



Organisation of World Heritage Cities growing despite pandemic

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On Friday, 7 August, OWHC' s China Secretariat will welcome a new member - Macao.

OWHC will welcome its new associate at a special ceremony. The event, held online due to the pandemic, will be attended by the Mayor of Krakow Jacek Majchrowski, who has been acting as the OWHC President since June 2019, and the Mayor's Plenipotentiary for Culture Robert Piaskowski.

In his special welcome video recorded for the invited guests, Mayor Majchrowski highlights the unique character of the city, which combines influences of Western and Eastern cultures. Macao was the first and longest existing European colony in China. It was here that the first Portuguese merchants landed in the 16th century. Over time, they managed to significantly strengthen their commercial and political position. Traces of Portuguese presence on the peninsula are still clearly visible today in the local culture, architecture, religion and cuisine. The unique mix of Chinese and Portuguese influence shaping Macao's historic center guided UNESCO's decision to inscribe the area onto the World Heritage List in 2005 as the 31st Chinese site.

Today, Macao is one of the richest regions in the world. Being one of the two (alongside Hong Kong) Special Administrative Regions of the People's Republic of China, the city is a centre of the clothing industry, financial services and a magnet for tourists interested not only in the beauty and rich heritage of the city but also in numerous... casinos.

Macao's accession to the OWHC is the first success of the recently established Chinese Secretariat. Its creation is due to the country's great importance to world heritage. Currently, there are already 55 Chinese sites and sites of exceptional natural interest on the UNESCO list. A further 60 are waiting to be entered, making China the second country with the highest number of entries on the list after Italy.

By joining the OWHC Macao enters a group of cities that treat their heritage as something more than just a lucrative tourist attraction. For the OWHC members caring for places, buildings and artifacts comes hand in hand with celebrating local legends, traditions and values. Macao, with the rich heritage of a meeting place of cultures, will undoubtedly be a valuable addition to the organisation. Moreover, the local experience in dealing with such current problems as counteracting the negative impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry, will certainly enrich the discussions within this international body.