

《习近平主席与中国人民老朋友瑞士主席施奈德-阿曼会面》

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President, visiting Swiss leader establish strategic innovative partnership spanning multiple sectors



Xi meets with 'old friend of Chinese people'

Chinese President Xi Jinping (L, front) holds a welcoming ceremony for Swiss President Johann Schneider-Ammann before their talks in Beijing, China, April 8, 2016. [Photo/Xinhua]

China and Switzerland signed five documents on Friday to boost cooperation in areas including work safety, science, innovation and low-carbon city construction as the two countries declared the establishment of their innovative strategic partnership.

President Xi Jinping and visiting Swiss President Johann Schneider-Ammann witnessed in Beijing the signing of two memorandums of understanding, between the Chinese cities of Guangzhou and Chengdu and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation as part of a Sino-Swiss low-carbon city project.

Calling Schneider-Ammann "an old friend of the Chinese people", Xi recalled his meeting with the Swiss president

in June when he came to China for the signing ceremony of the China-proposed Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Xi told his Swiss counterpart that the two countries should work together to establish innovative platforms for enhancing cooperation between enterprises, colleges and institutions.

Regarding the growth in trade between the two countries, which last year celebrated the 65th anniversary of their diplomatic ties, Xi said, "The daily trade volume is now 26 times what it was annually in the first years after we established diplomatic ties."

Switzerland is China's seventh-largest trade partner in Europe, and trade volume between the two reached \$44.3 billion last year.

Xi spoke highly of the Sino-Swiss free trade agreement. Enacted in July 2014, it was China's first free trade pact with a country on the European continent. Xi said it has "set an example for Sino-European cooperation".

Schneider-Ammann said that Switzerland would like to enhance communication with China in areas including science, environmental protection, finance and education. Switzerland wants to participate in the construction of China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative as well as the AIIB.

Schneider-Ammann arrived in China for his state visit on Thursday. Before meeting with Xi, he talked on Thursday with Premier Li Keqiang, the ministers of commerce and of science and technology, as well as the head of the Construction Bank of China. He is scheduled to fly to Shanghai on Saturday to meet with businesspeople there before returning home that day.

Wang Shunqing, deputy director of the European Department of the Foreign Ministry, said that the establishment of a Sino-Swiss innovative strategic partnership gives "a new definition to our bilateral ties", and marks a new era for the two countries.

"President Xi said that President Schneider-Ammann's visit has brought a spring breeze of cooperation," he said. The discussion between the two presidents was "somewhat longer" than had been scheduled, showing that the meeting had been fruitful, he added.

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