

《CCTV9英语新闻：习近平将于28日访问捷克》

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Chinese President Xi Jinping is scheduled to pay a three-day visit to the Czech Republic, beginning on March 28. It's the first visit by a Chinese head of state to the Czech Republic since the two nations established diplomatic relations 67 years ago.

Anticipation is building up in the Czech Republic.

Officials there say the country will welcome the Chinese President with its highest level of reception ceremonies.

"Some of these activities are really exceptional. Not just the ritual soldiers will attend the welcome ceremony, but also the Czech police and army, to provide security," said Jaroslav Tvrdik, chairman of Supervision CMTE. Czech-China Chamber of Cooperation.

Czech-China relations have developed quickly.

So far, the Czech Republic has become the second biggest trading partner of China in the Central and Eastern European region, and China is the Czech Republic's second biggest trading partner in the world, next only to the European Union.

In 2015, two-way trade topped 11 billion US dollars.

And now, through the China Investment Forum, more Chinese enterprises are investing in the Czech Republic.

"We view the China Investment Forum as a fruitful program. It was initially under the framework of China-Czech economic cooperation, and was later integrated into the cooperation programs between China and 16 Central and Eastern European countries. One of our hopes is to become the main cooperation partner of China in the region," Jaroslav said.

Officials from both sides are hoping President Xi's visit will bring bilateral relations to a new level.

"When President Xi visits the Czech Republic, our relations will be promoted to strategic partnership. China's Belt and Road Initiative will also promote our cooperation. The agreements we are going to sign this time cover almost every cooperation field between the two countries. And I want to emphasize again, President Xi's visit this time will be a milestone in our bilateral relations," he said.

President Xi has also been invited to Czech President Milos Zeman's official residence, the first such visit by a foreign head of state.

Yet another proof of a growing friendship.