

External Relations

As a non-sovereign special administrative region, Macao enjoys wide-ranging and close relationships with most countries and regions around the world. It has long maintained extensive, direct, friendly and beneficial relations, particularly with the Romance language-speaking countries, European Union member states and numerous international organisations.

Consulates in Macao

By the end of 2008, 79 countries had established consular services in Macao, and there were 82 consular establishments, four of which were vacant, and one was yet to open.

Portugal, Angola and the Philippines were the three countries that have established a consulate general in the MSAR.

Fifty-four consulates-general accredited to Hong Kong have also covered the Macao SAR, including several that may execute consular duties in the Macao SAR. They are (in alphabetical order): Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Columbia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, the United States of America, Venezuela, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. (Remarks: China has signed an agreement with Antigua and Barbuda that allows the island country to establish a consulate general in the Hong Kong SAR, but it has not yet opened.)

Eleven countries have appointed honorary consuls to the MSAR (in alphabetical order): Bhutan, Cape Verde, Estonia, Grenada, Guinea, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Peru, the United Kingdom and Guinea-Bissau. The posts of honorary consul of France and Surinam are currently vacant. (The posts of honorary consul of France and Surinam are currently vacant.)

Nine countries with honorary consulates in Hong Kong cover or extend services to the

MSAR (in alphabetical order): Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uruguay, Norway and Lithuania. (The posts of honorary consul of Eritrea and Rwanda are currently vacant.)

Mutual Exemption from Visa Requirements

By November 2009, 78 countries and regions allow visa-free entry or visa-on-arrival to MSAR passport holders.

Asia: Turkey, Japan, Israel, Indonesia, East Timor, South Korea, Jordan, Malaysia, the Maldives, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Lebanon and Mongolia.

Europe: Denmark, Belgium, Lithuania, Iceland, Spain, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Greece, Croatia, Poland, Finland, France, Andorra, Gibraltar, Latvia, United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Ireland, Norway, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovak, Austria, Italy, Cyprus, Estonia, San Marino, Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal, Germany, Monaco, Luxembourg, Romania, Malta, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

America: Brazil, Dominica, Aruba, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, the British Virgin Islands, Greenland, Martinique, Netherlands Antilles, Chile, Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, and Mexico.

Africa: South Africa, Egypt, La Réunion, Cape Verde, Mali, Mayotte, Namibia, Tanzania. and Seychelles.

Oceania: Kiribati, French Polynesia, Samoa, Wallis and Futuna.

Indian Ocean: French Southern and Antarctic Lands.

Macao and the European Union

Official relations between Macao and the European Union (EU) have been steadily built on the foundation of the trade and cooperation agreement between Macao and the European Community (as the EU was then known), which was signed in 1992 and came into effect in 1993. During the transition period, China and Portugal confirmed in the Sino-Portuguese Joint Liaison Group that this agreement would remain in force after the establishment of the MSAR in 1999.

Under the agreement, both sides cooperate in industry, investment, science and technology, energy, information, training and other areas. Joint committees of both parties hold annual meetings to review the implementation of the agreement and discuss its future development. Macao and Brussels take turns to hold such meetings, and fourteen such sessions had been held until February 2009.

The Macao Economic and Trade Office to the European Union has been set up at the Brussels headquarters of the EU to further enhance Macao's relationship with the organisation.

Macao and Portugal

Since the establishment of the MSAR, Macao has remained on good terms with Portugal. The MSAR established the Macao Economic and Trade Representative Office in the Portuguese capital, Lisbon, thus further strengthening the relationship between Portugal and Macao.

In May 2000, Macao and Portugal signed an agreement on the Mutual Encouragement and Protection of Investment between the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and the Portuguese Republic. This serves to strengthen economic and trade cooperation, and create favourable conditions for mutual investment in the future.

The Cooperation Framework Agreement between the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and the Portuguese Republic was signed in May 2001. The agreement's objective is to promote greater cooperation between the MSAR and Portugal in the areas of economics, finance, science, technology, culture, internal public security and justice. Moreover, to implement the framework agreement fully, the two sides may sign other specific protocols relating to these areas in the future.

On the basis of the Cooperation Framework Agreement, the MSAR Government and Portugal signed an Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation in Macao in July 2001 to promote future cooperation and the development of science and technology. The agreement's scope covers the exchange of scientific knowledge and research personnel, the joint formulation and implementation of research plans, and the joint promotion and organisation of conferences, seminars and other activities.

The Chief Executive, Mr Edmund Ho Hau Wah, visited Portugal in May 2000 and June 2006 respectively.

Macao and Portuguese-speaking Countries

Since the MSAR Government was founded, Macao has been maintaining and consolidating its implicit relations with these countries as well as continuing to exert its role as a bridge of exchange. With Portuguese-speaking expertise in Macao and existing mutual ties, Macao can help business communities in Portuguese-speaking countries and Mainland China to initiate economic and business negotiations.

The Chief Executive, Mr Edmund Ho Hau Wah, visited Mozambique and Brazil in September 2002 and June 2005 respectively. During the visits, Macao enterprises signed cooperation agreements with their counterparts in Mozambique and Brazil. The visits not only succeeded in strengthening economic, cultural and tourism links between Macao and Portuguese-speaking countries but also highlighted Macao's mediating role between the Mainland and the Portuguese-speaking countries.

Moreover, the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-Speaking Countries (Macao), which was organised by the Central Government and undertaken by the MSAR, was aimed at promoting trade and economic ties between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries and to use Macao as a platform. The First Ministerial Meeting of the Forum was held in October 2003 in Macao.

The Forum, including ministerial meetings and trade conferences, will be held every three years. Main participants are China, Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and East Timor. International organisations, chambers of commerce and entrepreneurs from other countries may also be invited to take part in the Forum.

The Second Ministerial Meeting of the Forum was held in Macao in September 2006, with the theme "Deepening cooperation and developing together". During the conference, officials from China and the Portuguese-speaking countries laid down the objectives for trade cooperation between 2007 and 2009, and decided to use Macao as a bridge to deepen mutual exchanges.

Macao and the Asia Pacific Region

The MSAR Government is committed to strengthening its relations with East Asia, particularly Southeast Asian countries, for the enhancement of economic development.

The Chief Executive, Edmund Ho Hau Wah, has visited countries including Singapore, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia in a bid to drive cooperation in trade, tourism, technology and academic studies. This has led to a joint training programme for Macao's civil servants by the Civil Service College of Singapore and the Administration and Civil Service Bureau of Macao, among other projects. In addition, the Macau Gallery, which is jointly managed by the MSAR Government and Malacca Historic City Council, has been established in Malacca for the promotion of Macao tourism.

More information:

Macao SAR Government (<http://www.gov.mo>)

Identification Bureau (<http://www.dsi.gov.mo>)

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