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Embassy of Switzerland in China
瑞士驻华大使馆

December 2015 / no 6

Swissnews

Message from Ambassador Jean-Jacques de Dardel

Dear Swiss citizens and friends of Switzerland,

It is that time of the year again! As we embrace the festive season of joy, goodwill and family reunion, we cannot but admire the magic of Christmas and New Year transforming a cold Beijing winter into a time of hope and promise.

It is also a time for many of us to unwind, reflect on the past year and look toward the future. In the international arena, 2015 presented many challenges related to conflicts, threats and acts of terrorism and the mounting refugee crisis.

Switzerland, which prioritizes freedom and the values of humanity, has joined hands with other countries to tackle these pressing issues.



On a more positive note, my colleagues and I at the Swiss Embassy and Consulates General have treasured the opportunity given us throughout this year to celebrate the 65th anniversary of bilateral relations between Switzerland and the People's Republic of China. Such an important milestone has allowed us to seize the initiative to forge new developments in Sino-Swiss relations.

Our Embassy and Consulates as well as our Chinese counterparts have embraced the anniversary year with utmost zest. High-level visits paved the way for concrete results in facilitating economic, financial, social and cultural cooperation between our two countries. Regular bilateral meetings and dialogues helped deepen our common ground and understanding of issues of joint concern. Bolstered by close collaboration with our partners, we successfully organized around 100 cultural projects and 400 events across China.

Looking ahead to 2016, we aspire to develop both countries' capacities to advance bilateral relations. Switzerland was recently invited by China to participate in next year's G20 Finance Track. As a world-leading financial center, we will further

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contribute to the international financial system. Switzerland, as the No. 1-ranked country in global innovation, is also eyeing closer cooperation with China in this area following Beijing's commitment to innovation in its new 13th Five-Year Plan for socioeconomic development.

As we prepare to usher in 2016, I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank you for your support and interest in our events and programs throughout the year. I wish you a heartfelt Merry Christmas, a happy New Year and, of course, a prosperous Chinese Spring Festival!

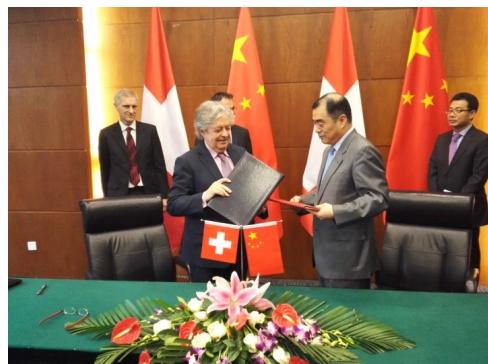


Jean-Jacques de Dardel

Ambassador of Switzerland to the People's Republic of China

Bilateral Relations

Switzerland to participate in G20 Financial Track, to further immigration process with China



The new immigration agreement is expected to advance bilateral cooperation. © Zhang Na

Switzerland will take part in the G20 Finance Track next year at the invitation of China. This is not only a recognition of its position in the international financial system, but also a reflection of its close relations with China that have been further intensified in recent years, especially in the financial field.

"All of the most important decisions on economic cooperation between countries, the development of the international financial system and financial market regulation are made in the G20. It is therefore important for Switzerland to be directly informed about the G20's work and to actively participate in it," said Swiss Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf. [Read more >>>](#)

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Economic News

Direct trading between RMB and Swiss franc launched



China's central bank, the People's Bank of China, has authorized direct trading between the renminbi (RMB) and Swiss franc on the China Foreign Exchange Trade System (CFETS). The new arrangement, in effect since November 9, has resulted in the Swiss franc becoming the seventh major currency to be directly exchanged for RMB without being converted into the US dollar. [Read more >>>](#)

Swiss franc can be directly exchanged for RMB now. © swissinfo.ch

Swiss Business Hub promotes central function concept to Chinese investors



The Swiss Business Hub (SBH) China hosted its first Central Function Investment promotion event with knowledge partner and auditing firm KPMG in Shanghai in November, introducing the concept of central function to Chinese companies and promoting Switzerland's favorable business environment. [Read more >>>](#)

[Swiss Business Hub website.](#)

The concept of central function is introduced to Chinese investors. © Ta Tamara

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Science and Innovation

Startups get commercial boost from Venture Leaders China Program

Swissnex China, Switzerland's outpost for promoting education, science and technology, has been the driving force connecting Swiss enterprises with Chinese industry insiders. Following the enormous success of the first Venture Leaders China Program in 2014, swissnex teamed up again with venturelab, a national startup training program, and brought 10 high-tech Swiss startups to China for an intensive business development boot camp in October. [Read more >>>](#)

[swissnex China website.](#)



Venture Leaders China Program brought Swiss high-tech startups to China. © swissnex China

St. Gallen Symposium focuses on China's economic growth

The Swiss Embassy proudly hosted the seventh St. Gallen Symposium Beijing Reception on December 9, bringing business leaders of today and tomorrow together to discuss challenging topics regarding economic growth in China. Under the theme of "Growth – the good, the bad and the ugly," the symposium was attended by four panellists who shared their perspectives on China's economic growth and its characteristics.

Acknowledging it will take time for the world to fully embrace China, Leslie Maasdorp, Vice President of the New Development Bank BRICS and Bernhard Schwartländer, World Health Organization Representative in China said the country should aim to achieve sustainable growth. Growth based solely on GDP could result in health problems for the population and huge costs for the country, Dr. Schwartländer warned. "Health is increasingly linked to growth. If there is no health, there is no wealth."

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Culture and Education

New school to bring excellence of Swiss education to Beijing expats



The Swiss School Beijing will open in the second half of 2016. © Swiss School Beijing

Children in Switzerland are among the happiest children in the world – and with good reason! At school, they are encouraged to follow their curiosity and explore the world around them. Teachers are there to facilitate their journey and help them put the knowledge they have discovered into structure.

This pedagogy model will soon be applied at the Swiss School Beijing, the first Swiss school in China, which is scheduled to open in the fall of 2016. Operating within an existing international school in Beijing and with support from the Swiss Embassy, the German-language school will take in its first group of 20 to 30 children distributed over one kindergarten and one elementary school class. [Read more.](#)

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Settimana della lingua italiana: encounter with Italian language, culture

Amid heated discussion about the refugee crisis in Europe, the screenings of the Italian-language film Stella Ciao on social evolution and migration sparked interesting discussions between director Vito Robbiani and Chinese university students during this year's Settimana della lingua italiana (World Italian Language Week) from late October to early November.

[Read more. >>>](#)



Director Robbiani had interesting discussions with Chinese students. © Chen Yijun

Alumni and exchange students gather at Swiss Embassy

The Swiss Alumni and Exchange Students Gathering held at the Swiss Embassy on December 3 was attended by about 150 alumni of Swiss higher education institutes. The panel discussion "Opportunities in China beyond the classroom" held for Swiss exchange students in China was also attended by Swiss entrepreneurs. It gave students inspiration and practical advice on career opportunities in China. [Read more. >>>](#)



Alumni and exchange students meet at Swiss Embassy. © swissnex China

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Rule of law, innovation the best solutions to air pollution



Still image from film *Invisible Smoke* produced by SDC.

Air quality and legislation dominated discussions at the Workshop on Black Carbon Emission Reduction and Diesel Retrofit Pilot in October in Beijing. Rule of law and innovation have helped Switzerland to effectively reduce hazardous emissions and improve its air quality over the last 30 years. In 2010, Switzerland and China launched their cooperation in clean air legislation and policy framework. [Read more. >>>](#)

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation China.

Switzerland actively contributes to COP21

A total of 195 nations reached a landmark accord to tackle climate change at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference (COP21) taking place in Paris from November 30 to December 11, 2015. The global deal sets a new target to limit global temperature rise to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and strive for a limit of 1.5°C if possible.

For Switzerland, tackling climate change is of utmost importance in order to achieve sustainable development. It is the first country to submit its Paris climate deal pledge to cut greenhouse gas by 50% on 1990 levels by 2030 in February 2015. At the conference, the Swiss delegation headed by Federal Councilor and Environment Minister Doris Leuthard took active part in the negotiations and helped to shape the new agreement.

Switzerland also took part in the activities in the field of climate change and showcased specific projects from its climate-related development cooperation, on the sidelines of the conference. At the Chinese pavilion, the achievements and results of the Adapting to Climate Change in China project, a flagship bilateral collaborative project between the SDC Beijing office and China, were presented to a large number of visitors.

Article: "The Paris agreement aims to reverse the trend in CO2 emissions"

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Chinese Encounters

Swiss artists transform Chinese migrant workers into 'philosophers'



Baltensperger + Siepert are fascinated with the rapid changes in China. © Jessica Wirth

Swiss artist-duo Baltensperger + Siepert use critical reflections of social, cultural and political issues as the inspiration for their work. Both believe that art should not only question, but also carry the responsibility of shaping society. Art is not simply a commodity to be consumed, but a starting point for serious thinking.

"A successful artwork initiates something in its beholder, a conversation that in the beginning can be an inner dialogue that inevitably draws wider circles," said Baltensperger + Siepert, who recently finished the duo's Invisible Philosophy project in Beijing in October. It is with the same philosophy that they initiated the project that casts the spotlight on one of China's most socially marginalized groups: migrant workers.

Diplomatic Life

Christmas party at Ambassador's Residence

Christmas trees and colorful lights lit up Swiss Ambassador de Dardel's residence in the lead up to Christmas. The Embassy's garden was also given a seasonal makeover as staff and guests celebrated Christmas on December 11. Ballet performances were held and guests enjoyed Swiss and Chinese cuisine and wine. Even Santa Claus dropped by to hand out gifts to all Embassy staff!



Swiss-Chinese Friendship Day



Swiss Ambassador de Dardel inaugurated the Swiss-Chinese Friendship Day on November 17 in Guilin. The day has become a proactive platform for locals to learn more about Switzerland as an attractive tourist destination, its cultural diversity and its innovative capacities. Hosted by the Consulate General in Guangzhou, the event is held twice a year in different cities and the first one in 2016 will take place in Shenzhen.

Swiss Ambassador briefs business community

Swiss Ambassador to China Jean-Jacques de Dardel shared his views and provided a candid assessment of the state of economic affairs in China and Sino-Swiss bilateral relations during his address to the Swiss business community at the Ambassador's Briefing event hosted by the Swiss-Chinese Chamber of Commerce Beijing on November 30. Under the theme of "Sino-Swiss Business Relations under the 'New Normal,'" Ambassador de Dardel offered his outlook on China's international initiatives for economic governance in 2016, Switzerland's participation with China in these projects and promising developments in the Sino-Swiss financial sector.

Guangdong Int'l Charity Sale



The Consulate General in Guangzhou played an active part in the 4th Guangdong International Charity Sale on November 28, raising about 36,000 yuan for left-behind and impoverished children in rural Guangdong Province. Dressed as Little Red Riding Hood, staff at the Consulate were warmly received by visitors and sold high-quality Swiss products. Along with 33 other consulates, the charity sale raised about 540,000 yuan.

Geneva tradition Escalade staged in Shanghai

For the third consecutive year, the Swiss Consulate General in Shanghai and swissnex China staged the traditional ceremony of the Escalade for Shanghai residents on December 8. Around 200 Swiss and Chinese participants were transported back to the 17th century in the middle of a surprise attack, where soldiers sent by the Duke of Savoy were eventually defeated by the city of Geneva. [More photos>>>](#)



“Switzerland has more” media party

About 100 representatives from the Chinese and international media attended the “Switzerland has more” media party held by the Swiss Embassy. The event also marked the end of 65th anniversary celebrations for Sino-Swiss bilateral relations. The Embassy acknowledged the outstanding coverage of Switzerland given by the media in 2015, handing out six awards to media outlets for their exemplary reportage.



Swiss Embassy chef retires after 44 years of service



Chef Wang, who worked at the Swiss Embassy for 44 years, is also a witness of the dynamic Sino-Swiss relations. © Zheng Chunjie

Wang Lianying, the former executive chef in residence at the Swiss Embassy in Beijing, would have embarked on a completely different career if China had not made peace with Vietnam following both sides' territorial dispute in the 1960s. Trained in the army and a skilled artilleryman, he was preparing to be dispatched to the battle before it ended. The truce and his subsequent discharge from the military allowed him to pursue his true passion: cooking. In 1971, he began working as a personal chef to a Swiss diplomat in Beijing. It was the start of his partnership with the Swiss Embassy that would last 44 years, coming to an end in December upon his retirement. [Read more >>>](#)

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Did you know?

SwissChat, Swiss Embassy WeChat account



What are the most noteworthy and fun cultural and education events held by the Swiss Embassy and its Consulates General in China? What are the latest trends in Swiss innovation and technology? How do Switzerland and China further its dynamic bilateral relations? Scan the QR code below and follow SwissChat, the official WeChat account of the Swiss Embassy, and embark on a new journey to know a diverse Switzerland!

Are you #inLOVEwithSWITZERLAND?

Winter in Switzerland means unforgettable days of sun and snow on ski slopes, cross-country ski trails or in a cosy hut. Switzerland is a destination that seduces tourists from all over the world. Have you fallen in love with Switzerland yet? Join Switzerland Tourism's #inLOVEwithSWITZERLAND campaign and share your personal stories, photos and videos using the hashtag on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. For more information, please visit [Switzerland Tourism website](#).



Sport, strong franc characterize Switzerland's image in 2015

Switzerland continues to have a positive image worldwide and is highly regarded by the general public, while the main focus of media reporting centers on the strong franc and sport. Governance and a high quality of life in particular rank among the country's strengths. In the Nation Brands Index, an image comparison between 50 countries, Switzerland ranked eighth this year. Read the full article [here](#).

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Events Calendar



Louis Schwizgebel piano recital concert

January 3 - 8, 2016

Xiamen, Wuhan, Beijing, Shanghai

<http://louisschwizgebelpiano.com>

Don't miss this rare encounter in China with talented Swiss pianist Louis Schwizgebel! Born in Geneva in 1987, the Swiss-Chinese pianist has been described as "a pianist with a profound gift" by The Guardian and an "insightful musician" by The New York Times. Schwizgebel has performed with world famous conductors and major orchestras across the globe. In January, the young musician will perform popular works by Mozart, Schumann, Beethoven and Schubert in China



Photography exhibition: China at Paléo

Until January 11, 2016

Dusk Dawn Club, 14 Shanlao Hutong,

Dongcheng District, Beijing

<http://blog.foukography.com>

Seven Chinese bands including Second Hand Rose and Hanggai staged extraordinary shows at the Paléo Festival in Switzerland in July 2015. A unique exchange in the musical landscape between the two countries, their performances were recorded by photographer Aurélien Foucault. The photo exhibition features the bands' performances and off-stage experience at the festival, capturing the spirit of the famous open-air festival.

Most Beautiful Swiss Books exhibition

Until January 30, 2016

Heng Shan Fang, 880 Heng Shan Road,
Shanghai

www.swissdesignawards.ch



After its successful debut at Beijing Design Week in October, the Most Beautiful Swiss Books and Swiss Posters exhibition is being hosted in Shanghai to offer visitors the chance to learn about Swiss graphic design. It features the latest awarded books from the Most Beautiful Swiss Books competition organized by the Swiss Federal Office of Culture and original posters from outstanding Swiss designers.



As It Disappears: A Cultural Study of Rural China

Until January 31, 2016

Ray Art Center, Room 182, Block 5A, Sport Loft,
128 Huayuan Road, Hongkou District, Shanghai

www.rayartcenter.org

The exhibition is inspired by a field research project about rural China by Swiss sociologist Matthias Messmer and Taiwanese researcher Hsin-Mei Chuang. For seven years from 2006, the pair visited more than 50 villages and towns across China, conducting research from various perspectives. Comprising photography, posters and artefacts, the show spans four sections and provides a glimpse into contemporary rural China's culture and society.



Exhibition: Life in Songzhuang

Until February 24, 2016

Songzhuang Art Center, Jingyujiu Road,
Tongzhou District, Beijing

www.sz-artcenter.com

The exhibition documents the life and works of Swiss artists Nick Perret, Heini and 19 other artists from 11 countries. Through the interaction and tension of strong color and form, Perret invites viewers into his work. Referring to himself as a romanticist, painter Heini emerged with an emphasis on creative inspiration and individualism, both of which are reflected in his works.



Shenzhen Bi-City Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism

Until February 28, 2016

Former Dacheng Flour Factory, Shenzhen,

Guangdong Province

en.szhkbiennale.org

The largest one of its kind, the biennale centers on the theme of Re-living the City. Co-curated by Swiss Federal Institute of Technology professors Hubert Klumpner and Alfredo Brillembourg in addition to Aaron Betsky and Doreen Liu, the exhibition exhibits architecture that reflects the reuse and rethinking of existing buildings, the re-imagination of our cities and the remaking of our daily lives by design.

Fête de la Francophonie 2016

March 2016

Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an, Qingdao and more

www.francophonie.faguowenhua.com

The arrival of March marks the exciting festival of Francophonie, an occasion to embrace the diversity of Francophone culture, literature and music! The Swiss Embassy, in collaboration with the French Embassy in China and representatives of other French-speaking countries in China, is set to outperform its previous editions and offer audiences a rich program of music, cinema, artistic residency, contests and activities around gastronomy, expositions, conferences and sports.



Film screening: From somewhere to nowhere – on the road in China with photographer Andreas Seibert

January 22, 2016

Ray Art Center, Room 182, Block 5A, Sport Loft, 128 Huayuan Road, Hongkou District, Shanghai

www.rayartcenter.org

Villi Hermann's film centers on Swiss photographer Andreas Seibert, who has been working on a photographic documentation about life and work of China's migrant workers since 2002. The migrant workers' stories are told in a collection of striking photographs that provide a close-up portrait to complement the current discussion of economic growth in China. With its combination of photographs and video images, this documentary film conveys a unique impression of the scale of this modern migration - the largest in human history.

Out to Sea? The Plastic Garbage Project

Until February 17, 2016

Hong Kong Science Museum, 2 Science Museum Road, Tsim Sha Tsui East, Hong Kong

http://hk.science.museum/en_US/web/scm/se/se.html

Curated by the Zurich Museum of Design, this thought-provoking exhibition combines elements of science and art to raise public awareness of plastic waste in the ocean. At the center of the show is a large, shocking centerpiece composed of various plastic flotsam collected from beach cleaning operations around the world. Different video footage and interactive exhibits featuring unique designs are also on display. The showcase aims to give visitors an in-depth understanding of the chemical composition, classification and recycling processes of different plastic materials, and educate the public about the harmful effects of plastic waste on birds and marine animals.

Until February 26, 2016

Wuhan University, 16 Luojiashan Road, Wuchang District, Wuhan, Hubei Province

<http://blog.sina.com.cn/whufilm>

The third edition of short film festival Wuda Fait Son Ciné is scheduled to take place at Wuhan University on April 21. The committee is calling for entries from French- or Chinese-speaking university students and amateur filmmakers. This year's theme is inspired by The Stranger by French author Albert Camus. All movies should be between two and 10 minutes. Organized by the French Association of Wuhan University in collaboration with Swiss Professor Yvan Obrist, the French and art departments of Wuhan University and café cinéphile Da Meng, the film festival has become a popular platform for filmmakers to meet and exchange ideas.

Photo exhibition: China between Yesterday and Tomorrow

December 29, 2015 - February 2016

Guangdong Science Center, 168 Xi Liu Road, University Town, Guangzhou, Guangdong

Province

<http://gdsc.southcn.com/?action-category-catid-67>

Some 65 photos from the portfolio of late Swiss photojournalist Fernand Gigon (1908-1986) showcase the hardships as well as beauty of everyday life of ordinary Chinese in the 1950s. Traveling extensively across the country, Gigon was particularly impressed by the masses uniting to develop the social economy and find their own path to the modern world. He subsequently focused his lens on ordinary people who kept their pride and dignity under difficult conditions. Organized by the Consulate General of Switzerland in Guangzhou, the exhibition is one of the highlights celebrating the 65th anniversary of Sino-Swiss bilateral relations.

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