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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 the economy, 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. As of April 2025, a total of 148 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 82 countries and regions (see Appendix 10, "Countries/Territories Granted Visa-free Access by the Macao SAR", for 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 February 2025, 86 countries had reached agreements with the Central People's Government on establishing consular services in the Macao SAR or had extended the duties of their consulates general in the Hong Kong SAR to include the Macao SAR, 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-nine 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, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, 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, Panama, Peru, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Republic of Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. (Note: Antigua and Barbuda, Samoa, the Bahamas, Denmark and Greece 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.)

Five countries have appointed honorary consuls to Macao: Estonia, Nigeria, Peru, Tanzania and the United Kingdom.

Eighteen countries with honorary consulates in Hong Kong cover or extend services to Macao: Cyprus, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iceland, Kenya, Lithuania, Maldives, Morocco, Namibia, Norway, Rwanda, San Marino, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sudan 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 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”. Hence, 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 2024, Macao attended several international virtual conferences as a member of China’s government delegation, including:

- The Kimberley Process Plenary 2024;
- The 112th Session of the International Labour Conference;
- The 2024 Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group;
- The 67th Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs;
- The 2024 Migration Management Cooperation Sub-forum of the Global Public Security Cooperation Forum (Lianyungang);
- The Autumn Session of the Universal Postal Union Council of Administration;
- The 14th Session of Air Navigation Conference of the International Civil Aviation Organization;
- The 29th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
- The 19th Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol; and
- The 6th Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement.

Also, under the name “Macao, China”, Macao attended virtual international conferences including:

- The Conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific;
- The 12th Forum of Presidents of the Supreme Courts of Justice of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and Territories;
- The 16th Meeting of the Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS);
- The 36th Joint Meeting of the UN Tourism Commission for East Asia and the Pacific &

the UN Tourism Commission for South Asia and First UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Asia and the Pacific;

- The 2024 Annual Meeting of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering;
- The Fourth United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review;
- The Asia-Pacific Joint Group Meeting;
- The 81st Marine Environment Protection Committee Meeting of the International Maritime Organization; and
- The 48th Session of the Management Committee of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (MC-48).

International Treaties

Article 138 of the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region 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 2024, 761 multilateral treaties were applicable to Macao: 69 treaties on foreign affairs and national defence; 15 on civil aviation; 10 on customs; 28 on drugs; eight on economics and finance; 10 on education, science and technology, culture and sport; 47 on the environment and conservation; six on health; 20 on human rights; nine on intellectual property; 16 on international crime; two on international trade; 34 on labour; 403 on maritime affairs; 10 on private international law; five on road traffic; 13 on postal affairs and telecommunications; and 56 on the establishment of international governmental organisations (see Appendix 11, "Multilateral Treaties Applicable to the Macao SAR", for details).

In 2024, the Legal Affairs Bureau commented on 16 international treaties or amendments to treaties. The Government also received notifications from the Central People's Government regarding 29 international instruments applicable to the MSAR: 13 multilateral treaties and 16 UN Security Council resolutions and/or sanction lists. It promulgated 29 international documents: 11 multilateral treaties, one bilateral treaty and 17 UN Security Council resolutions or sanction lists.

In addition, the MSAR Government has continued to follow up regarding the implementation of international treaties applicable to Macao, including through providing requested compliance materials, responses to questionnaires or feedback to international organisations such as the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies and the Hague Conference on Private International Law. Regarding human rights review, an MSAR Government delegation attended the Fourth United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review in January and July 2024, as well as the plenary session on the Universal Periodic Review Working Group Report on the approval of China's participation in the fourth round of the UPR by the Human Rights Council. This marks China's fourth participation in the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review, following its previous reviews in 2009, 2013, and 2018.

The Legal Affairs Bureau attended or took part in 16 international conferences and events, as

a member of the Central People's Government delegations or under the name of "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 areas including industry, investment, science and technology, energy, information, and training. A joint committee established by both parties holds meetings to review the implementation of the agreement and discuss its future development. The meeting venue alternates between Macao and Brussels, and 23 such sessions have been held to date.

Cooperative projects between EU and Macao have 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 Programme (2013-2016); 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.

In 2024, the total value of Macao's exports to the EU was 220 million patacas, while imports from the EU were worth 37.61 billion patacas.

To enhance relations with EU member countries including by promoting economic and trade, education and cultural 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, the third- and fourth-term Chief Executive Chui Sai On led a delegation to the EU.

In 2023, the Chief Executive of the fifth Macao SAR Government, Ho Iat Seng, led a delegation to Portugal, Luxembourg and Belgium.

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 a 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 to 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.

In 2010, 2016 and 2019, the third- and fourth-term Chief Executive Chui Sai On led delegations to Portugal.

Macao’s imports from Portugal during 2024 totalled 300 million patacas, and its exports to Portugal totalled 2.37 million patacas.

Macao and the United States

Since the Handover, both Macao and the United States have expressed readiness to promote trade and investment.

The value of Macao’s gross exports to the United States during 2024 totalled 300 million patacas, while total imports from the United States were valued at 7.52 billion patacas.

After the liberalisation of Macao’s gaming industry, three US-based companies were granted casino concessions.

Macao and Portuguese-speaking Countries

Besides its historical close links with Portugal, Macao also has traditional and special relationships with other members of the Portuguese-speaking 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 a platform for economic and trading cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

In the 12th, 13th and 14th Five-Year Plans, the Chinese mainland expressed explicit support for Macao’s establishment of “One Centre, One Platform, One Base”, with “One Platform” referring to its role as a platform for business and trade cooperation and services 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. 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 Cooperation 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.

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.

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. 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-sized 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 various 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.

In April 2022, the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries was held in Beijing and Macao, both online and offline, under the theme “Cooperate to combat the pandemic, Collaborate for common development”, with a congratulatory video message from Premier Li Keqiang. The Minister of Commerce and the ministers of the eight Portuguese-speaking countries signed a joint declaration and officially admitted Equatorial Guinea to the forum.

In April 2024, the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation Between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao) was held in Macao. Government representatives of the People’s Republic of China and government delegations from nine Portuguese-

speaking countries – Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Timor-Leste, attended the conference. The ministers from the participating countries signed the Strategic Plan for Economic and Trade Cooperation (2024-2027).

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 2024, the value of Macao’s exports to Portuguese-speaking countries was 4.97 million patacas, while imports from Portuguese-speaking countries were worth 1.34 billion patacas.

Engagement in and Support for the “Belt and Road” Initiative

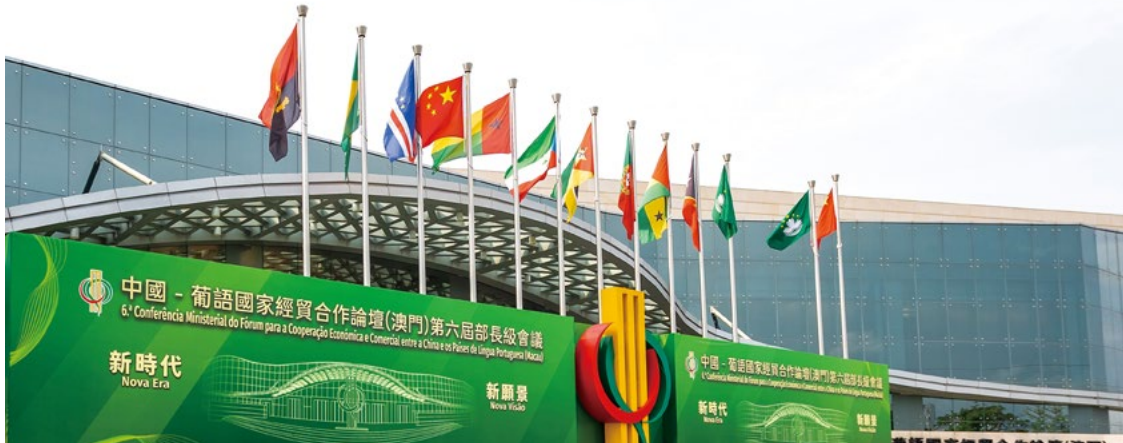
Macao actively participates in and supports the development of the “Belt and Road” initiative to build a “Belt and Road” functional platform. Adhering to the needs of the nation and Macao’s advantages, Macao fully leverages its platform advantage as an intersection of the country’s dual economic cycle, and establishes diversified cooperation in investment and financing, with exhibitions and conventions as an entry point, while facilitating Macao’s economic and trade relations with countries and regions along the “Belt and Road”.

In 2024, the value of Macao’s exports to “Belt and Road” countries/regions was 670 million patacas, while imports from “Belt and Road” countries/regions were worth 29.52 billion patacas.

The Government also remains committed to strengthening its relations with East Asia, particularly Southeast Asian countries. The first- and second-term Chief Executive, Edmund Ho Hau Wah, led delegations to countries including Singapore, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia. The third- and fourth-term Chief Executive Chui Sai On led MSAR Government delegations for visits to Singapore, Cambodia and Thailand.



Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation Between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries





The Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (Macao), was initially established in October 2003 in Macao, hosted by the Central Government of the People's Republic of China (Ministry of Commerce) and organised by the Macao Special Administrative Region Government. The nine Portuguese-speaking countries participating in the Forum are Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Timor-Leste. The Sixth Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries was held in Macao from 21 April to 23 April 2024. The meeting identified the key areas and modes of economic and trade cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries for the next three years, further enhancing Macao's role as a commercial and trade cooperation services platform between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries. All participating countries jointly signed the Strategic Plan for Economic and Trade Cooperation (2024–2027).