



**The EAA reviews its work in 2022 and
introduces its initiatives for 2023**

(30 January 2023) The Estate Agents Authority (“EAA”) held a press conference today at which its Chairman, Mr Simon Siu Chak-yu, BBS, JP, and Chief Executive Officer, Ms Ruby Hon, reviewed the EAA’s work in 2022 and introduced its initiatives for 2023.

In 2022, the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic and global economy brought great challenges to the property market of Hong Kong. Both the overall number of transactions as well as the transaction amount dropped significantly compared to 2021. The work of the EAA has also been affected by the epidemic and experienced greater difficulty.

Under the stagnant property market, only 9,087 candidates attended the 17 qualifying examinations held by the EAA in 2022, a decrease of 39% compared to 2021.

There was also a drop in the number of licences. There were 41,107 individual licensees as at 31 December 2022, a decrease of 2.3% compared to 31 December 2021. The number of estate agency companies and shops also recorded a decrease.

A total of 273 complaint cases were opened in 2022, a decrease of 18% compared to 2021, of which the cases related to first-hand residential properties also dropped 44% compared to 2021. Among the most common categories of complaints, issuance of non-compliant advertisements accounted for the most, at 24% of the total complaints, but the number has also decreased by 45% compared to 2021.



There were 62 complaint cases concerning non-local properties in 2022, of which 61 cases involved uncompleted non-residential development projects, representing a significant increase compared to 2021 but similar in number to that of 2020. Mr Siu emphasised that the issue of non-local properties is complex and involves many different stakeholders. Regulating estate agents cannot solve problems arising from developers or other stakeholders. It is also difficult for the EAA to set up an examination and training system for agents selling non-local properties, in a bid to ensure that they possess the relevant professional knowledge of different jurisdictions. On the issue of non-local properties, the EAA believes that consumer education is of utmost importance. Last year, the EAA launched a promotional slogan - **“To buy or not to buy non-local off-plan properties? Assess the risks before you buy!”** to raise consumers’ vigilance.

On the other hand, the EAA conducted 980 checks at the sale-sites of first-hand residential properties, 729 visits to estate agency shops and 1,203 spot checks on matters relating to Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing requirements. The EAA also conducted 1,393 spot checks on online property advertisements, an increase of 31% compared to 2021. During all these inspections and spot checks, a total of 116 non-compliant cases were discovered, a decrease of 29% compared to 2021 and most of them were about non-compliant advertisements.

The EAA took actions or imposed sanctions against a total of 416 licensees or former licensees in 2022. A total of 14 licences were suspended and 41 licences were revoked.

At the same time, the EAA issued a practice circular in 2022 in response to the taking effect of Part IVA of the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation)



Ordinance to provide guidelines for licensees to follow when handling the letting of “subdivided units”. Related promotion and education work had been strengthened so that estate agents can remind landlords to comply with the relevant requirements.

The EAA also continued its efforts in educating licensees and the public. To tie in with the theme of the EAA’s silver jubilee, “**Together we Establish, Advocate and Achieve**”, the EAA held a series of activities and contribute to the community together with estate agents.

Stepping into 2023, the EAA will update / issue guidelines to the estate agency trade on matters arising from any changes in law or market situation. These include enhancing the existing guidelines related to the sale by estate agents of uncompleted properties situated outside Hong Kong and the practice circular relating to compliance of anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing requirements, and considering developing guidelines on effective competition behaviour.

Besides, the EAA will also continue to promote the concept of “**5A agent**”, and will encourage the trade to proactively participate in corporate social responsibility activities to contribute to the community.



The EAA Chairman Mr Simon Siu Chak-yu, BBS, JP (Right) and the CEO Ms Ruby Hon (Left) reviewed the EAA's work in 2022 and introduced its initiatives for 2023 at the press conference.

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