

PORTUGUESE LEGACY IS NOT ENOUGH TO ATTRACT TOURISTS TO MACAU



Tourism expert Zeng Zhonglu claims that the Portuguese legacy is not enough to “sell” Macau to tourists. The territory must discover other historical narratives to promote its tourism products and emphasize what sets it apart.

“Macau has more than 400 years of a culture influenced by the Portuguese and Chinese. This culture is unique. It is different”, the professor of the Pedagogical and Scientific Centre in the Fields of Gaming and Tourism at the Macau Polytechnic Institute (IPM) said.

“Macau has many buildings whose architecture has Portuguese influences, but this is not enough”, the scholar stressed on the other hand.

The Chinese special administrative region “has to study the 400 years of history and find more narratives to develop other tourism products,” he explained.

Zeng Zhonglu gave an example: “For 400 years, Macau represented for many Chinese the only exit towards foreign countries in the whole of China. In those 400 years, many famous Chinese have left Macau for other countries. Macau must unearth those stories”.

The idea is to create added value in tourism products: “If the tourism product has a story, visitors find that more valuable. As such, Macau needs to find the meanings of these products and effective methods to communicate those to visitors. By doing this, Macau can attract cultural tourists to its artistic products, rather than just food, drink and shopping.”

Macau, the gambling capital of the world, in the year before COVID-19, managed to attract nearly 40 million visitors.

Apart from the casinos and luxury hotels, the historic center carrying the Portuguese legacy is one of the most popular spots for tourists. **The historic center of Macau was added to the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 15 July 2005.**

This classification includes several historical buildings built by the Portuguese, including the building and square of the Leal Senado, the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, the churches of Sé, São Lourenço, Santo António, Santo Agostinho, São Domingos, the Ruins of São Paulo and Largo da Companhia de Jesus or the Guia fortress.

After more than 400 years under Portuguese rule, Macau became a special administrative region of China on 20 December 1999.

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