



## Press release

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# 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of bilateral relations: cooperation to reach new high point

**Within the framework of the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations between Switzerland and the People's Republic of China, a busy agenda is set to honour the longstanding partnership. High-level bilateral meetings, regular dialogues, intensive economic and scientific cooperation and finally a rich cultural program will characterize what already looks like a breakthrough year.**

The Swiss diplomatic missions in China aim to celebrate this year's jubilee by commemorating the past, showcase the diversity and maturity of the relations that have been built, and further deepen ties. On February 6<sup>th</sup> the Swiss Minister of Finance, Ms. Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, speaking from the residence of the Swiss Ambassador in Beijing, stated that following the farsighted decision of the Swiss diplomacy to recognize - only a few months from its inception - the People's Republic of China, mutual contacts have been consistent and proactive, resulting in the setting up of many milestones.

Such milestones have distinctive economic features. To name only two examples, the first joint venture between China and a foreign country was established with Schindler, a Swiss company. More recently, the FTA agreement was the first China concluded with a continental European country. As a result of the mutual commitment, the bilateral trade has been growing on an impressive pace, and nowadays China is Switzerland's third most important trade partner.

Switzerland is said to mark this Anniversary by also promoting others prominent features of the partnership with the Chinese counterpart. A good number of projects are under way to further deepen and strengthen the cooperation between the two countries.

It is well known that both Switzerland and China are innovative countries. Beyond institutional dialogues, private enterprises have paved the way for intensified exchanges in a multitude of fields, among which the scientific and technological sectors stand out. The modernity of the Swiss approach is also shown by the dynamism of its presence in China. Apart from the four official Swiss representations, around 1000 Swiss companies' subsidiaries are settled in China. These companies employ more than 200'000 people, mostly locals, furthering integration.

Another regular employer of Chinese workers, the Embassy of Switzerland in China and the consulates will take advantage of this year's underlying theme of the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to pursue the aim of fostering mutual cultural knowledge.

The landings of the Solar Impulse's plane in two Chinese cities, during its attempted world tour, alongside the Far East Tour of the renowned Basel Symphony Orchestra, and the exhibition "Geneva at the Heart of Time - The Origin of Swiss Watchmaking Culture" are a selection of the numerous occasions that will honour the long-standing Sino-Swiss relations.

It is worth mentioning the intensive communication efforts deployed to reach out to the public: a dedicated website and brochure are now available, while the Swiss representations' social media tools, that is their Weibo accounts and the Consulate of Shanghai's WeChat will be more active than ever.

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