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Negotiations soon on a bilateral Free Trade Agreement between Switzerland and China

Bern, 13.08.2010 - President Doris Leuthard and the President of the People's Republic of China Hu Jintao approvingly acknowledged the findings of the feasibility study for a bilateral free trade agreement in Beijing today. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in their presence announcing that negotiations between Switzerland and China should commence in the near future.

In November 2009, the head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Doris Leuthard, and the Chinese Minister for Trade, Chen Deming, charged a Joint Study Group with the task of clarifying the feasibility of a possible free trade agreement between Switzerland and China. The study group composed of representatives from the authorities of both sides recently completed its work. It concluded that the economies of Switzerland and China are mutually complementary and that a comprehensive free trade agreement would significantly improve the general conditions for economic cooperation. As soon as the necessary internal procedures in both countries have been completed, negotiations should be opened on a free trade agreement between Switzerland and China. President Leuthard is currently on a five-day visit to the People's Republic of China accompanied by a high-ranking business delegation. The 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and China is being marked by a number of meetings at the highest level, such as the meeting today between President Leuthard and the President of the People's Republic of China. China has been Switzerland's most important trading partner in Asia since 2002. Bilateral trade relations are developing extremely dynamically. China is already our third largest supplier of goods worldwide and the fourth largest market for Swiss exports (after the EU, the USA and Japan).

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Publisher:

Federal Department of Economic Affairs
Internet: <http://www.dfe.admin.ch>⁽¹⁾

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