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## The Federal Authorities of the Swiss Confederation

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### Human rights dialogue between Switzerland and China

**Bern, 28.11.2013 - From 25 to 27 November 2013, Switzerland and China held their 12th round of human rights talks in Beijing. The discussions, which took place in an open and constructive atmosphere, focused on the judicial and criminal justice system, international human rights mechanisms, human rights in the economy and minority rights. Technical cooperation to promote human rights and concrete projects were also discussed.**

The goals of the human rights dialogue held between Switzerland and China since 1991 are sustainable improvement of human rights protection, strengthening the rule of law and, importantly, the intensification of bilateral relations overall. The confidential nature of the talks allows an open, critical and constructive exchange, including on sensitive issues.

Strengthening the rule of law was among the topics covered, as were the judicial and criminal justice system, the death penalty, the status of minorities in Switzerland and China and religious freedom. Both countries' activities in the Human Rights Council and in the context of its Universal Periodic Review were also discussed, as well as human rights and the economy. The reforms announced by China on 12 November were also covered in the talks. In addition, the parties agreed to continue ongoing cooperation projects, such as the exchange of experts on matters of criminal justice, and to intensify the discussion on human rights in the economy.

Alongside the round of talks on 25 November, additional meetings with various government and non-government bodies took place on 26 and 27 November. Participants included representatives from the Supreme People's Court, the State Administration for Religious Affairs, the All-China Lawyers Association and the Academy of Social Sciences, as well as representatives from civil society. These individual meetings strengthened the dialogue on human rights by allowing a more in-depth exchange on specific issues.

The Chinese delegation comprised representatives from the foreign ministry and other government offices in the areas of justice, public security, the economy, minorities and religions. The Swiss delegation accompanied by the special envoy for human rights issues, Paul Koller, was made up of representatives from the FDFA, FDJP, FDHA and EAER.

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