



Switzerland–China: political dialogue to strengthen sustainable relations

Bern, 09.11.2020 - State Secretary Krystyna Marty met with China's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Qin Gang for political dialogue on Monday 9 November 2020. The meeting took place by videoconference, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the current epidemiological situation, the talks focused on economic relations between the two countries and the human rights situation in China. The discussions illustrate the continuity of the good relations between Switzerland and China.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic underscores the importance of international cooperation, at the bilateral as well as the multilateral level. Global problems can only be solved globally. In their discussion, Ms Marty and Mr Qin acknowledged the mutual support and solidarity of their two countries in the fight against the coronavirus, and raised the matter of the new concept for testing travellers to China. Both sides emphasised that potential negative effects on the business activities of Swiss companies in China should be kept to a minimum.

Switzerland's third biggest trading partner

Economic relations between Switzerland and China are a fundamental component of the two countries' bilateral ties. Despite a 17% fall in trade volume, China remains Switzerland's third biggest trading partner – after the EU and the United States – at CHF 36 billion. Switzerland welcomes China's efforts to open its market to world trade and is closely following political and economic developments. During their discussion, Ms Marty and Mr Qin also highlighted the importance of this opening for the Chinese financial market.

Open dialogue on human rights

Respect for and promotion of human rights formed a substantial part of the political dialogue. Switzerland expressed its concern about the lack of respect for human rights in China, particularly with regard to the treatment of Uighurs, Tibetans and other ethnic and religious minorities. The introduction of the national security law in Hong Kong and the associated restrictions on freedom of expression were also discussed.

Winter sports as a unifying link

Ms Marty and Mr Qin also took a look at future projects such as the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing. China can count on the cooperation and expertise of Switzerland as a winter sports nation in organising this major sporting event.

To conclude their political dialogue, Ms Marty and Mr Qin expressed their hopes for an early normalisation of the epidemiological situation, and both sides emphasised their willingness to promote regular exchanges between Switzerland and China and increase travel between the two countries.

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