

Several agreements signed during the state visit by the Chinese President

Bern, 16.01.2017 - The state visit to Switzerland by Chinese President XI Jinping continued on Monday, 16 January, with official talks between the two delegations. On Sunday evening, the full Federal Council, led by President Doris Leuthard, met with President XI Jinping and his wife, PENG Liyuan, for the gala dinner. At the talks on Monday, the two sides defined areas in which the close political and economic relations could be further deepened. A number of agreements were signed during the visit covering in the area of culture and customs, as well as a declaration of intent in the field of energy.

An important aim of the state visit is to undertake further concrete steps towards expanding the scope of bilateral relations as part of the innovative strategic partnership. On Monday ten treaties, agreements and protocols were signed between Switzerland and China, and between Swiss and Chinese institutions.

Switzerland was represented at the official talks by President Leuthard, head of the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC), and the following members of the federal government: Federal Councillor Alain Berset, vice president of the Federal Council, Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer and Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann. On the Chinese side, President XI Jinping was accompanied by the state councillor with responsibility for foreign affairs, YANG Jiechi, Foreign Minister WANG Yi, the chairman of the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), XU Shaoshi, and Trade Minister GAO Hucheng.

A number of global issues were addressed including world trade, the financial system, environmental and climate protection, and international conflicts. The Swiss side credited China for assuming increasing responsibility in matters of free trade, environmental and climate protection and UN peace keeping missions.

In terms of bilateral relations, discussions between the delegations focused in particular on economic, finance, trade and science policy issues. Questions relating to human rights, the protection of minorities, cooperation in cultural affairs and cooperation at international level were also raised.

The delegations relaunched the bilateral dialogues fostered between the two countries – over 20 in total – covering economic affairs, human rights, migration issues, labour law, intellectual property and financial matters. The subject of tourism was also addressed; China and Switzerland have jointly declared 2017 to be the Year of Tourism.

Joint opening of the WEF Annual Meeting

On the agenda on Monday was an exchange with around 30 leading Swiss business representatives. On Tuesday, the Swiss and Chinese presidents will jointly open the WEF Annual Meeting in Davos. Federal Councillor Alain Berset, vice president of the Federal Council, will officially bid farewell to President XI Jinping on Wednesday evening, following a meal also attended by the new UN secretary general, António Guterres, in Geneva.

The state visit by the Chinese president is a return visit following the state visit to China received by the then president, Mr Schneider-Ammann, in April 2016, when the two sides defined their bilateral relations as an 'innovative strategic partnership'.

Switzerland is among one of the 60 or so states with which China enjoys a 'strategic partnership'. The two countries have fostered close contacts for decades. Switzerland was one of the first Western countries to recognise the newly founded People's Republic of China; it did so on 17 January 1950. Since 2010, China has been Switzerland's most important trade partner in Asia and is the third most important trade partner overall after the USA and the EU.

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