

China and Switzerland conduct human rights dialogue

Bern, 04.03.2015 - From 3 to 4 March 2015, delegations from Switzerland and China met in Bern for the 13th round of their bilateral human rights dialogue. The constructive atmosphere and the confidential framework of the meeting permitted the two sides to conduct an open and critical discussion on different views of the rule of law and criminal justice as well as about international cooperation on human rights and the inclusion of civil society.

This round focused on the importance of the rule of law with a special emphasis on the justice and penal system, including the abolition of the death penalty. The talks also covered the two countries' cooperation with the United Nations Human Rights Council and the treaty bodies of the international human rights conventions, the role and importance of including independent civil society in these international mechanisms and the situation with regard to minorities. Switzerland took the opportunity to explain the role of human rights in the economy and underscore the importance of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. With all items on the agenda, concrete situations were addressed and possibilities for exchanges at specialist level were discussed.

The Swiss delegation was headed by Ambassador Nicole Wyrsch, special envoy for human rights issues within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The delegation comprised representatives of the FDFA, the Swiss embassy in China, the Federal Department of Justice and Police, the Federal Department of Home Affairs and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research.

Following the one-day talks, the head of the Chinese delegation paid a courtesy visit to the state secretary, Yves Rossier, who acknowledged the importance of the human rights dialogue and expressed his expectation that the exchange be pursued in greater depth in the future.

On the second day of the visit, the Chinese delegation was provided with an insight into the approval procedure for demonstrations in the City of Bern by the city clerk, Jürg Wichtermann. During the visit to the House of Religions that followed, the Chinese visitors had the opportunity to learn about challenges to the peaceful co-existence of the various religious communities in Switzerland and the solutions that have been found.

The bilateral human rights dialogue between Switzerland and China was launched at Beijing's request in 1991. The objective is to promote mutual understanding and, as far as possible, support reforms and improve the human rights situation in the partner country. In this way the dialogue also strengthens the steadily closer relations that are developing between Switzerland and China. In addition to the regular discussion rounds, the dialogue creates the framework for technical cooperation and projects with civil society.

Additional indications:

- [Switzerland's human rights policy^{\(1\)}](#)
- [Bilateral relations Switzerland-China^{\(2\)}](#)

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