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## State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

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### Federal Councillor Schneider-Ammann signs free trade agreement with China

**Bern, 06.07.2013 - On 6 July Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann and the Chinese Minister of Commerce GAO Hucheng signed the bilateral free trade agreement between Switzerland and China in Beijing. The agreement is expected to enter into effect in 2014. On the same day, Federal Councillor Schneider-Ammann also signed a parallel agreement on labour and employment with the Chinese Minister of Human Resources and Social Security YIN Weimin.**

The free trade agreement with China covers a comprehensive range of sectors and issues. It contains a preamble and provisions on trade in goods (industrial products, processed and basic agricultural products, rules of origin, customs procedures and trade facilitation, non-tariff barriers to trade, trade remedies) and trade in services. In addition, the agreement covers the protection of intellectual property, investment promotion, competition, transparency in public procurement, trade-related environmental and labour issues (the latter as part of a parallel agreement signed on the same day), economic and technical cooperation and institutional provisions (joint committee and dispute settlement procedures). In conjunction with the free trade agreement, Switzerland and China have signed five sector-specific cooperation agreements in the fields of technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

The comprehensive free trade agreement will improve access for exports of Swiss goods and services to the large and growing Chinese market and facilitate two-way trade. The agreement will also strengthen legal certainty for economic exchange, promote bilateral cooperation between Switzerland and China and contribute to sustainable development.

China is the world's second largest economy after the USA and one of Switzerland's most important foreign economic partners. China is the largest market for Swiss industrial products in Asia and the third largest worldwide (after the EU and the USA). In 2012 Switzerland exported goods to China valued at CHF 7.8 billion (3.7% of total Swiss exports), imports from China were valued at CHF 10.3 billion (5.5% of total exports).

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