



MEDIA STATEMENT

REJECTION OF APPLICATION BY OSEA PTE LTD TO REGISTER AS A PRIVATE COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES

Singapore, 11 April 2018 - On 8 February 2018, an application was made to the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) to register a private company limited by shares under the name of "OSEA Pte Ltd". Particulars of the office holders and purposes of the company were provided. ACRA has today notified the applicant that the application was rejected on the grounds that the registration of OSEA Pte Ltd would be contrary to Singapore's national interests.

2 The application designated Singaporeans Thum Ping Tjin (Thum) and Kirsten Han (Han) as Director and Editor-in-Chief respectively. The proposed activities of OSEA Pte Ltd include organising discussion fora, workshops, and other events in Singapore, such as "Democracy Classroom" sessions.

3 Another of OSEA Pte Ltd's objectives is to provide editorial services to a website named "New Naratif" (www.newnaratif.com), in which Thum and Han are also involved. New Naratif has been publishing articles critical of politics in regional countries. For example, its articles have claimed that certain regional governments are using violence to maintain political control, had manipulated events or framed them for political gain, and have "rigged" their electoral systems.

4 The purposes of the proposed company are clearly political in nature.

5 OSEA Pte Ltd was to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Observatory Southeast Asia Ltd (OSEA UK), a UK-registered company. One of OSEA UK's stated objects is to "promote the universal values of democracy, freedom of the media, and freedom of inquiry, information and expression". Currently, OSEA UK owns and manages the New Naratif website.

6 OSEA UK has received a grant of USD\$75,000 from Foundation Open Societies Institute (FOSI), Switzerland.

7 Furthermore, FOSI is a Swiss charitable foundation closely associated with Open Society Foundations (OSF). OSF, founded and led by George Soros, was expressly established to pursue a political agenda the world over, and has a history of involvement in the domestic politics of sovereign countries. For example, OSF is said to have provided financial backing to organisations opposing the Church's position in an upcoming referendum in Ireland. The organisations sought to build upon legislation legalising same-sex marriage, and thereby also impact other strongly Catholic countries in Europe.

8 Similarly, OSF has reportedly funded organisations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Last year, Human Rights Watch published a report advocating changes to laws and the political system in Singapore.

9 What happens in other jurisdictions is not the concern of the Singapore Government. OSF and FOSI, and other foreign philanthropies and groups, can fund whatever causes they like elsewhere. In Singapore, however, our position is that none of them can be allowed to fund Singaporean organisations or individuals participating in our domestic politics.

10 The registration of OSEA Pte Ltd would therefore be contrary to Singapore's national interests. Singapore's politics should be for Singaporeans alone to determine. We should not allow foreigners to interfere in how we should govern our country. Nor should we allow any group of Singaporeans to lend themselves to being used by foreigners to pursue a political activity in Singapore.

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About ACRA

The Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) is the national regulator of business entities, public accountants and corporate service providers in Singapore. We promote a trusted and vibrant environment for businesses to thrive and flourish, and contribute towards making Singapore the best place for business.

For more information, please visit: www.acra.gov.sg.