

PRESS RELEASE

ECTAA and Macao strengthen tourism ties between Europe and Asia

Macao, 3 June 2025 – ECTAA, the European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Association, is holding this week its 2025 Summit, from 2nd to 5th of June in Macao, as part of its partnership of Preferred Destination for 2025 with the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO). This strategic collaboration aims to intensify tourist flows between Europe and Asia, positioning Macao as a destination of choice for European travellers.

The meeting is taking place at the Grand Lisboa Palace Resort and brought together leaders of European travel agencies, representatives of national associations from across Europe, as well as institutional partners and local authorities. The presence of Mrs Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, Director of the MGTO, and Mr Tai Kin Ip, Secretary for Economy and Finance of the Macao SAR, demonstrate the territory's strong commitment to diversifying its international customer base and strengthening cooperation with European markets.

One of the highlights of the meeting will be a round table discussion on tourism opportunities between Europe and Asia, focusing on new market dynamics. The speakers – Frank Gulin, Tiago Brito, Nigel Wong and Mary Huang, from European national tourism organisations, Asian professional associations and the private sector – will share their vision of the changes underway: the rise of independent travel, the search for authentic cultural experiences, growing demands for sustainability, and the need for European destinations to adapt their communication to the new expectations of Asian travellers. The discussions should show a convergence of interests: on the one hand, European destinations keen to win back the Chinese market; on the other, Asian destinations seeking to diversify their customer base and raise their profile in Europe.

“Cooperation between Europe and Asia in the travel sector is obvious, but it requires a new approach based on better mutual understanding, tailored products and concrete collaboration between professionals,” said Frank Oostdam, President of ECTAA in a press conference. “The partnership with Macao illustrates this desire to go beyond intentions and create real connections between markets.”

Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, remarked at the same occasion that “it is a great opportunity for Macao to welcome this significant group of the European tourism industry, especially now that a new wave of tourism development is emerging, highlighting that travel agencies are key partners that MGTO wants to work with to continue to increase visitor flows from Europe.”

The meeting is also providing an opportunity for a B2B session between 30 European delegates and more than 50 local companies, facilitating the emergence of new business partnerships.

Although Europe is not yet one of Macao's main source markets, this partnership aims to reverse this trend. With a high-end hotel offering (150 establishments, 24 Forbes 5-star hotels by 2025), a rich cultural heritage, an internationally recognised gastronomic scene (UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy), and a solid tourism infrastructure, Macao has all the assets to attract a demanding European clientele.

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About ECTAA

ECTAA represents the interests of 80,000 travel agents and tour operators in Europe, which provide consultancy and sell transport, accommodation, leisure and other tourism services as well as combined products to leisure and business customers. For media inquiries, please contact: Eric Drésin: edresin@ectaa.eu (+32 478 844 513).