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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 March 2019, a total of 141 countries and regions had agreed to grant visa-free access or visas on arrival to holders of Macao SAR Passports (see Appendix 9, "Visa-free Access for Holders of Macao SAR Passports and Travel Permits", for more details). In addition, 14 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 79 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 2018, a total of 90 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, Mozambique, the Philippines and Portugal are the four countries (in alphabetical order, similarly hereinafter) 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: 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, 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.)

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

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: 1. 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 2. 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 delegation member of the Central People's Government. 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.

Following the establishment of the MSAR, Macao's participation in international activities of non-governmental organisations should fall within the sphere of Macao's autonomous affairs. Hence, such participation is left to Macao's own discretion, and according to its needs.

During 2018, Macao attended several international conferences as a member of Central People's Government delegations, including:

- The Third Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations Human Rights Council;
- The 41st Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- The 107th Session of the International Labour Conference;

- The Third Session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy;
- Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation;
- Universal Postal Union Extraordinary Congress 2018; and
- The International Telecommunication Union Plenipotentiary Conference 2018.

Macao also attended:

- The 13th Annual Conference of the International Academy of CIO;
- The 25th Meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Public Key Directory;
- The 22nd EU-Macao Joint Committee Meeting;
- The Fifth Meeting of Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting;
- The Sixth Session of the Committee on Statistics, UNESCAP;
- The World Investment Forum 2018;
- The 2018 Traditional Medicine International Cooperation Forum (Macao);
- Annual events of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WB);
- The 2018 General Assembly of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO);
- The 50th Session of the ESCAP/ World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Typhoon Committee; and
- The 72nd Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee.

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 2018, 628 multilateral treaties were applicable to Macao: 60 treaties on foreign affairs and defence; 15 on civil aviation; 10 on customs; 12 on drugs; eight on economics and finance; seven on education, science, technology, culture and sport; 26 on the environment and conservation; six on health; 17 on human rights; nine on intellectual property; 14 on international crime; two on international trade; 36 on labour; 339 on maritime affairs; 10 on private international law; three on road traffic; nine on postal affairs and telecommunications; and 45 on the establishment of international governmental organisations (see Appendix 11, "Multilateral Treaties Applicable to the Macao SAR", for details).

In 2018, the Law Reform and International Law Bureau commented on 11 international treaties or amendments. The bureau also received notifications from the Central People's Government regarding 34 international instruments applicable to the MSAR: eight multilateral treaties and 26 UN Security Council resolutions and/or sanction lists.

The Law Reform and International Law Bureau announced 52 international documents: 18 multilateral treaties, five bilateral treaties and 29 UN Security Council resolutions (with seven instruments translated into Portuguese). In addition, the Law Reform and International Law Bureau submitted regular compliance reports or follow-up reports on human right treaties applicable to Macao to the United Nations human rights treaty bodies and questionnaire responses to international organisations. It also provided information to other departments, assisting them in writing the reports required by the international organisations.

The Law Reform and International Law Bureau sent delegates to attend or take part in five international conferences and activities.

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 22 such sessions have been held to date.

Cooperative projects between EU and Macao included: Training for the Tourism Industry (1999-2001); European Programme Scheme (1999-2001); Services Development Programme (1999-2001); Asia-Invest Programme (2001 and 2002); EU-Macao Legal Cooperation Programme: Phase One (2002-2007), Phase Two (2010-2013) and Phase Three (2016-2019); Immigration Services Training Programme (2006-2007); EU Business Information Cooperative Programme (2009-2012); Chinese-Portuguese Translation and Interpretation Training Programme (2010-2014); the EU Academic Programme (2012-2016); Chinese-Portuguese Translation and Interpretation Training Cooperation (2016-2020); and Horizon 2020 (2016-2020).

Other 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.

The Business Cooperation Centre of Enterprise Europe Network Central China Macao Office (EENCC Macao Office) has provided useful information about Europe to SMEs in Macao, Hong Kong, the Pearl River Delta and neighbouring regions.

In 2018, the total value of Macao's exports to the EU was 209 million patacas, representing an increase of 10.6 percent over 2017; while imports from the EU were worth 22.53 billion patacas, 18.01 percent more than in 2017.

Visa-free Access

Currently, MSAR Passport holders are allowed to remain for 90 days or six months without a visa in the 28 EU member countries. These countries are: Denmark, Belgium, Lithuania, Spain, Hungary, Greece, Croatia, 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-term Chief Executive Edmund Ho Hau Wah led delegations to visit Portugal, France, Belgium and Germany in 2000, 2001 and 2004. During 2006, Edmund Ho Hau Wah 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.

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, Chief Executive Chui Sai On led a delegation to Portugal, to deepen the friendship as well as trade, economic, social and cultural cooperation between Macao and Portugal. In September 2016, Chief Executive Chui Sai On led a delegation to Portugal. The two sides reached a consensus on strengthening economic and language training cooperation.

Macao's imports from Portugal during 2018 totalled 329 million patacas, representing an increase of 23.2 percent over the 2017 figure. Its exports to Portugal increased by 5,767.4.9 percent from 2017, to 24.25 million patacas.

Macao and the United States

Since the Handover, interactions 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 further consolidate ties between the two parties.

The total value of Macao's gross exports during 2018 was 12.19 billion patacas; of these, gross exports to the United States accounted for 129 million patacas, 30.6 percent less than in 2017. Macao's total imports from the United States were valued at 3.67 billion patacas, representing an increase of 10.6 percent over 2016.

Three US-based companies were granted casino concessions or sub-concessions after the liberalisation of the gaming industry.

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.

In the 12th and 13th Five-Year Plans, mainland China expressed explicit support for Macao's establishment of "One Centre, One Platform", the latter of which refers to a business and trade cooperation and services platform for 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, the Second Ministerial Meeting of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries was held in Macao, 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 Meeting of Entrepreneurs 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 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.

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-term Chief Executive, Edmund Ho Hau Wah, paid official visits to Mozambique and Brazil.

During 2018, the value of Macao's exports to Portuguese-speaking countries was 24.56 million patacas, while imports from Portuguese-speaking countries were worth 790 million patacas.

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

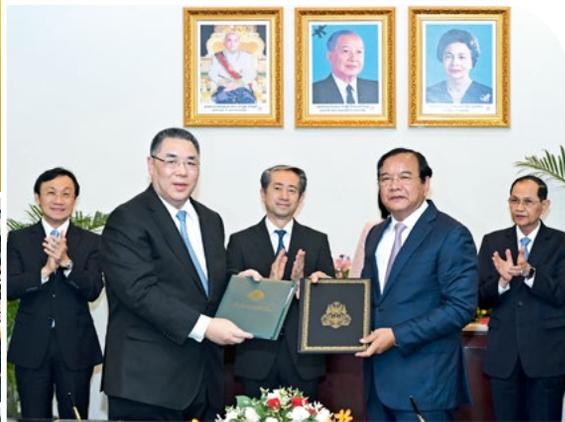
In 2018, Chief Executive Chui Sai On led a delegation to Cambodia and Thailand. The visits helped Macao to leverage its unique advantages in supporting the "Belt and Road" initiative, as well as to boost Macao's adequate economic diversification, and foster youth development.





CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S VISITS TO CAMBODIA AND THAILAND





Chief Executive Chui Sai On led a delegation to Phnom Penh in Cambodia and Bangkok in Thailand from 7 to 11 May, to meet with leaders and senior officials of the two countries, and participated in various activities held by the MSAR Government.

The Chief Executive described the visits as successful and fruitful. Through the visits, Macao could leverage its unique advantages in supporting the “Belt and Road” initiative, whilst promoting sustainable diversification and nurturing the growth and success of the younger generation.

