

President Leuthard to represent Switzerland at Silk Road summit in Beijing

Bern, 09.05.2017 - On Sunday and Monday, 14 and 15 May, President Doris Leuthard will be representing Switzerland at the summit on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Beijing. The aim of the BRI or Silk Road summit is to discuss ways of strengthening trade, particularly between Asia and Europe, and promoting ties between the continents. Around 25 heads of state and government are expected to attend.

Prior to the summit, President Leuthard will meet Chinese President Xi Jinping for bilateral discussions on Saturday, 13 May. As part of their innovative strategic partnership Switzerland and China have also decided to intensify cooperation in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The Belt and Road initiative was launched by President Xi in 2013. According to the action plan the BRI covers 50 countries – mostly developing countries with a strong need for infrastructure – and a total of 4.4 billion people (63% of the world's population). Varying routes are defined, they cover the countries of Central Asia, East Africa, the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula. The routes end in Europe and here too there are different supply lines and regional distribution centres.

Ms Leuthard will take advantage of the opportunity to hold bilateral talks in Beijing with heads of state and government of other guest countries. The president will attend the Sino-Swiss Business Awards, as well as an event to mark the 2017 Switzerland China Year of Tourism, and other events highlighting fashion, creativity and innovation in both countries.

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