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# President Ueli Maurer to visit China with finance and business delegation and is invited for state visit

**Bern, 16.04.2019 - President Ueli Maurer will pay a visit to China from 22 to 30 April accompanied by a finance and business delegation. Chinese President Xi Jinping has invited Mr Maurer for a state visit on 28 and 29 April. Following a Federal Council decision taken on 10 April, Switzerland and China will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation with third markets under the Belt and Road Initiative during the visit. In the days prior to that Mr Maurer will hold meetings with the Chinese authorities and representatives from the financial and business sectors and attend the second Belt and Road Forum.**

President Ueli Maurer will begin his visit to China on Tuesday, 23 April, by meeting representatives from the Chinese authorities and the financial sector in the financial hub Shanghai; similar meetings are set to take place in Beijing on Wednesday and Thursday.

On Friday and Saturday, 26 and 27 April, Mr Maurer will attend the second Belt and Road Forum on international cooperation, where development strategies and questions concerning infrastructure and sustainability will be on the agenda. Around 40 heads of state and government are expected to attend. Switzerland will be represented at the Belt and Road Forum for the second time and is thereby supporting the contribution made by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to developing relations between Asia and Europe.

As part of the Innovative Strategic Partnership between Switzerland and China, bilateral cooperation on trade and financial matters in third markets should also be strengthened. A Memorandum of Understanding focusing on finance and trade is expected to be signed during the visit.

The aim of the memorandum is for both parties to intensify cooperation on trade, investment and project financing in third markets along the routes of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) based on a catalogue of basic principles for cooperation and in line with

international standards and legislation in the countries concerned. (The text of the Memorandum will be published after the signing.)

Chinese President Xi Jinping has invited Mr Maurer for a state visit on Sunday and Monday, 28 and 29 April. Mr Maurer will hold talks with the president and Prime Minister Li Keqiang. The visit is intended to further deepen the already very good relations between Switzerland and China. It is at this point that the abovementioned memorandum will be signed by state secretaries Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch, director of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), and Daniela Stoffel, director of the State Secretariat for International Financial Matters (SIF).

## Wide-ranging relations

The two countries are conducting bilateral dialogues covering 30 areas aimed at addressing specific issues. These include high-level political consultations on economic affairs, human rights, migration, labour law, intellectual property, and financial issues. Further important areas of cooperation include science and technology, health and the environment.

Switzerland was one of the first western states to recognise the newly founded People's Republic. Switzerland was also the first country in continental Europe to conclude a free trade agreement with China. China is Switzerland's largest trade partner after the EU and the USA. In 2016 the two sides agreed to define their bilateral relations as an 'Innovative Strategic Partnership', resulting in a further deepening of Sino-Swiss relations. Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to Switzerland at the beginning of 2017.

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