communication channels? 