




**swisscham.org**

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Embassy of Switzerland in China  
瑞士驻华大使馆

## Media Release

Beijing, 6 September, 2018

# **5<sup>th</sup> Edition of Sino-Swiss Economic Forum successfully held; Swiss Federal Councillor Schneider-Ammann attends with economic, science delegation**

The Fifth Sino-Swiss Economic Forum (SSEF 2018) was successfully held on September 6, 2018, at the Peninsula Hotel in Beijing with the noteworthy presence of H.E Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, and Mr. Qian Zhai, Director general of the Ministry of Commerce of the P.R. of China. The SSEF takes place every two years in Beijing. The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the forum was jointly organized by the Embassy of Switzerland in China and the Swiss-Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Beijing, in partnership with swissnex China.

The 50-strong economic and science delegation which is on a work visit to China with Federal Councillor Schneider-Ammann also attended the forum. With the topic of “free trade”, prominent experts discussed tomorrow’s retail in the context of the technological revolution at the forum. Furthermore, they explored ways of living, working and doing business in the sustainable cities of the Sino-Swiss future. More than 350 guests attended the event, including leaders of Swiss and Chinese companies as well as high-level government representatives from both countries.

## **The Topic – free trade**

Four years after the entry into force of the free trade agreement (FTA) between Switzerland and China, trade flows between the two countries have been growing robustly and the number of companies making use of the FTA is increasing. The two countries have committed themselves to a further enhancement of the FTA during China’s President Xi Jinping’s State visit to Switzerland in January 2017. At the SSEF 2018, both countries’ representatives renewed their promises to further promote free trade.

During his speech, Schneider-Ammann highly acknowledged the dynamic bilateral relations and increasing bilateral trade, and emphasized the great interest of the Chinese market to Swiss companies.

“China also remains by large the most important destination for Swiss Foreign Direct Investment in Asia, showing the importance China has gained for Swiss companies. Bilateral trade in goods and services reflects this importance as well. While about a

third of our merchandise trade of 37 billion US dollars is gold, trade in other goods shows significant gains as well since the entry into force of our Free Trade Agreement. China continues to be our third most important trading partner overall after only the European Union and the United States,” said Schneider-Ammann.

Talking about trade protectionism, he noted this year there is too much protectionism in many guises and not enough free trade. “Switzerland as an open, strongly export-oriented economy needs the rule-based trading system. We work with all members on new approaches to keep the WTO relevant – in administering the existing agreements, in settling disputes, and in negotiating new agreements.”

Heinz Karrer, Head of business delegation and President of economiesuisse, Michael Hengartner, Head of the science delegation and President of the University of Zurich and swissuniversities as well as the President of the Swiss Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Samuel Baumgartner also underlined the crucial importance of free trade.

### **The panel discussions**

*The future of retail: how technology is revolutionizing tomorrow’s supply chain and consumer habits*

The panelists discussed the opportunities and challenges of the Chinese retail markets. Christina Lu, General Manager, Uni Marketing Center of the Alibaba Group, Glenn Bai, Managing Director of Militzer & Muench China, David Wang, CEO of Kingnautre China, and Jay Qin, e-commerce new RTM lead of Nestlé China, pointed out the technology induced changes to the retail business of tomorrow.

The panel underlined gains that companies can make with the use of the latest technologies in retail.

*Life, work and sustainable economies in the Sino-Swiss future*

The second panel discussion widened the scope and focused on future cities in the P.R. of China and Switzerland. Antonie Angerer founder and director of the I: project space in Beijing, Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schmitt of the department of architecture ETH Zurich and chair of information ETH Singapore, Reggie Lai Vice President and General Manager of TE Connectivity, Dr. Ying Long founder of the Beijing City Lab and Associate Professor for architecture at the Tsinghua University and Dr. Zhelin Wang, director of the Chinese Institute for Strategy and Management , all proven experts on the field of the development of future cities, debated the way people will live and work

---

*connect > exchange > lobby > promote > service >*

**SwissCham Beijing (Swiss Chinese Chamber of Commerce)** – 中国瑞士商会

Room 611, Xinyuanli West 19, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100027 - 中国北京市 100027 朝阳区新源里西 19 号 611 室  
Tel. / 电话: +86 10 8468 3982 Fax / 传真: +86 10 8468 3983 info@bei.swisscham.org www.swisscham.org



**swisscham.org**

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Embassy of Switzerland in China  
瑞士驻华大使馆

in cities of tomorrow and how sustainable economies will create the framework for new markets to develop.

**Many thanks to the sponsors and partners of the Sino-Swiss Economic Forum 2018:**

Organisers: SwissCham, Swiss Embassy, (swissnex China)

Platinum Sponsors: Nestlé, TE Connectivity,

Gold Sponsors: Novartis, Double Check

Silver Sponsors: Mercuria, Euro-Sino Enterprises Association

Corporate Table: Interroll, ABB, Shankai Sports

In-Kind Sponsor: Mammut, Caran D' Ache, Cheers Wines, Dragonfly, Kingnature, Lindt, Nespresso, Swisswalls (SKC)

Venue Sponsor: The Peninsula Hotel, Beijing

Media Partners: Caixin, China Economic Weekly

**Photo credit: © SwissCham Beijing 2018**

More pictures available on our website:

[www.pailixiang.com/m/album/main\\_ig2325949.html](http://www.pailixiang.com/m/album/main_ig2325949.html)

**About Us**

Founded in 1996, the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in China (SwissCham China) is the only Swiss non-profit and non-governmental business & trade association officially registered in Mainland China. Our main goal is to gather all actors of the Sino-Swiss business community on a common platform to strengthen the political and economic bonds between the two countries to stimulate interaction and develop business opportunities. Our close relations with Swiss and Chinese official institutions allow us to have the ability to make your voice heard in regards to your experience in doing business in China. Our 3 offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou total more than 450 members and among them 150 are in Beijing.

**Contact & Information**

Mr. Roger Germann

General Manager

[roger.germann@bei.swisscham.org](mailto:roger.germann@bei.swisscham.org)

+86 10 8468 3982 ext. 188

**Follow us**

Website

[cn.swisscham.org](http://cn.swisscham.org)

LinkedIn - click [HERE](#)

WeChat (ID: SwissCham)

WeChat



---

*connect > exchange > lobby > promote > service >*

**SwissCham Beijing (Swiss Chinese Chamber of Commerce)** – 中国瑞士商会

Room 611, Xinyuanli West 19, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100027 - 中国北京市 100027 朝阳区新源里西 19 号 611 室  
Tel. / 电话: +86 10 8468 3982 Fax / 传真: +86 10 8468 3983 info@bei.swisscham.org www.swisscham.org