The KPMG & EuroCham Connected Cities in Asia Pacific – Breakfast Seminar

On Friday the 26 April your BLCC and some of her members joined the insightful Breakfast Seminar on 'Connected Cities in the Asia Pacific' presented by EuroCham and KPMG. While enjoying the tasty & colourful breakfast, Mr. Marcos Chow of KPMG summarized the highlights of the research report, which assessed residents' perceptions, preferences and expectations of their cities turning "smarter".

Subsequently, a six-headed lively panel discussed smart city developments and pitfalls within Hong Kong. Smart initiatives have the power of tackling long-standing and future problems. However, technology remains vital within smart solutions and should be implemented by both businesses and the Hong Kong government side by side, instead of being separated. Most importantly, it must serve the people and their wishes.

Left to right: Moderator: Mr. Tom Uiterwall, CEO, Reconergy Ltd. Panellists: Mr. Clube Ng, Founding Co-Chairman, Connected City Alliance; Mrs. Waltraut Ritter, Managing Director, Knowledge Dialogues; Mrs. Sabine Reppert, CEO, Deon Digital Hong Kong Ltd.; Mr. Tony Wong, Assistant Government Chief Information Officer HKSAR; Mr. Marcos Chow, Partner, IT Advisory, KPMG; Mr. Austin Bryan, Senior Director, CLP Holdings Ltd.

Within the survey, the creation of a better living environment through thoughtful urban planning and design was the key area of development for citizens within the five case studies: Singapore, Shanghai, Seoul, Melbourne, and Hong Kong. Moreover, all residents underscored the problem of traffic congestion. The latter was far from a surprise for Ms. Ritten, and the solution, she believed, is all in all not too difficult. In the context of Hong Kong, the transport department should keep on drastically transforming its mindset from a focus on vehicular transport towards de-carbonized transport. Non-motorized transport should be made more pleasant by reducing pollution and obstacles, and by applying the right technology.

Mr. Bryan emphasized the importance of smart energy. Hong Kong's buildings are responsible for 90% of its energy emissions. Tools like CLP's recently developed app through which building managers can assess and control all energy used, should become a standard. This connecting of all information through technology and disclosing it, is also, as Mr. Clube mentioned, what the new open data policy

of the Hong Kong government is all about. With 700 new data sets from various departments this year, businesses have the capability to use these as the fuels of their innovation. Having the right software is moreover increasingly essential. As mentioned by Mr. Wong, the provision of free software to all healthcare providers in Hong Kong is certainly a contribution to Hong Kong's smart development. Therefore Ms. Reppert advocated that besides Hong Kong's extraordinary capability in building hardware in the city, attracting and establishing the smart enabling software layer needs also to receive more attention. Besides a trading hub, Hong Kong should become a place in which software start-ups can grow.

BLCC member and Flanders Trade Commissioner Katrien Leinders, among others, enjoyed the seminar. She left with a more definite answer on what a smart city actually means in Hong Kong's contexts, and how it differs from those in Belgium. Especially the importance of connection and responsiveness in smart initiatives will stick with her.

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