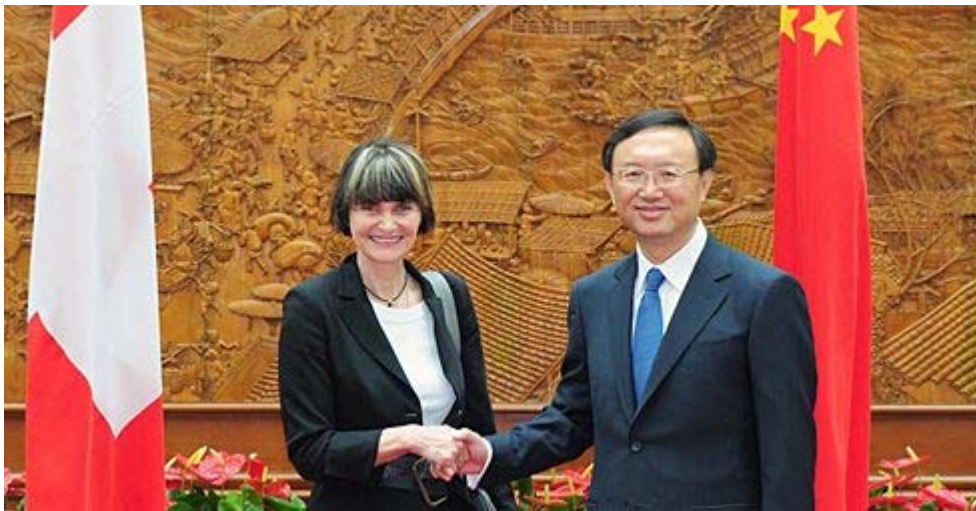




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Significant deepening of bilateral relationships between Switzerland and China



Micheline Calmy-Rey and Yang Jiechi © Keystone

At the end of her official working visit to China, Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and Yang Jiechi, the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, opened the first political dialogue meeting of high-ranking officials. For Switzerland and China, this is an important milestone on the road to intensifying their bilateral relationships. Earlier, the Head of the FDFA met with China's first Vice-Premier Li Keqiang in Beijing and also visited the wandering exhibition "Einstein 2010 – 2012". Her visit to China kicked off with an appearance at the EXPO 2010 in Shanghai, where Switzerland is represented with a pavilion that has attracted much attention.

Sixty years ago, Switzerland was one of the first western countries to recognise and to enter into diplomatic relations with the newly founded People's Republic of China. To celebrate this anniversary, Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, has been on an official working visit to China for several days.

Her discussions in Beijing focused on a significant deepening of the bilateral relationships between Switzerland and China. Together with her Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi, Federal Councillor Calmy-Rey launched a series of meetings between high-ranking officials of the two countries as a means to strengthen the political dialogue while discussing a wide range of topics. Until this coming Thursday, experts representing both governments will discuss financial and currency issues, disarmament and arms control, human rights, humanitarian aid and disaster prevention, as well as conditions in the Near and Middle East, the Korean Peninsula and Africa.

At the meeting between the Head of the FDFA and the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, the parties discussed bilateral as well as international issues. The discussion

with China's first Vice-Premier, Li Keqiang, with whom Federal Councillor Calmy-Rey met on the previous day, also focused on the deepening of the good relationships between Switzerland and the People's Republic of China. The strength of these ties is confirmed by the number of high-ranking visits planned for the rest of this year. The Chinese parliament speaker is expected in Berne this summer, shortly before Federal President Doris Leuthard and later also Federal Councillor Leuenberger will travel to China.

The Head of the FDFA kicked off her visit to China with an appearance at the 2010 world expo in Shanghai, where Switzerland is currently represented with a pavilion managed by Presence Switzerland which is attracting well over ten thousand visitors every day. Between her meetings in Beijing, Federal Councillor Calmy-Rey also found time to visit the Einstein exhibition, which was put together by the Berne Historical Museum to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the theory of relativity. Supported by the FDFA, this wandering exhibition will visit a number of selected Chinese cities until 2012.

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