

Media release

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Swiss Embassy in China holds a panel discussion on the utilization of the bilateral free trade agreement for the past 10 years

Beijing, 16 April – As the 10th anniversary of the Sino-Swiss Free Trade Agreement (SSFTA)’s entry into force approaches, the Embassy of Switzerland in China held a panel discussion event under the title ‘Making Good Use of Free Trade Agreements’ at the Swiss Ambassador’s Residence in Beijing on 16 April. Over 120 diplomats, academics, experts and practitioners working in the field of bilateral foreign trade participated and jointly discussed the utilization rate and impact of the SSFTA. Swiss Ambassador to China Jürg Burri was present and gave a speech.

During the event, the Chinese version of *The Sino-Swiss Free Trade Agreement – 2023 Academic Evaluation Report (10th Anniversary Edition)* jointly completed by the Sino-Swiss Competence Centre of the University of International Business and Economics in China, the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland and the Shanghai Customs College, was first released. This is the second collaboration of the three academic institutes preparing an evaluation report on the same topic since 2018.

The new report analyses the practical implementation of the SSFTA and its utilization by companies in both countries. It provides evidence that the SSFTA has achieved remarkable results in the past ten years. The report comprehensively calculates the utilization rate of SSFTA for various products in bilateral trade between both countries and analyses the reasons why the agreement is or isn’t utilized. In the past ten years, many Swiss and Chinese enterprises have seized the new opportunities brought by the SSFTA and continuously expanded the scale of trade and investment, thus enhancing solid economic cooperation between the two countries.

The panel discussion was moderated by Chantal Delli, Deputy Head of Mission of the Swiss Embassy, and participated by Professor Tomas Casas i Klett of the University of St. Gallen, Professor Tu Xinquan of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics, Jennifer Zhong, economist at UBS, Nicolas Musy, Founding Partner of China Integrated, and Martin Matter, Counsellor of the Swiss Embassy. It covered a range of topics like the added value and utilization rate of the SSFTA, its effect on bilateral trade especially on Swiss and Chinese SMEs, and the broader significance of foreign trade for economic development.

‘The Sino-Swiss FTA entered into force ten years ago and became gradually more important as China reduced its tariffs in accordance with a schedule that – for most tariff lines – extended over ten years.

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So we have reason to celebrate this jubilee, as well as the 50th anniversary of the trade agreement. This is also a good time to review the implementation of the FTA,' said Ambassador Burri in his speech at the event.

2024 marks the 10th anniversary of the SSFTA's entry into force. The negotiation of the agreement began in 2011. It was signed in Beijing on 6 July 2013, entered into force on 1 July 2014 and has become the most utilized FTA outside Europe for Swiss exporters. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the conclusion of the Sino-Swiss Trade Agreement of 1974, which established a Joint Bilateral Economic Commission.

Today's event officially kicks off the two-year public diplomacy campaign 2024-2025 of the Embassy and Consulates of Switzerland in China, with a focus on Economy in 2024 to celebrate SSFTA's 10 years with various projects and will culminate in the 75th anniversary next year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and China.

Due to its economic openness and commitment to free trade, Switzerland is an attractive trade partner to China. Since 2010, China has been Switzerland's biggest trading partner in Asia and third largest globally after the EU and the United States.

[The Sino-Swiss Free Trade Agreement – 2023 Academic Evaluation Report \(10th Anniversary Edition\)](#)

[China-Switzerland Free Trade Agreement](#)

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