

Striving Towards a Modern Coastal Metropolis

# Foreign-Trade Charter Flight Launched from Ningbo to Budapest

By Jin Lu

A charter flight bound for Hungary's Budapest Ferenc Liszt International Airport took off from Ningbo Lishe International airport at 10:07AM on July 10<sup>th</sup>, carrying a delegation of 36 government officials and business representatives from Ningbo and Shanghai.

This is the first charter flight in China backed by the local government to help local entrepreneurs consolidate their ties with the European market.

## Regaining a Foothold in the European Market

"We have several in-person meetings with French companies scheduled for mid-July to discuss orders," said Yuan Lin, a manager with a garment exporter in Ningbo aboard the charter flight.

"July happens to be the start of a new season in fashion. We have brought a lot of new autumn and winter styles this time. I hope we can secure old clients' orders and gain new clients at the same time," Yuan added.

Many innovative home products manufactured by Ningbo Rollmax Shutter Component Co., Ltd., such as smart window accessories and electric clothes racks, are bestsellers in overseas markets. Ding Yandong, general manager of the company, immediately signed up after he heard about the charter flight. Ding said he planned to go to Poland to renew orders with regular clients.

Sun Chonglong, executive director of Ningbo Lianbang Changyun International Trade Co., Ltd., will be signing a general agent agreement in person with two beef factories in Hungary.

"After this agreement is signed, our company will increase beef imports to China by ¥350 million (\$52.16 million) annually," Sun said. "This trip is of great significance. It shows that the government is actively helping enterprises maintain and strengthen business ties with foreign clients and factories."



The charter flight bound for Hungary took off from Ningbo Lishe International airport.

[Photo by Yan Long]

## Ningbo Supports SMEs

The charter flight was organized with the support of many local government departments in Ningbo, including the Municipal Commercial Bureau, Foreign Affairs Office, Health Commission, and Public Security Bureau.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many Ningbo importers and exporters could not have regular in-person talks or international visits with their partners. Communication was reduced to video conferencing, phone calls, and emails. However, these modes have their limitations. In addition, given global port congestions, in-transit orders face possible cancellations.

As a result, Ningbo exporters have seen a decline in their overseas orders. Since international flights are few and far in between, the local government decided to organize a charter flight, explained Fei Jianming, an official from the Ningbo Municipal Bureau of Commerce leading the delegation.

Ningbo has taken a series of measures to support local foreign trade SMEs, such as facilitating the entry and exit of import-export companies' staff and introducing new policies to stimulate high-quality development of the export sector. Sending a business delegation via the charter flight is yet another move that shows Ningbo's determination to help enterprises secure orders and expand the international market, while achieving faster economic recovery and growth.

For Chinese companies, especially those based in Zhejiang, the move will give them the confidence that the government stands ready to help out in challenging times.

## How to Apply for the Charter Flights

In addition to the Ningbo-Budapest-Hangzhou flight, another air charter, departing from Ningbo for Milan and eventually returning to Hangzhou, is scheduled for July 21 and 22.

If you have business to conduct overseas, how can you

apply for a seat on a chartered flight organized by the local government? Journalists from *Ningbo Times* interviewed officials from the Ningbo Municipal Bureau of Commerce to bring you the answers.

### Q1: What are the requirements for application?

A1: The application is open to any company based in China that needs to send staff overseas to conduct business talks for the purpose of market expansion.

### Q2: How can I apply for the charter flight?

A2: The Ningbo Municipal Bureau of Commerce will post the information on its WeChat account. Interested companies can log onto a miniprogram and fill out the forms before the deadline. The Commerce Bureau's staff will contact you after receiving the forms.

### Q3: After successful registration, what services will the local government provide?

A3: The government will help facilitate visa applications and offer discounted airfares in accordance with relevant regulations.

## Comments from the Ningbo Times Readers' Club

I heard about the charter flight from Ningbo to Budapest. It's very good news because it means that the government is actively taking a role in helping local businesses to restart after the pandemic, which brought a slowdown in international business. This could be a good start for the Ningbo economy since it has long-standing business partnerships with CEEC markets. This could also be a great opportunity for Europe as well, in terms of revamping the economy and initiating mutually-beneficial cooperation.

Hopefully, there will be more such charter flights to Europe. This way, the Zhejiang economy could improve its economic relations with European markets.

— Mattia Marchetti Aloisio, branding specialist at an export company in Ningbo.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Ningbo Enterprises Enjoy Tens of Millions of Tariff Concessions Thanks to RCEP

By Xu Zhuowei

"After the company resumed production, we managed to obtain the Certificates of Origin for 18 shipments of exported goods just in time, which are expected to bring us a tax discount of ¥200,000." On July 11, Mr. Hu, a sales representative of the international business department of Ningbo Zhongyuan Oujia Fishing Tackle Co., Ltd., showed the correspondent the RCEP Certificates of Origin issued by the Hangzhou Bay New Zone Customs, which is part of Ningbo Customs. He explained that with the RCEP Certificate of Origin, the brass tapes that his company exported to Japan could get nearly ¥10,000 of tariff concessions from Japan's customs.

On January 1, 2022, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) came into effect in China. In the past six months, the number of RCEP member states has continued to grow. As of now, RCEP has come into effect in 13 of the 15 signatory states. For Ningbo's exporters, this means saving "hard cash" on export tariffs.

Data shows that in the first half of this year, Ningbo Customs handled ¥4.4 billion of goods that were either issued the RCEP Certificate of Origin or claimed preferential import tariff rates. An accumulated ¥14.16 million of tariffs were reduced for imported products. Chinese goods bound for export are expected to enjoy a tariff reduction of ¥34.17 million.

Ningbo Zhonglin Foreign Trade Co., Ltd. is engaged in the import and export of primary plastic products. Its business partners are mostly in Southeast Asia. "Due to the pandemic and changes in the import and export policies of various countries at the start of this year, our company's business was negatively impacted. However, RCEP has allowed our company to get a 6.5% tariff reduction for raw materials, which applied to over ¥10 million yuan of our imports in the first half of this year," said a company representative excitedly.

Ningbo Customs has established an "RCEP inquiries center", published guides to explain RCEP policies, and held several seminars to let more companies find out about the benefits that RCEP could bring. "One-on-one" guidance is also available for companies that require additional assistance.

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## 双语汇 Different Tongues

### 去“阿拉的海”，尽享夏日清凉

By Dong Na

Blue, clear water, expensive artificial coconut trees, and exquisite beach chairs... At the super-large artificial beach of Our Sea Water Park, it feels just like being at Thailand's beautiful Pattaya.

碧蓝通透的水面、造价昂贵的仿真椰子树、精致的遮阳伞椅……来到“阿拉的海”超大面积的人工沙滩，仿佛置身于风情满满的芭提雅。

Our Sea Water Park opened in Xiangshan in June 2018. It was built with a total investment of about 680 million yuan and covers an area of about 200,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Since its opening, the Park has won many awards, such as "National

Water Park Best Innovation Award". Many tourists like to go to the Park to enjoy water-side fun in summer.

“阿拉的海”大型水上乐园于2018年6月在象山开园，该项目总投资约6.8亿元人民币，占地面积约20万平方米。开园至今，已荣获“全国水上乐园最佳创新奖”等多项大奖，是不少游客夏日玩水的好去处。

The Park is equipped with more than 30 world-class rides and facilities; it also hosts franchised restaurants, making it a modern destination where visitors can enjoy both exciting experiences and delicious food.

“阿拉的海”配备了30多项世界先进的游乐设施，还引入全品牌化运作的连锁餐饮等，是一个集美食、休闲、娱乐于一体的创新游乐项目。



Our Sea Water Park. /阿拉的海。

[Photo provided to Ningbo Times]

The Park's theme is inspired by the local maritime culture and Xiangshan's history and legends. With six original

mascots that symbolize the local culture, the Park blends the East China Sea's charm with fun water activities.

乐园以海洋文化为背景，结合象山历史传说，融入六个极具地域文化的主题IP人物，让游客在纵情戏水的同时体验奇幻的东海之旅。

