



Media Release

Sino Swiss Free Trade Agreement entering into force

Beijing, July 1st 2014 – Today the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the Swiss Confederation and the People's Republic of China enters into force. The negotiations for the FTA were officially launched in January 2011 and were concluded in May 2013. The historic Agreement was signed on 6 July 2013 in Beijing by Swiss Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann and Chinese Minister of Commerce Gao Hucheng. It is so far the only FTA China has signed with a continental European country and one of the 20 largest developed economies.

For the vast majority of bilateral trade, the FTA dismantles tariffs fully or partially, sometimes subject to transition periods. The FTA improves mutual market access for goods and services, enhances legal security for the protection of intellectual property and for bilateral economic relations in general. Further, together with sector-specific agreements, the FTA contributes to the reduction of non-tariff barriers including technical barriers to trade (TBT), sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS). The FTA together with the Agreement on Labour and Employment also contributes to a strengthened cooperation on the social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

This milestone in Sino-Swiss relations is celebrated today in Switzerland, where Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann is hosting festivities in Basel, and in China with the presence of Swiss State Secretary for Economic Affairs Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch. She met today with her counterpart, Vice-Minister of Commerce Zhong Shan to celebrate the entry into force of the FTA and discuss the further promotion of the economic ties between the two countries. She also had discussions with high-level Chinese officials from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MoHRSS), the Ministry of Finance and the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ).

Additionally, State Secretary Ineichen-Fleisch attended the third Sino Swiss Economic Forum today, where the benefits of the Sino-Swiss FTA were discussed and explained by representatives from government, business and academia. Tomorrow, she will travel to Zhenjiang in Jiangsu Province to attend the official opening ceremony of the Sino-Swiss Zhenjiang Ecological Industrial Park.

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