

External Relations

As a non-sovereign special administrative region, Macao enjoys wide-ranging and close relationships with most countries and regions around the world. According to the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region, Macao may develop bilateral relations with other countries or regions, and participate in international organisations and multinational treaties on its own under the name 'Macao, China' in the areas of commerce, trade, finance, aviation, communication, tourism, culture, technology and sport.

Consulates in Macao

By the end of 2017, 89 countries had established consular services in Macao or extended their consular services in Hong Kong to Macao, or had empowered them to execute consular duties in Macao.

Angola, Mozambique, the Philippines and Portugal are the four countries that have established a consulate general in Macao.

Fifty-seven other countries have assigned their consulates general in Hong Kong to cover consular affairs in Macao, including several countries that may execute consular duties in Macao. These are (in alphabetical order, similarly hereinafter): Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Egypt, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, the State of Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, Venezuela, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. (Note: Antigua and Barbuda, Samoa, the Bahamas and Denmark have not yet established consulates general in Hong Kong, but their agreements with China on provision or expansion of consulate services are still in force.)

Eight countries have appointed honorary consuls to Macao: Cape Verde, Estonia, Grenada, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Peru and the United Kingdom.

Twenty countries with honorary consulates in Hong Kong cover or extend services to Macao: Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iceland, Kenya, Lithuania, Maldives, Morocco, Namibia, Rwanda, San Marino, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania and Uruguay (note: the post of honorary consul of Norway to Hong Kong is currently vacant).

Mutual Exemption from Visa Requirements

By June 2018, 137 countries and regions allow visa-free or visa-on-arrival entry to MSAR passport holders. In addition, 14 countries or regions give visa-free or visa-on-arrival entry to holders of MSAR travel permits.

Macao and the European Union

Official relations between Macao and the EU have been steadily built on the foundation of the Macao-EC Trade and Cooperation Agreement signed in 1992. Macao has maintained good relations with the EU in terms of economic and trade affairs ever since the establishment of the MSAR. The Macao Economic and Trade Office at the Brussels headquarters of the EU seeks to enhance Macao's relationship with the organisation.

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 21 such sessions had been held.

Since the agreement was signed, the EU has funded cooperative projects with Macao. The projects included: training for the tourism industry (1999-2001); a European studies programme (1999-2001); a services development programme (1999-2001) on advising Macao on improvement of the local services sector; the Asia-Invest programme (2001 and 2002); and the EU-Macao Legal Cooperation Programme (2001-2005). During 2006, funded by the MSAR Government, the Directorate General for Interpretation (SCIC) of the European Commission provided training on translation and interpretation. In 2009, with regard to legal cooperation between the MSAR and the European Commission, a new protocol on the second phase of legal cooperation projects was signed between the two parties, including the EU Business Information Programme (2009-2012); and the EU Academic Programme was launched in the 2012. In November 2015, the MSAR Government signed a cooperation memorandum with the Directorate General for Interpretation of the EU on continuing to jointly organise the

Chinese-Portuguese Translation and Interpretation Study Scheme. The third phase of the cooperation project between Macao and EU on legal affairs was also passed. In addition, Macao announced the establishment of the matching fund, which would provide financial assistance to MSAR researchers for participation in the EU's Horizon 2020.

Also, joint projects inaugurated by Macao and the EU were: the Macao-Europe Centre for Advanced Tourism Studies (ME-CATS) and the Institute of European Studies of Macao.

In 2017, the total value of Macao's exports to the EU was 190 million patacas, representing an increase of 8.6 percent over 2016; while imports from the EU were worth 19.09 billion patacas, 12.1 percent more than in 2016.

Visa-free Access

At present, MSAR Passport holders have been allowed to remain for 90 days or six months without a visa in the 28 EU member countries that are signatories to the Schengen Agreement. These countries are: Denmark, Belgium, Lithuania, Spain, Hungary, Greece, Croatia, Poland, Finland, France, Latvia, the UK, Bulgaria, Ireland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovak Republic, Austria, Italy, Cyprus, Estonia, Sweden, Portugal, Germany, Luxembourg, Romania and Malta.

To enhance relations with EU member countries and increase economic and trade relations with them, the first and second Chief Executive Edmund Ho led delegations to visit Portugal, France, Belgium and Germany in 2000, 2001 and 2004. During 2006, Edmund Ho led a delegation to Portugal and Belgium, including the EU headquarters in Brussels. In 2012, Chief Executive Chui Sai On led a delegation to visit the EU.

Macao and Portugal

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

The Agreement on Mutual Encouragement and Protection of Investment between the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and the Portuguese Republic, and the

Cooperation Framework Agreement between the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and the Portuguese Republic, as well as the bilateral cooperation agreements between Macao and Portugal in the areas of administration and legal affairs, health care, technology, sports and audit have strengthened exchanges between the two parties. The agreements have promoted greater cooperation between the MSAR and Portugal in the areas of economics, finance, science, technology, culture, internal public security and justice.

In May 2014, Portuguese President Anibal Cavaco Silva visited Macao and signed the Amendment of the Cooperation Framework Agreement between the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and the Portuguese Republic, to further enhance the mechanism for cooperation between the two places by changing the biennial bilateral meeting to an annual one.

In 2010, the Chief Executive Chui Sai On led a delegation to Portugal, marking his first official visit to a foreign country. The visit served to deepen the friendship as well as trade, economic, social and cultural cooperation between the two places. In September 2016, the Chief Executive visited Portugal again to strengthen cooperation in the economy and language education.

Macao's imports from Portugal during 2017 totalled 267 million patacas, a decrease of 3.26 percent over the 2016 figure; its exports to Portugal decreased by 26.4 percent from 2016, to 4.133 million patacas.

Macao and the United States

Since the Handover, interaction and cooperation between Macao and the United States have strengthened in areas such as combating illegal transshipment, anti-piracy measures, law enforcement training and anti-terrorism measures. Both sides have expressed readiness to establish a good relationship, and to extend bilateral cooperation to promote trade and investment. The US Consulate General for Hong Kong and Macao encourages US officials to visit Macao in order to consolidate ties between the two parties further.

The total value of Macao's gross exports during 2017 was 11.28 billion patacas; of these, gross exports to the United States accounted for 186 million patacas, 19.2 percent more than in 2016. Macao's total imports from the United States were valued at 3.319 billion patacas, representing a decrease of 3.3 percent over 2016.

Three of the companies granted casino concession or sub-concession contracts by the Government following the liberalisation of Macao's gaming industry are US-funded.

Macao and Portuguese-speaking Countries

Eight Portuguese-speaking countries - Portugal, Brazil, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique and Timor-Leste - formed the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, in 1996. Besides its close links with Portugal, Macao also has traditional and special relationships with other members of the community. It is the only Chinese city capable of developing special relationships with the Portuguese-speaking countries on four continents. As a result, Macao has the unique advantage of serving as an economic and trading bridge between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

One of the Government's policy objectives is to transform Macao into an economic and trading service platform between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

The central government also attaches importance to this role. It arranged for Macao to host the Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries. The First Forum was held in October 2003. China and seven Portuguese-speaking countries sent government and business delegations to this major event. During the forum, ministerial-level officials of China and seven Portuguese-speaking countries signed the Economic and Trade Cooperation Action Plan. They agreed to establish a permanent secretariat for the forum in Macao.

In September 2006, Macao hosted the Second Ministerial Meeting of the Forum, with the theme "Deepening cooperation and developing together". Ministerial-level officials from China and seven Portuguese-speaking countries adopted and signed the Economic and Trade Cooperation Action Plan 2007-2009.

In November 2010, the third Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries was held in Macao under the theme of "Advance Common Development Through Diversified Cooperation". Premier Wen Jiabao attended the event and delivered a keynote speech. Attendees representing different countries jointly signed the 2010-2013 Action Plan on Trade and Economic Cooperation at the conference.

In November 2013, the fourth Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries was held in Macao under the theme of "New Cycle, New Opportunities". Attendees representing different countries jointly signed the 2014-2016 Action Plan for Economic and Trade Cooperation at the conference. The action plan further reiterates the importance of Macao as a platform; proposes a professional development exhibition in Macao targeting markets in Portuguese-speaking countries; explores the establishment of a commercial and trade service centre in Macao for small and medium enterprises from the countries that attended the forum, as well as a food trading and distribution centre for Portuguese-speaking countries; and promotes Macao as a commercial arbitration centre for handling disputes between enterprises in China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

In October 2016, the fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and the Portuguese-speaking Countries was held in Macao, with the theme "Working towards Stronger Sino-Portuguese-speaking Countries' Trade and Economic Relations – Combining Efforts, Jointly Building a Platform, Sharing Fruits of Development". Premier Li Keqiang attended the event, and delivered a keynote speech in which he announced 18 new measures for strengthening and deepening the economic and trade cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. Attendees representing different countries jointly signed the Strategic Plan for Economic and Trade Co-operation (2017-2019) and the Memorandum of Understanding on Promoting Co-operation in Production Capacity.

To strengthen sporting exchanges between Macao and Portuguese-speaking countries, Macao hosted the First Lusofonia Games in October 2006.

The first and second Chief Executive Edmund Ho paid official visits to Mozambique and Brazil in 2002 and 2005, respectively.

Macao and the Asia Pacific Region

The Government is committed to strengthening its relations with

East Asia, particularly Southeast Asian countries, for the enhancement of economic and tourism cooperation.

The first and second Chief Executive, Mr Edmund Ho Hau Wah, has visited countries including Singapore, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia. In 2011, Chief Executive Chui Sai On led a delegation for an official visit to Singapore.

For more information:

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

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

The Institute of European Studies of Macau (<http://www.ieem.org.mo>)

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