



Federal Chancellor Guy Parmelin to meet Chinese minister Wang Zhigang

Bern, 10.10.2019 - Federal Chancellor Guy Parmelin, head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER, met the Chinese science and technology minister Wang Zhigang in Bern yesterday. During their discussions, which rounded off the eighth Joint Committee Meeting on Science and Technology, they considered the many links between Switzerland and China in research and innovation.

The meeting between Mr Parmelin and Mr Zhigang was a further stage in the positive bilateral relations between Switzerland and China, which have set up around thirty groups holding regular discussions on a variety of topics, including business, education and intellectual property.

The meeting of the Joint Committee on Science and Technology, which was attended by representatives from the ministries, the leading house, research funding agencies and organisations that support innovation and enterprise, considered the current areas of collaboration between China and Switzerland. While direct links between higher education institutions are already well established in more than 200 collaboration agreements, exchange is also increasing in the field of innovation. For example, in recent years swissnex's China office has supported more than 120 start-ups interested in China and the Chinese market. At the end of the meeting, two agreements were signed between partners wishing to increase their collaboration. One of these, between Venturelab and the China Science and Technology Exchange Center, will promote exchange in area of start-up support.

Since Switzerland and China signed a bilateral agreement on cooperation in science and technology in 1989, collaborations between researchers and higher education institutions in the two countries have developed apace. China has become a key partner for researchers from Switzerland, in particular thanks to major investments made by the country in research and development almost equalling those made by the US. Mr Parmelin and Mr Zhigang discussed the opportunities and the challenges presented by cooperation in research and innovation. The two ministers signed a joint declaration expressing their two countries' intention to pursue dialogue in this field in order to foster exchange.

A bilateral scientific and technological cooperation programme was launched more than ten years ago, with the aim of encouraging joint projects. Under the programme, more than 300 persons have been funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and by the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, the leading house for cooperation with East and Southeast Asia. The SNSF has also established a partnership with the National Natural Science Foundation of China, with which it periodically publishes calls for joint projects. Furthermore, since 1961 350 Chinese researchers have had the opportunity to study at a Swiss university on a Swiss government excellence scholarship.

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Publisher

Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research
<http://www.wbf.admin.ch>

Last modification 03.10.2018

