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Agreement reached on bilateral air services

THE Hongkong and French governments have reached an agreement on bilateral air services, French consulate sources here said yesterday.

The agreement will be signed on Monday between the Secretary for Economic Services and the French Air Transport Services chief, the sources said.

The agreement is the fifth of its kind to be signed by Hongkong since Whitehall authorised the territory's government to draw up its own air services agreements with other countries, the sources said.

British authorisation followed the signing of the 1984 Sino-British agreement.

Hongkong hopes to finalise agreements with all relevant countries before the 1997 takeover.

The territory so far has signed air services accords with the Netherlands, Canada, Switzerland and Borneo.

Plans are in hand to sign further agreements with Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines and Thailand, an airline source said.