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Reader's Digest, 25 March – 14 April 2017

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BILATERAL RELATIONS

[Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer Lead a Delegation From Swiss Financial Sector Visit Asia](#)

Published by [efd.admin.ch](#), 4th April 2017

From 12 to 19 April 2017, Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer, Head of the Federal Department of Finance (FDF), will lead a delegation from the Confederation and Swiss financial centre players on a trip to Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore. Visits to ministries and authorities, state institutions and financial centre players are envisaged. The talks will focus on bilateral and multilateral issues, and concrete cooperation at the state and private-sector levels. In particular, the optimum framework conditions for supporting innovation in the financial sector, for investments and financial services will be broached, as will the role and opportunities for Swiss financial institutions locally and those of the countries concerned in Switzerland, as well as interest in implementing and drawing up global standards concerning financial matters. This exchange with state and private-sector players from the most important financial centres in the Asian region will take place in the context of Switzerland's financial market policy for a competitive Swiss financial centre. This underlines the strengths of the Swiss financial centre and actively safeguards Switzerland's interests in this area. This also includes opening doors for the sector overseas. It is therefore desirable to achieve a public image that is as consistent and effective as possible together with the sector. Switzerland has one of the best, most secure and most competitive financial centres in the world thanks to its excellent framework conditions.

[Chinese Consul General to Zurich Meet the New Mayor of Lucerne](#)

Published by [zurich.china-consulate.org](#), 31st March 2017

On 31 March, the Chinese Consul to Zurich and the Principality of Liechtenstein, Ms. Yanping Gao met the Mayor of Lucerne, Mr. Züsli at the Consulate. The General Consul introduced the latest development of Chinese economy and Sino-Swiss relation, saying that Chinese President Xi had a successful state visit to Switzerland at the beginning of

this year. The leaders of two countries reached a broad consensus on deeper cooperation including the opening of "Sino-Swiss Tourism Year 2017". As the favorite city of Chinese tourists in Switzerland, the General Consul hoped that Lucerne would provide better services to Chinese tourists. Mr. Züsli said that Lucerne is optimistic about China's development and attaches great importance to the development of relation and cooperation with China, in particular, welcomed more Chinese tourists to visit Lucerne. They also exchanged the view in economic relations, cultural activities organization and the consular protection of Chinese citizens and enterprises.

[China, Switzerland Pledge to Advance Military-to-Military Cooperation](#)

Published by chinamil.com, 31st March 2017

Fan Changlong, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, and Chang Wanquan, Chinese defense minister and state councilor, on Friday met separately with Guy Parmelin, head of the Swiss Federal Department of Defense, Civil Protection and Sport. Fan Changlong said China is willing to work with Switzerland to implement consensus reached by leaders of the two countries, enhance strategic communication, enrich military-to-military relations, and make positive contributions to the China-Switzerland innovative strategic partnership. Fan also hailed the smooth development of military-to-military relations in recent years and deepening of exchanges and cooperation in areas such as the exchange of high-level visits, personnel training and international peacekeeping missions. Parmelin said that Switzerland adheres to the one-China policy and is willing to advance pragmatic cooperation with China in all fields. Parmelin told Chang that Switzerland attaches much importance to developing ties with China and is willing to work together with China to elevate military-to-military relations to a new level.

[Swiss Federal Councillor, Defence Minister Guy Parmelin Pays Official Visit to China](#)

Published by eda.admin.ch, 30th March 2017

Swiss Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin, head of the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS), paid an official work visit to China from 30 March to 3 April. He was received by the Chinese Minister of Defence CHANG Wanquan in Beijing. This official visit by Defence Minister Guy Parmelin to his Chinese counterpart CHANG Wanquan is the first high-ranking meeting at ministerial level since the state visit of Chinese President XI Jinping to Switzerland in the middle of January. Federal Councillor Parmelin was also received by the Vice President of China's Central Military Commission, General FAN Changlong, for a brief bilateral exchange. In addition, a visit was planned to a helicopter brigade which is primarily involved in natural disaster relief and rescue operations on behalf of the civilian population. From 2005 to 2009, the Swiss Armed Forces Joint Staff and the Department for Humanitarian Aid of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation provided support in setting up the Chinese rescue team. In parallel, the DDPS conducted various training sessions and workshops in China on earthquake rescue operations.

[Chinese Ambassador to Switzerland Pays a Visit to the President of Government of Grisons](#)

Published by fmprc.gov.cn, 23rd March 2017

On 22 March, Chinese Ambassador to Switzerland GengWenbing paid a visit to the President of Government of Grisons, Ms. Steiner. The latter warmly welcomed the Ambassador Geng. She was very honoured and proud to receive President Xi Jinping's presence at the Davos World Economy Forum. Ms. Steiner also introduced the advantage in multiculturalism, tourism, winter sports and stressed the importance of developing a friendly relation and cooperation with China in relative areas. Ambassador Geng thanked the Canton Government for the hospitality and spoke highly of the positive contribution made by Grisons to the success of President Xi's visit. Geng hoped that on the occasion of Sino-Swiss Tourism Year, Grisons would attract more Chinese tourists and increase the cooperative level in winter sports at the same time. The Embassy will play a bridge role by promoting the local

exchanges, trade, investment and pragmatic cooperation in other areas.

[Chinese Ambassador to Switzerland Pays a Visit to the Deputy State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Department](#)

Published by fmpc.gov.cn, 20th March 2017

On 20 March, the Chinese Ambassador to Switzerland Mr. Geng Wenbing paid a visit to the Deputy State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Department. Ambassador Geng said the current Sino-Swiss Innovative Strategic Partnership is at a comprehensive and rapid development stage and that the state visit of President Xi was a success. The pragmatic cooperation achieved significant results in various fields. He also expressed his willingness to enhance the "Strategic Innovative Partnership", upgrade the FTA between the two countries and strengthen the cooperation under the construction of "One Belt One Road". The Deputy Secretary also stated that Sino-Swiss bilateral relationship achieved a remarkable development. Switzerland attaches great importance to the friendly relationship and collaboration between China and Switzerland. Facing the current world economic situation, the Sino-Swiss cooperation built a significant model.

BUSINESS NEWS

[Ten Start-Ups Selected for the Venture Leaders China Program](#)

Published by startupticker.ch, 7th April 2017

For the 4th time, the venture leaders jury has selected the venture leaders China team 2017, forming the "Swiss National Startup Team China". The ten high growth Swiss startups will take part in the high powered business and financing roadshow, co-organized with swissnex China. Coined as a "flagship program" by the Swiss Ambassador in China, the program will bring the startups to Beijing, Dalian, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Hong Kong, for the most intense journey so far. This time you will overview programs, for example, Urban Famers by Roman Gaus, VIU Ventures by Peter Kaeser, both from Uni St. Gallen and other eight programs in different domains. Created in 2001, venture leaders offers one-week roadshows in Boston (Life Science), Silicon Valley (Technology), New York (Fintech) and China (all domains). This includes presentations to local investors, partners and industry experts as well as business workshops and company visits. Further to getting a unique visibility in Switzerland and abroad, as well as building a strong network, the participants are part of a team of entrepreneurs sharing the same objectives and challenges.

[Finland, Switzerland apt models for research, innovation](#)

Published by usa.chinadaily.com.cn, 6th April 2017

Following President Xi's trip to Davos to attend the World Economic Forum and a state visit to Switzerland in January, he reached Finland on 11 April before flying to the United States. Xi has used his overseas trips to deliver messages on how China views the world and the global economy at a time when populism and protectionism seem to be gathering strength. Xi used his Switzerland visit, and will now use his Finland trip to express China's views that all global players, should fulfill their due responsibilities to build a prosperous and peaceful world, instead of telling China what its global duties are. Besides, Switzerland and Finland can also help China strengthen its domestic program for innovation. By 2050, China aims to become a world leader in science and technology, with its economy mainly driven by innovation. In Switzerland and Finland, China has perfect economic partners; Switzerland occupied the top spot in the World Intellectual Property Organization rankings, with Finland taking the fifth slot. And the two countries are willing to share knowledge and technology with China. Such openness offers great opportunities for Switzerland and Finland. Even though the two countries' population is less than 10 million each, they can get access to China's market

of more than 1.3 billion consumers. And since innovation has become an integral part of the national policy, even Southwest China's Guizhou province, a relatively poor region, has made Switzerland an example of its efforts to reduce poverty.

[China to Overtake U.S. as Digital Market Leader for Luxury Watch Brands](#)

Published by thetop-tier.net, 6th April 2017

Luxury watch brands like Tag Heuer have been increasing their digital presence in China in recent months, and the timing couldn't be better—Chinese consumers are now visiting luxury watch websites more than ever before. Visits to luxury watch websites from China are expected to surpass web traffic from the currently leading U.S. market this year, according to the results of the latest World Watch Report™ Benchmark by Digital Luxury Group (DLG). The report presents insights into the changing preferences and behaviors of consumers, offering clues as to how the Swiss luxury watch industry can save itself in China. The global luxury watch industry used to benefit from China's gift-giving culture, where high-profile individuals in business and political circles purchased costly watches to showcase their social status or to nurture relationships. However, President Xi Jinping's nationwide anti-graft campaign brought the downfall of ostentatious displays of luxury, bringing ongoing challenges to the luxury watch industry in China.

Despite these obstacles, brands are beginning to consider how they can change their course by taking advantage of the emerging market of millennial consumers who have different goals and behaviors from their predecessors. The rise in web traffic from China suggests there is a huge group of digitally savvy consumers with a strong interest in luxury watches. Thus, strengthening their digital elements, from distribution channels to marketing campaigns, has become necessary for luxury watch makers seeking to serve to the potential needs of these consumers.

CULTURE & SOCIETY

[Chinese-style Gusu Garden in Geneva Gets Spring Color](#)

Published by news.xinhuanet.com, 11th April 2017

(PICTURE) Photo taken on 10 April 2017 shows the traditional Chinese Gusu Garden in Geneva, Switzerland. The Chinese-style Gusu garden situated inside the World Trade Organization's Geneva headquarters was formally opened on 13 February 2013. It was named after the ancient Chinese city of Suzhou, a city in south China known for its UNESCO-listed classical gardens. The Ministry of Commerce of China and the Municipal Government of Suzhou jointly offered the Gusu Garden to the WTO as a symbol of China's long-lasting confidence in the multilateral trading system.

[Swiss Presence at 2017 GUYU ACTION International Performance Art Festival](#)

Published by prohelvetia.cn, 29th March 2017

GUYU ACTION International Performance Art Festival is one of the most active international performance art festivals in China. It was established in 2007 in Xi'an China. And it promotes an open and free exchange of art. It aims at creating an international and experimental platform for performance artists to express their ideas with art works. Since 2007, GUYU ACTION has successfully organized ten times international performance art festivals in Beijing, Xi'an and other places. 500 artists from all over the world have participated in this festival. This year, seven Swiss artists will perform at GUYU, including YannMarussich, Muda Mathis, SusZwick, Hochuli Gisela, GisalaHochuli, Marianne Papst, SibylleHauert, Simone Etter. Among the performers, YannMarussich will perform "Bain Brisé" for the second time in China.

GENERAL INTEREST

[Switzerland Tops the Global Talent Competitiveness Index](#)

Published by mapsofworld.com, 10th April 2017

The Global Talent Competitiveness Index is a report released by INSEAD in partnership with Human Capital Leadership Institute of Singapore and Adecco Group. The report measures the nations' ability to compete for talent. The report also measures how nations around the world grow, attract as well as retain talent. Countries that occupy the top slots in the table have certain characteristics in common. These are employment policies that support flexibility, good educational standards, mobility and entrepreneurship, among others. The 2017 Global Talent Competitiveness Index, which is the fourth edition, places Switzerland at the top of the table with a score of 74.55. Singapore occupies the second spot with a score of 74.09. It is followed by the United Kingdom in the third place, which has a score of 69.4. In fact, majority of the countries that have a score of 60 and above belong to Europe and all of them are high income economies. BRICS, which are five major emerging national economies, do not fare very well on the 2017 Global Talent Competitiveness Index. The five nations China, Russia, South Africa, Brazil and India occupy the 54, 56, 67, 81, and 92 ranks with scores of 45.34, 45.03, 42.75, 38.99, and 35.65 respectively.

[Why Hospitality Students Head to Switzerland](#)

Published by koreaherald.com, 5th April 2017

Among the plethora of private schools in Switzerland, a handful of boarding institutions near the city of Montreux have a long tradition of specializing in hospitality -- a field which ranges from fine dining and luxury branding to hotel management and finances. During the first year, all students acquire the basics of fine dining. After mastering the practical, in the second and third years, the students move onto theory in management, finances, marketing, and other studies necessary in executive-level hospitality. Asian students go into the hospitality industry for a number of reasons. Some have parents who run hotels and recommend the Swiss schools to their children, wanting their successors to be expertly trained. Others have no background in the business, but are passionate about specializing in the field. What the students are here to learn, they explained, is the centuries-old Swiss tradition in the hotel business, which they believe sets a firm foundation for today's luxury services. Enrollment statistics reflect the global hospitality trend, SEG officials say. Currently, some 69.2 percent of the students of SEG's schools consist of pupils from the greater Asia and Pacific region, reflecting the tourism boom in the area. Of those, many hail from China, Korea and Taiwan.

[62 Overseas NGOs Set Up Offices in China After Registration Under New Law](#)

Published by chinadaily.com.cn, 2nd April 2017

A total of 62 overseas NGOs have registered with public security authorities and set up representative offices on the Chinese mainland after a new law regulating overseas NGOs took effect 1 January. Among the 62 NGOs, which include those in fields such as the economy, education and environmental protection, 27 are from the United States, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the US-China Business Council. The other 35 come from 14 regions and countries, including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Britain, Germany and Switzerland. "With simplified procedures and less time spent, the registration went smoothly under the new law," said Jacob Parker, vice president of China Operations of the US-China Business Council, an organization of American companies in business with China. The new law, which was adopted last year, requires all overseas NGOs to secure approval from Chinese authorities before they operate on the Chinese mainland.

INDUSTRIES

Engineering / Manufacturing

[ChemChina Wins EU, US Nods for Syngenta Takeover](#)

Published by Chinadaily.com, 6th April 2017

China National Chemical Corp (ChemChina) won the European Union's antitrust approval for its USD43 billion takeover of Swiss pesticide maker Syngenta AG, a day after the US gave its blessing, bringing China's largest foreign acquisition closer to the finish line. ChemChina's offer to divest some pesticides and other agricultural products will remove "problematic overlaps" and allow EU regulators to clear the deal, the European Commission said in an emailed statement. The takeover, announced a year ago, is one of a trio of megadeals that would reshape the global agrochemicals industry. If the deal is completed, ChemChina Chairman Ren Jianxin would become the head of a chemicals giant that sells products as varied as rubber tires, pesticides and genetically modified crop seeds.

Bank / Finance / Insurance

[UBS Economist Kwok Sees China PPI Just About Peaking](#)

Published by finance.yahoo.com, 11th April 2017

(VIDEO) UBS Senior China Economist Donna Kwok discusses her outlook for the Chinese economy, inflation and food prices. She speaks on "Bloomberg Daybreak: Asia."

Hospitality / Tourism / Retail

[Baselworld 2018 Will Be Two Days Shorter; Ongoing Declines Plague Swiss Watch Industry](#)

Published by forbes.com, 1st April 2017

Baselworld, the annual watch and jewelry show in Basel, Switzerland, will run for six days instead of eight days next year, in the wake of lower attendance and declining sales in the Swiss watch industry. The decision comes on the heels of the 2017 show, which ended Thursday. "The boom in China during the 2000s has been stifled by the Chinese government's crackdown on luxury gift-giving, resulting in a 50% drop in exports to Hong Kong over the past four years. Currency fluctuations have also had a negative effect, particularly the strong Swiss franc, and declining tourism in the U.S. and Europe for political reasons have curtailed luxury shopping," said the industry expert Joe Thompson of Watch Time magazine. The result is a watch industry that is overstocked and, many say, overpriced, resulting in a surge in the grey market. Richemont, whose brands include Cartier, Piaget and Vacheron Constantin, bought back millions of euros in inventory from retailers in 2016, and cut 200 jobs from its watchmaking staff. As for coping strategies, companies have been reducing prices and revising product development strategies, boosting lower-priced categories and putting the brakes on new high-horology showpieces.

Legal / Trade / Consulting / Services

[China Legal Report – March 2017](#)

Published by wenfei.com, 31st March 2017

China Legal Report is a monthly collection of Chinese law related news gathered from various media and news

services, edited by Wenfei Attorney-at-law LTD. This time, you will read the analyses concerning the *International Exchange of Financial Information in Tax Matter – Overview with Focus on China*. We will look through this topic by some parts like “over view of the treaties and legislation”, “current state in China”, “administration assistance”, “spontaneous exchange of information” and “automatic exchange of information”.

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