



President Schneider-Ammann to pay visit to China

Bern, 04.04.2016 - President Johann N. Schneider-Ammann has been invited to pay a state visit to the People's Republic of China between 6 and 9 April. The president will travel to Beijing and Shanghai accompanied by a delegation of business representatives and academics. High-level talks with President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang, the Chairman of the National People's Congress, Zhang Dejiang, as well as with a number of other ministers, will take place in Beijing on Thursday, 7 April, and Friday, 8 April. Further meetings are set to take place with politicians and business leaders in Shanghai on Saturday, 9 April.

The visit by President Schneider-Ammann offers an opportunity to further deepen the bilateral relations successfully fostered in recent years. There are currently over twenty formal dialogue and cooperation arrangements in place between Switzerland and China; a free trade agreement has been in place since mid-2014.

Discussions in Beijing will cover economic, financial, trade and scientific issues. International affairs and cooperation between the two countries in multilateral bodies such as the G20 and the WTO will be addressed too. There will also be opportunities for exchanges on innovation, sustainable development and human rights.

The series of talks will begin with a meeting with Wan Gang, the Minister for Science and Technology. President Schneider-Ammann will then meet Premier Li Keqiang in the Great Hall of the People.

On Friday the president will take part in a Sino-Swiss economic forum with business representatives from both countries, which trade minister Gao Hucheng is also expected to attend. Also on the agenda are visits to the China Construction Bank and an ABB joint venture.

The highlight of the visit will be a meeting with President Xi Jinping, followed by a state reception. The last comparable visit to China by a Swiss president in protocol terms dates back to 2010.

Scientific cooperation and Innovation

The second leg of the journey involves numerous business meetings and a working dinner with Han Zheng, Communist Party Secretary of Shanghai. The president will also open the new offices of the Swiss Center Shanghai (SCS) and tour a Novartis research centre. The trip will be rounded off with an event at the China Europe International Business School (CEIBS), where the president will address business representatives and alumni on the subject of scientific cooperation and innovation.

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