

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: For city perfection look no further . . .

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By Sandra Sau-yu Wong and Alexander M Swoboda
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From Mr Alexander M. Swoboda.

Sir, With surprise I discovered Haig Simonian's blind spot in his commentary on his quest for the perfect city ("In the search for the perfect city, size matters - but who cares?", April 15/16).

He almost exhaustively examined the top 10 of Mercer Human Resources Consulting's recent study, but left out its number four without explanation. This city has the 1m-1.5m inhabitants he claims are required to be perfect. It has a low crime rate, proximity to the Alps and leading cultural institutions, in particular with respect to classical music, which guarantee a high quality of living.

Both its history as the capital of a multinational empire and the presence of international organisations provide it with the air of internationality. While in the past, Mr Simonian could have argued, it is economically marginal, this is changing, since the demise of the iron curtain, when it has established itself as an entry point to central Europe. Mr Simonian, as Billy Joel has been singing already more than a decade ago: "Vienna waits for you".

Alexander M. Swoboda,

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From Ms Sandra Sau-yu Wong.

Sir, Is it not a perfect city for Haig Simonian where trains run on time, tipping is not expected, queues are orderly, lost items are invariably handed over to the police, mobile phones are prohibited on public transport, people never talk in loud voices and good manners still exist?

An ideal urban environment is created where consideration and kindness for others prevail or, as Lynne Truss puts it, where the "utter bloody rudeness of the world today" does not run amok. Such a place can still be found in Tokyo. It is the best city in the world and like Tyler Brûlé, I am an appreciative devotee.

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