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President of the National Council, Isabelle Moret, pays official visit to China

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The president of the National Council, Isabelle Moret (FDP, VD) will pay an official visit to China from 13 to 17 January. The programme includes a meeting with her counterpart and working discussions with other government representatives. Ms Moret will also take part in the opening event of a year of celebrations to mark the seventieth anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and China.

During her stay in China, from 13 to 17 January 2020, Isabelle Moret, President of the National Council, will be received by Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, with whom she will discuss the bilateral relations between Switzerland and China and current issues. Ms Moret will also attend official talks with government representatives in Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing, the capital city of Jiangsu Province.

On Friday 17 January Ms Moret will attend the opening event of a year of festivities to mark 70 years of diplomatic relations with China, to be held at the Swiss Embassy. Switzerland was one of the first Western countries to recognise the People's Republic of China, on 17 January 1950. Since then bilateral relations have intensified, in particular in recent years, as evidenced by the regular reciprocal visits between high-ranking representatives of both government and parliament. The two countries discuss issues in many different fields, such as the environment, development cooperation, human rights, immigration, education, science and finance.

In addition, Ms Moret will make use of the occasion to visit some Swiss enterprises based in China, and in Nanjing she will visit the Drum Tower Hospital, a leading medical institute which recently received an extension overseen by a Swiss firm of architects.

China has been Switzerland's main economic partner in Asia since 2010, and its third main trading partner overall after the EU and the US. In 2013 a bilateral free trade agreement was signed in Beijing; this entered into force on 1 July 2014.

Ms Moret will be accompanied on her visit by Claudio Fischer, Ambassador and Head of International Relations and Multilingualism at the Parliamentary Services.