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EXTERNAL RELATIONS



External Relations

The Central People's Government is responsible for the foreign affairs of the Macao SAR. When the MSAR was established, the Central People's Government set up the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Macao Special Administrative Region, to handle foreign affairs issues related to Macao.

The Central People's Government also authorised Macao to manage certain external affairs in accordance with the regulatory framework stipulated in Chapter 7 of the Macao Basic Law.

As a non-sovereign region, Macao enjoys wide-ranging and close relationships with most countries and regions throughout the world. This is an advantage for Macao in its longstanding, extensive, direct, friendly and beneficial relationships, particularly those with European Union (EU) member states and Romance language-speaking countries. To facilitate Macao's further development, the Government frequently conducts external activities and makes great efforts to foster interactions and collaboration with countries and regions around the world, in areas such as economics, trade and culture.

Mutual Exemption from Visa Requirements

One of the Government's major tasks is to promote the Macao Passport and other travel permits. With the Central People's Government's support and assistance, it has made substantial progress in negotiating with other countries and regions to grant visa-free access to holders of Macao Passports and travel permits. By April 2013, a total of 104 countries and regions had agreed to grant visa-free access or visas on arrival to holders of Macao SAR Passports, with 74 countries and 16 regions allowing visa-free entry, and 14 countries requiring landing visas for entry (see Appendix 9, "Visa-free Access for Holders of Macao SAR Passports and Travel Permits", for more details). In addition, nine countries have agreed to grant visa-free access or visas on arrival to holders of MSAR travel permits.

The Government also grants visa-free access to nationals or citizens of 73 countries and regions (see Appendix 10, "Countries/Territories Granted Visa-free Access by the Macao SAR", for more details). Nationals or citizens of these countries and territories who are in possession of valid passports can stay in Macao for periods of 14-90 days. Visitors from certain countries, such as the United Kingdom, may be given permission to stay for up to six months.

Consulates in Macao

Under the provisions of Article 142 of the Macao Basic Law, the establishment of foreign consular and other official or semi-official missions in the MSAR is subject to approval by the Central People's Government. Consular and other official missions established in Macao before the Handover by states with formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China were allowed to remain. According to individual circumstances, consular and other official missions established in Macao by states with no formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China were allowed either to remain, or to change to semi-official missions. States not recognised by the People's Republic

of China were only allowed to establish non-governmental institutions in the MSAR.

By the end of December 2012, a total of 89 countries had reached agreements with the Macao SAR on establishing consular services in Macao or had extended the duties of their consulates general in Hong Kong to include Macao, or had empowered them to execute consular duties in Macao (see Appendix 8, “Countries Exercising Consular Jurisdiction in the Macao SAR”).

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

Fifty-three 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, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, the State of Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, Venezuela, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. China has signed an agreement with Antigua and Barbuda that allows the island country to establish a consulate general in Hong Kong, but it has not yet opened. The consulates general of Samoa, Bahamas and Denmark in Hong Kong were closed but their agreements on provision or expansion of consulate services were not terminated.

Ten countries have appointed honorary consuls to Macao: Cape Verde, Estonia, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Peru and the United Kingdom. The posts of honorary consul of Bhutan, France and Surinam are currently vacant.

Twenty countries with honorary consulates in Hong Kong cover or extend services to Macao: Cyprus, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Hungary, Iceland, Kenya, Lithuania, Maldives, Morocco, Namibia, Norway, Rwanda, San Marino, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania and Uruguay.

International Organisations and Multilateral Treaties

As a modern international city, Macao participates in various international organisations and multilateral treaties. This helps it to maintain its unique position in the world and to develop external relations in areas such as economics, trade, finance, aviation, transportation, culture, education, environmental protection and health.

International Organisations

The principles contained in Articles 136 and 137 of the Macao Basic Law regarding the appropriate participation of Macao in international activities form the legal bases on which the Central People’s Government and the MSAR Government handle issues relating to Macao’s participation in international activities.

Since the establishment of the MSAR, the Central People’s Government has assisted and

supported Macao's participation in relevant international conferences and activities in accordance with the Macao Basic Law, and has also shown concern for and safeguarded Macao's rights and interests in these international organisations. The Government participates in intergovernmental organisations in one of two ways: As a full member of the organisation concerned, with the identity of a separate region that undertakes international obligations and enjoys corresponding rights and interests; or as an associate member (or affiliate member) or member without voting rights that speaks as "Macao, China". In such circumstances, Macao undertakes its international obligations and enjoys corresponding rights and interests, subject to certain conditions.

In addition, Macao attends meetings of other intergovernmental organisations as a member of the central government delegation. Its delegates may express opinions on matters relevant to the MSAR in the name of "Macao, China". Macao may also attend non-governmental, regional and specialist meetings of international organisations.

Macao's participation in international activities of non-governmental organisations should fall within the sphere of Macao's autonomous affairs following the establishment of the MSAR. Such issues would thus be left to Macao's own discretion, and according to its needs.

During 2012, Macao attended several international conferences as a member of central government delegations, including:

- The Seventh Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures,
- The Council on General Affairs and Policy of the Hague Conference on Private International Law,
- The 101st Session of the International Labour Conference,
- The International Monetary Fund and World Bank Spring Meetings,
- The World Health Organization Executive Board Meeting,
- The 55th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs,
- The United Nations Climate Change Conference,
- The World Radiocommunication Conference 2012,
- The 12th Air Navigation Conference of the International Civil Aviation Organization,
- The 18th International Hydrographic Conference,
- The Consideration of Report on Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,
- The 25th Universal Postal Union Congress, and
- The 12th Assembly of the Asian Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions.

Also, under the name "Macao, China", Macao attended international conferences including:

- The Sixth International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance,
- The 18th CINDER International Congress,

- The 16th ICAO PKD Meeting,
- The Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes: Competent Authorities Meeting,
- The 15th Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) Annual Meeting,
- Seminars on “Counting the Seven Billion: The Future of Population and Housing Censuses” and “Integrating Statistical and Geospatial Information: Cloud and Web Service Applications”- UNSD (United Nations Statistics Division),
- The 35th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group Meeting,
- The Financial Action Task Force plenary meeting,
- The London Olympic Committee Paralympic Leadership Conference 2012,
- The Fourth World Curriculum Studies Conference,
- The Institutional Management in Higher Education General Conference 2012,
- The 36th Session of World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),
- The Annual Meeting of the Pacific Asia Travel Association 2012,
- The 68th Session of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,
- The 81st INTERPOL General Assembly,
- The Ninth Meeting of Presidents of Supreme Courts in Portuguese-Speaking Countries and Regions,
- The Board of Director's Meeting of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI), and
- The Sixth Annual Conference and General Meeting of the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities.

International Treaties

Article 138 of the Basic Law stipulates the applicability of multilateral treaties to Macao; and this forms the legal and regulatory framework for the Central People's Government and MSAR Government to implement multinational treaties applicable to Macao.

As of 2012, 275 multilateral treaties were applicable to Macao: 51 treaties on foreign affairs and defence; 15 on civil aviation; 10 on customs; four on drugs; seven on economics and finance; seven on education, science, technology, culture and sport; 20 on the environment and conservation; three on health; 20 on human rights; four on intellectual property; 12 on international crime; two on international trade; 36 on labour; 34 on maritime affairs; 10 on private international law; three on road traffic; eight on postal affairs and telecommunications; and 29 on the establishment of

international governmental organisations (see Appendix 11, “Multilateral Treaties Applicable to the Macao SAR”, for details).

On regional and international laws, the Government began negotiations with the Hong Kong SAR Government in 2012 on the signing of the Arrangement on Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement of Arbitration Awards, regarding confirmation of the documents to be signed. The Government also followed up on mutual legal assistance agreements with other countries, completed the implementation reports on several rights conventions, such as replies to the list of questions on the first report of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and began preparatory work for Macao’s first participation in the deliberation meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council as an individual member under the name “Macao, China”.

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 their agreement, Macao and the EU may cooperate in industry, investment, science and technology, energy, information, training and other areas. A Joint Committee established by both parties holds an annual meeting to review the implementation of the agreement and discuss its future development. The meeting venue alternates between Macao and Brussels, and 17 such sessions have been held to date. A great deal has been achieved through this form of cooperation.

According to statistics compiled by the European Commission: since the agreement was signed, the EU has funded cooperative projects with Macao worth around one million euros per annum. The projects have 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. This commenced in 2010, and is effective for three years. The EU Business Information Programme has been held from 2009 to 2012; and the EU Academic Programme began in 2012.

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.

Since its establishment in 1992, the Euro-Info Centre has provided specialist services to enable SMEs in Macao, Hong Kong, the Pearl River Delta and neighbouring regions to obtain useful information about Europe.

In October 2006, the European Commission published the Communication from the Commission

to the Council and the European Parliament – The European Union, Hong Kong and Macao: Possibilities for Cooperation 2007-2013.

The EU is Macao's second-largest trading partner. In 2012, the total value of Macao's exports to the EU was 315 million patacas, representing a decrease of 12.1 percent over 2011; while imports from the EU were worth 16.6 billion patacas, up by 7.1 percent from 2011.

Visa-free Access

Currently, MSAR Passport holders are allowed to remain for 90 days or six months without a visa in the 27 EU member countries. These countries are: Denmark, Belgium, Lithuania, Spain, Hungary, Greece, Poland, Finland, France, Latvia, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Ireland, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovakia, 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

Macao has remained on good terms with Portugal since the establishment of the MSAR. It has established the Macao Economic and Trade Office in Lisbon, further strengthening the relationship between Portugal and Macao. The 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, 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 series of specific cooperation protocols with Portugal, covering administration and justice, medicine and hygiene, science and technology, sports and auditing have enhanced cooperation and communication between the two sides and promoted greater cooperation between Macao and Portugal in the areas of economics, finance, science, technology, culture, internal public security and justice.

Macao's imports from Portugal during 2012 totalled 238 million patacas, an increase of 28.6 percent over the 2011 figure; whereas its exports to Portugal increased by 50.2 percent from 2011, to 1.649 million patacas.

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.

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 United States is Macao's largest export market. The total value of Macao's gross exports during 2012 was 8.16 billion patacas; of these, gross exports to the United States accounted for 507 million patacas, 8.8 percent less than in 2011 figure. Macao's total imports from the United States were valued at 3.68 billion patacas, representing a decrease of 1.39 percent over 2011.

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 People's 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 – Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and Timor-Leste – 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. During the Second Ministerial Meeting, the Entrepreneurs Meeting for Commercial and Economic Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries, bilateral meetings between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries, and an exhibition on the forum's achievements were also held.

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.

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.

During 2006, the Government also remained committed to strengthening its relations with East Asia, particularly Southeast Asian countries, for the enhancement of cooperation in areas such as the economy and tourism. From the establishment of the MSAR Government to the end of 2006, the first and second Chief Executive, Edmund Ho Hau Wah led delegations to countries including Singapore, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. In 2007, he made further visits to Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. In January 2011, the incumbent Chief Executive Chui Sai On led a delegation for an official visit to Singapore.



Signing agreements

With support and assistance from the Central People's Government, the MSAR Government strives to pursue mutual exemption from visa requirements with many other countries and regions. By April 2013, a total of 104 countries and regions had granted visa-free access or visas on arrival to holders of Macao SAR Passports.

