European Union outlines positive balance of rights and freedoms of Macao, but again defends the need for the Chief Executive to be elected by universal suffrage

Russian hackers may be trying to interfere with the presidential elections in France - in this program we look at the online campaign against Macron and the impact it can have on the second round of the elections

European Union close to achieving 2020 target in the proportion of young people who have completed higher education - in this issue we look at cases of success and failure in education

Welcome to the Europe Magazine,

The European Union has again set a positive balance of respect for the rights and freedoms of citizens in Macao. Nevertheless, Brussels reaffirms that the population should be able to directly elect the Chief Executive.

These are some of the notes in the latest annual report of the European Commission on Macao. In the document for 2016, an assessment is also made of bilateral economic relations, affected by the recession that hit the territory last year, as the radio journalist André Jegundo tells us:

RM – André Jegundo:
"European Union exports to Macao declined more than 20 percent in 2016 to 603 million euros, while imports from Macao fell 6.5 percent to 86 million euros. Result, says the EU annual report, of the sharp recession affecting the local economy.
Regarding the economic situation, the report highlights the rising costs of living and housing that the local population faces. And also the severe shortage of labor, aggravated by the fact that the importation of workers has become an increasingly politically sensitive subject.
In 2016, the European institutions say that the 'one country two systems' principle has continued to work and that citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms are respected, despite growing concerns about self-censorship in the Chinese media.
The Union again recommends greater popular involvement in the election of the Chief Executive, recognizing that the Basic Law does not contemplate the possibility of universal suffrage.
Concern also focused on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, especially in access to the labor market and health care. "

Beijing criticized the report. Following this reaction, Macao said that "the Macao Special Administrative Region system works effectively on the basis of the Constitution and the Basic Law," and that "the guarantee of Macao citizens' rights under the law goes beyond any conditions Ever recorded in the history of

Macau. " Moreover, the Government says that "political stability, economic development, social harmony and the guarantee of the rights of the population of Macau according to the law surpass any conditions ever recorded in the history of Macau." The government of the region accuses Brussels of fabricating "irresponsible comments" that are not in accordance with the facts and says that the document constitutes an "interference in the internal politics of China".

On the phone from Brussels is the resident commentator of Magazine Europe, Victor Ângelo, an international consultant based in the Belgian capital.

Hello Victor, does it make sense for Brussels to continue to send this message to Macao regarding the method of election of the Chief Executive?

RM – Victor Ângelo:
"I think we have to start by saying that the report, in essence, the report is very positive. That is, at least, the way I read the report. It does, of course, make one or two observations ... But essentially the image it conveys to the European Parliament about Macao is an image of an open society with a relatively liberal and certainly very democratic political environment compared to other situations and, In particular, much more democratic than in the neighborhood. The method of election is very much in accordance with the Basic Law of Macau and what had been agreed with Portugal, so I do not see any lack of respect for the Basic Law. Clearly it is another way of doing things. It is also clear that the history of Macau is a story that needs a smooth transition and that means that the choice of who will be responsible for the governance of Macao has to be done with great care. In fact, there are a number of balances that need to be maintained and I think the Chinese position is a position of great prudence. To a certain extent, it can be said that great prudence does not necessarily rhyme with democracy, but I think that for the majority of the population of Macao, the method that is followed is an acceptable method and that is important."

The report also mentions the issue of money laundering in a region marked by gambling ... And also here are acknowledged the efforts of Macau ...

RM – Victor Ângelo:
"I think the position of the European Union on this issue is a positive one. It has seen an evolution, in the sense of identifying who plays and the type of resources that are put on the table - that is, it is recognized in Brussels that there is progress regarding the rules of the game. And so the fight against money laundering has intensified in Macao and this is recognized by the report. "

Another point in the report of the European Commission is the lack of skilled labor in Macao. The issue is politically sensitive on the ground, with the government insisting on giving priority to local workers and businesses to complain about the lack of

adequate professionals to expand business. Facilitating the entry of European professionals into the Macao labor market could help increase the competitiveness of the local economy?

RM - Victor Ângelo:
"The fundamental objective of the Government is the diversification of the economy and it is going through a new type of managers, more technical staffs, by another type of specialists. And it is clear that it will not always be possible for companies investing in Macao to find such staff in Macao's economy and society. Therefore, there has to be some flexibility with regard to work permits. On the other hand, the Government is also concerned about promoting the local workforce and here there is a balance that the Government has to look for, that is, immigration policy is always a very sensitive policy, both in Macau and in other parts of the world, including in Europe. So, on the one hand, yes, in terms of diversification, it is important that there is another kind of cadres and, if these tables are not available in Macao, they can come from other parts of the world, including from Europe. On the other hand, there is a question of balance and it must be borne in mind that, in reality, the Macao Government responds, first and foremost, to the people of Macao and the ambitions and dreams, so to speak, of the Local cadres, and have to be aware of such concerns. "

There are suspicions that Russian hackers may have tried to interfere in the presidential elections in France. This is what a report from security company Trend Micro, released last week by the international press, journalist Hugo Pinto says:

RM - Hugo Pinto:
"E-mails to steal personal data, malicious software, and fake domains are some of the tools that have been used in cyber attacks by members of Emmanuel Macron's campaign team.
The independent candidate was ahead in the first round of the French presidential election, followed by the far-right candidate Marine Le Pen. The two will face the second round, scheduled for May 7.
According to security firm Trend Micro, behind the cyber attacks will be Russian hackers. Hackers who belong to the same group that allegedly interfered in the US elections.
A spokeswoman for France's national cyber-security official confirmed that there were in fact several attacks on the accounts of Macron team workers and back office systems, but said it was difficult to identify with certainty who the authors were .
Russia has denied being behind the attacks on Emmanuel Macron. "

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Victor, are there certainties that it was Russian hackers attacking Macron's candidacy?
RM - Victor Ângelo -
But who would be interested in this narrative?
RM - Victor Ângelo -
What impact does this news - and what is being done - have on the second round of the French presidential elections?
RM - Victor Ângelo -
Last week also spoke about the impact of the French elections on the European economy and the UK post-Brexit. Some analysts believe that a Macron victory may help the French economy, but it may also be beneficial to the UK at the level of the Brexit negotiations, as the departure of the European Union seems not to have had so much influence on the Urns in France ... How do you rate this reading?
RM – Victor Ângelo –
The number of Europeans who have completed higher education continues to increase. According to a Eurostat report, last year 13 of the 28 EU Member States already met the target set for 2020. This is what the journalist from Radio Macau, João Picanço, tells us:
RM - João Picanço - higher education
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The target is set: in 2020, at least 40 per cent of EU citizens between the ages of 30 and 34 must have completed a college course.
13 member states have already done so - among them are Lithuania, Luxembourg and Cyprus, which lead the ranking. In these countries, more than half of the population in this age group has completed higher education. On the opposite side of the table are countries like Romania, Spain and Malta.
The bloc's average rose from 23.6 percent in 2002 to 39.1 percent last year.
Another target set by Brussels is that, by 2020, the proportion of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who drop out is less than 10 per cent. There have also been improvements here.
Last year, the countries with the lowest drop-out rates at these ages are Croatia, Lithuania and Slovenia. The worst-ranked countries in this area are Romania, Spain and Malta. +++++++++++++++++
_The data points to a significant investment in education. Is this one of the milestones of the European Union?
RM - Victor Ângelo -
Finland is one of the countries that has already reached the 2020 targets ... And it is a well-known case of educational success. How is this success explained?
RM - Victor Ângelo -
On the other hand, Portugal is among the least well-positioned countries in terms of these goals ... It is the fourth worst in the percentage of citizens aged 30 to 34 who have completed higher education. And the tenth worst to the level of early abandonment of these courses ... What has failed?

The analysis of Victor Ângelo, resident commentator of Magazine Europe.

The closing, a historic house that crossed an ocean: an American artist sent from the United States to Germany, the wooden house that once belonged to Rosa Parks, a civic rights activist who in 1955 refused to give up the place on the bus In favor of a white man.

The house, which was in danger of being demolished in Detroit, arrived in Germany in two thousand pieces and was rebuilt at the back of Ryan Mendoza's Berlin studio. The American artist, who has been working on a home renovation project in Detroit, understands that the house is special because it was where Rosa Parks eventually found refuge. Visitors can observe the house, but only from outside - the artist says that entering is prohibited, out of respect for the activist.

See you next week!