



Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann meets Chinese trade minister Gao Hucheng

Bern, 20.01.2015 - The head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, today met his Chinese counterpart, Gao Hucheng, in the run-up to the WEF Annual Meeting. A good six months after the free trade agreement came into effect, the two ministers noted during their talks in Zurich that exporters were making good use of the new arrangement. Other subjects addressed included the appreciation of the franc following the lifting of the minimum exchange rate against the euro, and the future of World Trade Organization WTO negotiations.

On the eve of the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, the head of the EAER and his Chinese counterpart took the opportunity to discuss bilateral and multilateral economic issues. In 2013, Switzerland was the first continental European country to sign a comprehensive bilateral free trade agreement with China, which came into effect on 1 July 2014. The two ministers expressed their satisfaction at the good progress being made in implementing the agreement and that exporters were making extremely good use of it. In addition to lowering customs tariffs the free trade agreement with China also provides greater legal certainty e.g. for trade in services and intellectual property.

As the world's second largest economy China is becoming an ever more important partner in further developing the global trade system. Both Switzerland's and China's economies are markedly export oriented and are therefore dependent on a system of common rules for all trade partners, such as those maintained and developed by the World Trade Organization WTO. Discussions between the two ministers concentrated on how matters still outstanding from the Doha Round could be spurred on and brought to a conclusion as swiftly as possible.

The People's Republic of China is Switzerland's most important trade partner in Asia; Switzerland conducts a significant and sharply rising amount of trade outside Europe with China. Switzerland and China foster close ties and work together in a range of areas.

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