



The Federal Authorities of the Swiss Confederation

Visit to Switzerland of Chinese Vice Premier Hui Liangyu

Bern, 18.02.2013 - The Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China, Hui Liangyu paid an official working visit to Switzerland on 18 February 2013 at the invitation of Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, who as well as being Vice President of the Federal Council heads the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). During the visit he paid a courtesy call on the Swiss President Ueli Maurer and also had a meeting with Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann. The talks touched on bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the two countries in a number of areas.

During the working session, both parties welcomed the progress made so far in negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement between Switzerland and China, calculated to further strengthen the already substantial economic ties between the two countries as well as the institutional framework and trade policy. Vice Premier Hui, who is responsible for agricultural affairs, visited a farm in the area of Lucerne on Sunday and discussed agricultural matters with Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, who heads the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER). Also on the agenda were questions relating to science and technology.

On the occasion of Vice Premier Hui's courtesy call on Swiss President Ueli Maurer, who heads the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sports (DDPS), the latter underlined the growing importance of political and economic relations with China as well as bilateral relations in many other areas. They also discussed Switzerland's desire to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with China at the multilateral level in an effort to meet global challenges.

During a working breakfast which concluded the official part of the visit to Switzerland, Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter in his capacity as Head of the FDFA discussed with the Chinese Vice Premier the situation in Asia and Europe and notably in their respective countries. The foreign policy questions covered included human rights, climate change, scientific exchanges and financial stability, areas in which the two men agreed on the importance of bilateral dialogue.

The two parties acknowledged the growing importance of exchanges between China and Switzerland in areas including the movement of persons, goods and services, culture, knowledge and ideas. It was also agreed that in addition to bilateral agreements and official visits, the imminent opening of a direct air link between Beijing and Geneva is both a good indicator and a new instrument for ever more dynamic relations between the two countries.

Information:

Information DDPS
+41 (0)31 324 50 58

Information EAER
+41 (0)31 322 20 07

Information FDFA
+41 (0)31 322 31 53

Additional indications:

[Bilateral relations between Switzerland and China](#)⁽¹⁾

Address for enquiries:

Information FDFA
Bundeshaus West
CH-3003 Bern
Tel.: (+41) 031 322 31 53
Fax: (+41) 031 324 90 47
E-Mail: info@eda.admin.ch

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