

Mainland Affairs Council Responds to Mainland China Opening Tourist Travel to Taiwan

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Mainland China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism announced on April 28 that it will first allow Fujian residents to resume travel to Matsu, and that group travel for Fujian residents to Taiwan shall be reinstated once direct maritime passenger services from Pingtan to Taiwan are restored. The response of the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) is as follows:

I. The Taiwan government previously announced plans concerning the resumption of cross-Strait tourism on August 24, 2023. The relevant agencies have completed all preparations necessary for the return of mainland Chinese tourists and are ready to proceed once mainland China lifts restrictions.

II. In response to Taiwan's proposed plans to fully resume two-way group tours across the Taiwan Strait, the mainland Chinese authorities not only imposed additional conditions but also significantly narrowed the scope of tourists to only Fujian residents to travel to Matsu, not the Kinmen or Penghu areas. It is unclear why resuming tour group access to Taiwan is contingent upon reactivation of the Pingtan maritime route, why travel is limited exclusively to residents in Fujian and not other parts of mainland China. Such arrangements do not conform to the principle of reciprocal opening, nor do they reflect the norm for tourism and travel. The MAC, the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, and other authorities shall investigate these issues further before coming to any decisions. This is to ensure that policy is practical and that cross-Strait exchanges resume

in a healthy and orderly manner.