



**MADRID RESIDENTS** sign their names on a statue of a giant panda, which is the symbol of Chengdu.  
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## Global connections

Chengdu, a megacity in western China, is expanding its worldwide friendship circle to transform itself into an international metropolis.

A media delegation from the city made a trip to Pecs, Hungary in January, to strengthen mutual understanding between the two cities.

Chengdu and Pecs signed a memorandum of understanding in 2014 to establish friendly and cooperative relations. Zsolt Pava, mayor of Pecs, said he was looking forward to conducting further cooperation with Chengdu.

"We welcome tourists and businesspeople from Chengdu and I am looking forward to establishing a formal sister-city relationship with Chengdu," he said at the signing.

He said the city will attend the Chengdu Global Innovation and Entrepreneurship Fair in May to seek further cooperation opportunities.

Jozsef Bodis, the president of the University of Pecs, said the institution will send representatives to join the Pecs delegation at the Chengdu event.

He said that the two cities have great potential to cooperate in fields such as teaching, scientific research and the commercialization of scientific research achievements.

With its opening-up to the world, Chengdu has established sister-city relationships with an increasing number of international cities in recent years.

Currently it has 32 sister cities and has established friendly cooperation agreements with another 41 cities.

Chengdu won the International Friendship-City Exchange and Cooperation Award for the third consecutive time during a recent selection by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and China International Friendship Cities Association.

The award is the highest honor in the country for cities that have contributed to friendly exchanges and cooperation between China and the world.

# ARTS EXCHANGES BOOST PARTNERSHIP

Chengdu and Madrid co-host events to celebrate friendly relations and cultural heritage

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Chengdu has been making a name for itself in Western countries in recent years, as the city has moved to strengthen its cultural exchanges with the rest of the world.

Chengdu Week was held in Madrid in January as a major activity of the 2017 Happy Spring Festival in Spain, offering locals a feast of typical cultural elements from Chengdu.

The Happy Spring Festival is an annual event held by the Chinese embassy in Spain to celebrate the traditional Spring Festival holiday with overseas Chinese, locals and other visitors.

It was the first time that the Chinese embassy specially introduced a city to the traditional Lunar New Year celebration.

During the festival, classic regional art forms such as paper cutting, shadow plays and face changing opera performances were on display at the famous Plaza Mayor in Madrid.

"The performances are so amazing that I want to buy a ticket to Chengdu right now," said Manuela Carmena, mayor of Madrid, during the event.



**ARTISTS FROM CHENGDU** present various folk performances in Madrid. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Visitors could also have a taste of Chengdu's local snacks, such as long wontons, zhong dumplings, dandan noodles and baked egg cake.

Mayor Carmena said that the two cities share similarities in many aspects and she looks forward to deepening mutual exchanges and cooperation with Chengdu in more fields.

"Madrid is a city of tourism and arts, while Chengdu also boasts rich historical and cultural heritage. The two cities can have further exchanges in tourism and culture," she said.

Guillermo Ospina, who traveled to Madrid from New York for a vacation, was attracted by the interesting performances at the Plaza.

"It's so fascinating," said Ospina, holding a Chinese papercut in one hand and a pile of tourist handbooks

in the other. "I haven't been to China before. I want to go to China this year, and Chengdu must be my first stop," he said.

Ospina said he also hoped that such activities can be held in New York some day.

Jose Alberto, a journalist from Madrid, said he was pleased to report and experience such wonderful activities.

"The traditional Chengdu arts and the giant pandas made me fall in love with the city. I would like to help more people discover the city and its charm," he said.

Alberto said he is also interested in unique Sichuan cuisine.

Lyu Fan, Chinese ambassador to Spain, said the cooperation between Chengdu and Madrid holds great potential in fields such as tourism, the breeding of giant pandas and



automobile manufacturing.

Madrid's zoo held a naming ceremony on Dec 12 for its latest baby panda, a day before the opening ceremony of the Chengdu Week festivities.

The 5-month-old female panda was named Chulina. It is the first female giant panda to be born at the zoo. Its parents came from Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding in 2007.

Echoing Chengdu Week, the Madrid zoo held an art exhibition on giant pandas during the Happy Spring Festival. The exhibition displayed pictures and painted panda statues.

Chengdu has become more closely tied to Spain since a direct flight connecting Madrid and Chengdu was launched on Dec 17. A one-way trip takes about 13 hours.



## MOST OF THE GIANT PANDAS

living in overseas zoos are from the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding.

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