

議會今後為何而存？

What's TIC's raison d'être in future?


政府對旅遊業監管架構的建議改革公佈後，有些人懷疑議會今後是否還需要存在。議會成立至今已經三十多年了，負起行業自律監管的責任也超過二十年，這麼多年來不斷奮發向上，廣受公眾、同業、政府、各地旅遊機關的認可，其他機構絕難取代。**旅遊業監管局將來成立後，將負責監管和處分業者等棘手事務，這對議會來說未嘗不是好事，因為以後可以集中精力為同業和業界服務。**不管議會日後會變得怎麼樣，會員的支持始終是必不可少的。

農曆新年在今年一月，出乎意料，外遊印花額竟然比去年同期下跌了兩成，估計是因為農曆新年和聖誕很接近，加上天氣欠佳，市民不願外遊之故。幸虧二月的印花額上升了三成，抵銷了一月的不少跌幅。雖然今年環球經濟的前景並不明朗，但對外遊業全年的預測仍然是樂觀的，希望業者繼續推陳出新，保持良好的服務水平，藉以維持業務增長。

過去一兩年來，經過議會及同業多方努力後，內地入境團的水平已有不少改善。內地居民的生活水平不住提高，對旅遊目的地的期望自然會相應提高，任何目的地都要不住努力，提升服務，才能不被淘汰。

今年七月香港政府就會換屆，期望新一任政府可以為業界創造更大的發展空間，加大扶持旅行社的力度，因為它們大都是中小型公司，特別容易受經濟波動影響。此外，要旅遊業更加蓬勃，多個環節都必須加以完善，像酒店、景點、交通設施等等。期望新一任政府與旅遊業界緊密合作，共同締造美好的將來。✎

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After the announcement of the proposed reform to the regulatory framework, there are some doubts about the TIC's raison d'être in the future. The TIC was set up more than 30 years ago and has been responsible for self-regulation for over 20 years. During all these years, it has exerted itself tirelessly and gained the wide recognition of the public, traders, the Government and tourism authorities of various places. It would be no easy task for any organisations to take its place. **After its establishment, the Travel Industry Authority will be in charge of such thorny matters as regulating and disciplining traders, which may not be a bad thing for the TIC, because it will then be able to focus its efforts on serving traders and the trade.** No matter what will become of it, the support of members is always indispensable.

This year's Chinese New Year fell in January, whose outbound levy amount unexpectedly dropped by 20% year on year. That was probably caused by the two festivals, Chinese New Year and Christmas, being too close, the weather over the former rather bad and the citizens hesitant about travelling. Fortunately, the levy for February surged by 30%, recovering most of the ground lost in January. Although the outlook of the global economy is uncertain this year, the forecast for the outbound trade is optimistic. It is hoped that traders can continue to roll out new products and maintain sound service quality in order to grow business.

Thanks to the many efforts by the TIC and traders during the past one to two years, inbound tours from the mainland have shown considerable improvement. As the living standards of residents there are always rising, their expectations of destinations will also be on the rise. Any destinations which fail to work hard to have better service on offer will find it hard to continue to be in the race.

The new administration of Hong Kong will be sworn in this July. It is hoped that it will help the industry to carve out greater room for development and put in more efforts to help travel agents because they are mostly small- and medium-sized companies especially vulnerable to economic fluctuations. Besides, a thriving tourism industry requires plenty of its components such as hotels, attractions and transport facilities to have necessary tweaking. It is hoped that the new administration will work closely with the industry for a bright tomorrow. ✎

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