



Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

Official visit to Berne of Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang

24.05.2013

At the invitation of President of the Confederation Ueli Maurer, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang paid an official visit to Bern on 24 May 2013. The head of the Chinese government was received by the President of the Confederation, the vice-president of the Federal Council and head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Didier Burkhalter and head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research Johann Schneider-Ammann. The conclusion of negotiations on a free trade agreement was at the heart of the talks, which also addressed various bilateral and international issues.

President of the Confederation Ueli Maurer received Li Keqiang at the official Lohn residence. The federal councillor and head of the Federal Department of Defence (DDPS), expressed his honour and pleasure in this opportunity to receive the head of the new Chinese government on his first visit to a European country. In his welcome address, Mr Maurer underlined the quality of Swiss-Chinese relations, which have a strong historical basis and enhance the potential for development in coming years.

The negotiations between Switzerland and China on free trade were formally concluded at the technical level during this visit. The concluded agreement applies to the trade of goods (industrial and agricultural products), rules of origin, trade facilitation measures, non-tariff trade barriers, trade in services, the protection of intellectual property, the promotion of investments, competition, transparency in public sector procurement, economic and technical cooperation and arrangements relating to commerce and the environment as well as in a parallel agreement in commercial issues and work standards. The agreement establishes a joint committee to monitor implementation and development of the agreement and provides a mechanism to settle disputes. Its preamble refers to the principles, values and fundamental instruments of relations and international law.

Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Amman, head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (DEFR) said that he was delighted that these negotiations have been completed. He thought that 'this agreement marks a new and very important step in bilateral economic relations between Switzerland and China and will permit, on a lasting basis, greater cooperation and economic exchange between our countries.'

Bilateral agreements signed

The agreements signed on 24 May in Bern by the Swiss and Chinese delegations include the initiation of a bilateral dialogue on financial issues, an academic agreement, an agreement on watch-making and two agreements of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) on sustainable development issues and respective training.

Other topics on the agenda discussed between the delegations were the environment, human rights and international security issues. Views were exchanged between the head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) Didier Burkhalter and the Chinese prime minister on different current issues such as the situation on the Korean peninsula or the Middle East. Mr Burkhalter also appreciated high-level political talks between the two countries in the wake of his visit to Peking last April and his meeting with the Chinese minister of foreign affairs Wang Yang.


Apart from the Federal Council's delegation, the four state secretaries - Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch, State Secretary for Economic Affairs (SECO), Yves Rossier, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Michael Ambühl, State Secretary for the Federal Department of

Finance (FDF), and Mauro Dell'Ambrogio, State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) - participated in the Chinese prime minister's visit to Bern.

The Chinese delegation, encompassing several ministers and top officials, stayed in Switzerland from 23 to 25 May. Apart from the official talks with the members of the Federal Council, its programme included visits to and meetings with representatives from the Swiss National Bank (BNS) and various economic and scientific protagonists from our country.

General Secretariat DDPS

Internet: <http://www.vbs.admin.ch>

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[Overview of the agreements from the meeting of 24 May 2013](#)

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