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BILATERAL RELATIONS

[Swiss Economics Minister Says WTO Should be Strengthened](#)

Published by news.cgtn.com, 7th September 2018

Switzerland wants to defend free trade and strengthen the World Trade Organization (WTO). That was the message from Swiss Economics Minister Johann Schneider-Ammann – the man who helped engineer the Sino-Swiss free trade agreement in 2013. “I believe that we have to sit down together to make sure that WTO not only survives but also gets strengthened,” Ammann said, adding that big elephants such as China, the United States, India, Brazil and European Union will need to have a reasonable conversation by “sitting around the table of WTO.” Switzerland was one of the first Western countries that sought contact with China. In 2013, Switzerland became the first continental European country to sign a free-trade agreement with China, and in 2016 Switzerland was one of the first countries in Europe to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). During this year’s World Economic Forum in Davos, China and Switzerland pledged to further promote bilateral relations. And Switzerland planned to coordinate cooperation with China within the context of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and to promote the continuous development of bilateral relations of friendship and cooperation in all fields.

[Swiss Minister Keeps Eye on Chinese Company Takeover Policy](#)

Published by swissinfo.ch, 5th September 2018

Chinese companies are free to acquire counterparts in Switzerland, but China imposes restrictions on its soil. Swiss Economics Minister Johann Schneider-Ammann says he will push for a level playing field during a forthcoming trip to China. But Schneider-Ammann is more optimistic than other ministerial colleagues that the situation will improve. Last month, Communications Minister Doris Leuthard told the Aargauer Zeitung newspaper that Switzerland should insist on reciprocity, pointing to a tough line taken on the issue

in Germany. “We must do what Germany did many years ago, which is hold a discussion on how to react in the face of Chinese firms’ hunger for takeovers,” she declared. Currently, Chinese rules only allow Swiss firms to have joint ventures with Chinese companies. Ahead of his visit to China, Schneider-Ammann gave a more placatory message to Swiss public television, SRF, on Wednesday. While acknowledging that the unequal takeover treatment is a real problem, the minister said progress is being made. “It is my understanding that it is only a matter of time before China must also allow the majority of shares to be given over,” he told SRF. “I am sure that they will get to where we currently are.” For this reason, the level playing field issue will not take a special place in his discussions with the Chinese authorities during his trip.

Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann to Travel to China on Economic and Scientific Mission

Published by seco.admin.ch, 3rd September 2018

The head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) will meet with various members of the Chinese government, including the vice premier of the state council and the ministers for science and technology, and industry and trade. Topics on the agenda are set to include bilateral economic relations and cooperation in the field of education, research and innovation. The mission should also provide an opportunity to hold exchanges with observers on China’s development and private sector players, as well as with representatives from China’s education, research and innovation sector. One such opportunity will be the Sino-Swiss Economic Forum organised by the Swiss-Chinese Chamber of Commerce SwissCham in Beijing on 6 September. A further highlight of the visit will be the Sino-Swiss Drone Night in Shanghai on 7 September to mark the 10th anniversary of swissnex China. Swissnex China is one of five offices in Switzerland’s network around the world which supports Swiss players to connect internationally in the field of education, research and innovation, and encourages them to be actively involved in the global exchange of knowledge, ideas and talent.

BUSINESS NEWS

Fifth Edition of the Sino-Swiss Economic Forum

Published by cn.swisscham.org, 13th September 2018

The Fifth Sino-Swiss Economic Forum (SSEF 2018) was successfully held on 6 September, 2018, at the Peninsula Hotel in Beijing with the noteworthy presence of H.E Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, and Mr. Qian Zhai, Director general of the Ministry of Commerce of the P.R. of China. The SSEF takes place every two years in Beijing. The 5th edition of the forum was jointly organized by the Embassy of Switzerland in China and the Swiss-Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Beijing, in partnership with swissnex China. The 50-strong economic and science delegation which is on a work visit to China with Federal Councillor Schneider-Ammann also attended the forum. With the topic of “free trade”, prominent experts discussed tomorrow’s retail in the context of the technological revolution at the forum. Furthermore, they explored ways of living, working and doing business in the sustainable cities of the Sino-Swiss future. More than 350 guests attended the event, including leaders of Swiss and Chinese companies as well as high-level government representatives from both countries. Four years after the entry into force of the free trade agreement (FTA) between Switzerland and China, trade flows between the two countries have been growing robustly and the number of companies making use of the FTA is increasing. The two countries

have committed themselves to a further enhancement of the FTA during China's President Xi Jinping's State visit to Switzerland in January 2017. At the SSEF 2018, both countries' representatives renewed their promises to further promote free trade. During his speech, Schneider-Ammann highly acknowledged the dynamic bilateral relations and increasing bilateral trade, and emphasized the great interest of the Chinese market to Swiss companies.

[ICBC: "We Chose Zurich as We Target Corporate Banking"](#)

Published by agefi.com, 9th September 2018

The General Manager of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Zurich Branch talked with the Swiss press for the first time. In June this year, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) officially inaugurated its Zurich branch in the presence of Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer as well as the President of the Swiss National Bank, Thomas Jordan. ICBC is the largest bank in the world in terms of balance sheet. The bank employs more than 450,000 people around the world. After a fierce battle between Geneva and Zurich lasted for more than five years, it was finally the city with banks of the Limmat, on a regular basis, was the most convincing city to attract not only ICBC but also, a year earlier, China Construction Bank (CCB). In an interview with Agefi, CHEN Peichen, the new General Manager of ICBC in Zurich, talked with the Swiss press for the first time. The key criteria of choosing Zurich rather than Geneva was that ICBC mainly target corporate banking, they considered Zurich as a priority at the first step. However, Geneva was also an important financial center, particularly regarding the maritime transport and commodity trading sectors. In fact, since the opening of the branch in Zurich, ICBC has some of major clients - both Chinese and Swiss - active in commodity trading based in Geneva.

[Bally CEO Frédéric de Narp Looks to a 'Fascinating' Future with Chinese Owners](#)

Published by afr.com, 6th September 2018

Luxury goods. Once a thing for the chosen few, those with privilege and access; items that signified to the world a certain status, exclusivity, social cachet. But according to Frédéric de Narp, chief executive of Swiss luxury fashion company Bally, that's not the only approach to luxury in the present age. His strategy is quite the opposite: he wants to make Bally approachable and – gasp – suitable for the everyday. "When I started with the company, we undertook a true, deep assessment of what Bally stood for to clarify our strategy. Our conclusion was we can't be everything to everyone," he tells Luxury from Switzerland. "Bally is set to win in the sector on the approachable and inclusive aspect. After all, we are from a peaceful country, open to the world!" Most significantly, after various holders and investors over the past decade, de Narp has been leading the company through new ownership. In February, Bally was bought by Chinese textile giant Shandong Ruyi, which de Narp acknowledges as one of the turning points in the company's history. "It's the first time a global accessories company like Bally has been sold to a Chinese conglomerate.

[WISeKey Ramps Up Semiconductors and Blockchain Operation in China](#)

Published by globenewswire.com, 5th September 2018

WISeKey International Holding Ltd ("WISeKey" or the "Company"), a leading cybersecurity and IoT company, today announced that is joining the 2018 Annual Meeting of the New Champions in Tianjin. More than 2,000 leaders from government, business, science and civil society will join the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting of the New Champions in Tianjin, People's Republic of China, taking place on 18-20 September 2018. 111 countries will be represented. WISeKey was originally nominated as one of

the founding members of the New Champions community back in 2007 in China with already 12 years of deep engagement with the Forum as member of its Expert Network and member of the PACI, Cyber Resilience and Global Agenda Council. During the past years, the New Champions event in China has provided an excellent platform for WISEKey to exchange insights and practices with multi-stakeholders in China, which has greatly accelerated our WISEKey China operations. The main objective of Summer Davos is to create a global community to ensure that emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain and the internet of things are used to benefit society and that they remain human-centered. This requires global collaborative efforts to define the necessary principles of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the standards to ensure global interoperability.

CULTURE & SOCIETY

[Swiss Focus in East Asian Jazz Festivals](#)

Published by prohelvetia.cn, 29th August 2018

One of the biggest Jazz Festival in Asia, Jarasum International Jazz Festival in Korea, will shed the spotlight on Switzerland this October. Under the support of Pro Helvetia Shanghai, Swiss musicians Colin Vallon Trio, Schnellertollermeier (STM) and Tobias Preisig are invited to perform in their robust program. Besides Jarasum, their tour is replete with meaningful gigs at OCT-LOFT Jazz Festival in Shenzhen, Match&Fuse Festival in Tokyo/Osaka, and many other music houses in China and Japan. Colin Vallon Trio is an innovative and very well-respected band of their generation. Formed in 1999, they have a wealth of successful tours and concerts to their name, and have found its own space in the crowded world of the piano trio by quietly challenging its conventions. STM is an in-demand trio with an original musical identity and part of a dynamic contemporary European music scene. Tobias Preisig was admitted as the first violin student at the Swiss Jazz School in Berne. He has performed several times in Japan, China and Korea with his electronic duo EgoPusher, which has frequented China two times on tour and gained reputation.

GENERAL INTEREST

[Grand Basel—The Art Basel of Cars—Opens in Switzerland](#)

Published by hk.asiatatler.com, 3rd September 2018

Art, design, architecture and automotive design. These are the pitch points of Grand Basel, a new trade show centred around masterpiece cars that are debuting in Basel this week. Running from 6 to 9 September (with a media preview on 4 September) the show is the brainchild of MCH Group, which organises Baselworld for watches and Art Basel art fairs in Switzerland, Miami and Hong Kong. Many have already hailed Grand Basel as the Art Basel of the car world—and with good reason. The inaugural edition will display a top-of-the-range selection of vintage, current and future cars, in what MCH Group describes as a “cultural context.” What that means, exactly, is a series of exhibitions that go beyond the mere trade show format—think curated presentations and lifestyle events throughout the event, each conceived by an independent advisory board of architects, designers and other creative figures such as Swiss artist Sylvie Fleury and Italian entrepreneur Lapo Elkann. Some 100 cars are making this first show, including, as the official press release tells us “racing legends, movie icons, radical one-offs, culturally-significant classics, and the world premiere of a contemporary coach built special.”

INDUSTRIES

Engineering / Manufacturing

[Swiss Multinational Group Invests in High-End Machine Tool Production Facility in Changzhou National Hi-Tech District](#)

Published by [markets.businessinsider.com](#), 10th September 2018

On 5 September, GF Machining Solutions held a ground-breaking ceremony for its new Phase II project in Changzhou National Hi-Tech District, with Liang Yibo, vice mayor of Changzhou; Chen Zhengchun, director of the Administration Committee of Changzhou National Hi-Tech District and director of Xinbei District; and Xu Yawei, vice director of Xinbei District in attendance. The USD 48 million, 32,000-square-meter facility, built on a 5.14 hectare plot of land, will be equipped with a manufacturing workshop and offices. The main focus will be the research, development and production of high-end machine tools, with the aim of establishing GF Machining Solutions as the world-class manufacturing base and R&D center for such tools. The project will help promote technical innovation across the district's equipment manufacturing sector, as well as attract the best companies from the upstream and downstream segments of the industry to set up operations locally, setting in motion the development of the district's equipment manufacturing industry chain. Changzhou GF Machining Solutions is a subsidiary of Switzerland-based Georg Fischer. Founded in 1802, Georg Fischer is one of the world's leading industrial groups, with operations in over 140 countries and regions. The group has more than 15,800 employees worldwide and generated sales of CHF 4.2 billion (approx. USD 4.33 billion) in 2017.

[ABB Innovative Technology to Power Belt and Road Initiative](#)

Published by [abb.com.cn](#), 4th September 2018

ABB held the “Belt and Road” Customer Event in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, on September 4th, with the theme “Innovation backs connectivity – ABB partners with you in winning along the Silk Road”. The event aimed to support local customers and customers from neighboring regions to further explore the market areas of Belt and Road, to innovate trade and investment models, and to build a green Silk Road together through innovative technologies and ABB Ability™ digital solutions together with ABB’s rich experiences in global EPC project management. Upon the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up, the event re-echoed the “Re-take the Ancient Silk Road and Play the Chorus” program organized by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) from late August till middle September. More than 200 guests from the CPAFFC, local government, customers, and media attended the event. “The Belt and Road Initiative has injected new momentum for China and the global economy and closed in the gap between the East and the West, opening up new space and opportunities for collaboration. ABB was one of the first group of multinational enterprises to be a partner of choice for Chinese companies in EPC with its wide business coverage in the fields of power and automation,” said Jiang Haibo, Head of Industrial Automation division, ABB China.

Bank / Finance / Insurance

[Chinese Firms Look to Smaller Foreign Buys, UBS China Boss Says](#)

Published by [reuters.com](#), 6th September 2018

China’s appetite for foreign takeovers has not yet been sated, but future targets may be smaller, the head of Chinese strategy at UBS said. “I believe, having done all this M&A, this trend is not going to stop,” UBS’s

Chairman of the China Strategy Board Eugene Qian said at a roundtable with journalists. Many Chinese companies are looking to partnerships and acquisitions abroad in order to sustain high growth rates and deliver the high quality foreign brand names sought out by China's emerging middle class. After a spate of landmark deals — including the purchases of Swiss seed and chemical giant Syngenta by ChemChina and German robotics maker Kuka by Midea — state-controlled Chinese firms are now focusing on smaller foreign transactions, according to the investment banking expert. UBS and other Western banks are well positioned to profit from the push, he added. UBS currently employs 1,100 people in China, and could add several hundred new jobs by 2020 in its investment bank, asset management and wealth management business by 2020, Qian said. Switzerland's biggest bank and the world's largest wealth manager is looking to increase its stake in its profitable Chinese joint venture to 51% from currently 25 percent and is waiting for approval from Chinese authorities to do so.

[Asia Expert Joins Swiss Boutique](#)

Published by finews.asia, 4th September 2018

Swiss International Asset Management, a Hong Kong-based investment boutique, appointed a banker with years of experience from LGT and Mirabaud to boost its services in the region. John Holmes, a Canadian citizen and permanent resident of Hong Kong, joined Swiss International Asset Management as partner and senior relationship manager, the company said in a statement. Holmes spent more than a decade at LGT in Hong Kong, both as managing director and senior relationship manager. He also was the managing director of the Hong Kong branch of Mirabaud, the Swiss private bank.

[Hospitality / Tourism / Retails](#)

[Richemont Posts Strong Sales Growth Helped by Asia](#)

Published by cnbc.com, 10th September 2018

Cartier maker Richemont said sales of its watches and jewellery rose 10% in the five months to 31 August, helped by strong demand in Asia Pacific and the Americas. Swiss watchmakers have seen sales rebound strongly after a severe downturn, but some investors now fear Chinese luxury demand could have peaked and rising trade tensions could take their toll. "Hong Kong, Korea and Macau all generated double digit increases while China showed good growth," the world's second biggest luxury goods group said in a statement released ahead of its annual general meeting in Geneva. It did not provide an outlook for the rest of the year. Sales in constant currency rose 10% in the period, while sales at actual exchange rates were up 7%, Richemont said, which on Monday also appointed Jerome Lambert as chief executive. Including recently acquired Yoox Net-a-Porter (YNAP) and Watchfinder.co.uk, sales were up 25% at constant exchange rates and 22% at actual rates.

[Wyeth Reports Strong Performance on Chinese Demand](#)

Published by irishtimes.com, 4th September 2018

Wyeth Nutritionals, the Irish infant formula business of Swiss food giant Nestlé, reported another strong trading performance last year due to increased demand for its products in China. The company, which produces a range of powder and liquid "ready to feed" infant formulas – including brands such as SMA, S-26, Progress, Promil and Illuma – recorded turnover of USD 655.8 million (EUR 566.4 million) in 2017, up USD 5.5 million (EUR 4.75 million) on a year earlier. However, pretax profits were down sharply on the prior year, a period in which the company recorded a 103% rise in profits due to a significant gain arising

from the sale of its intellectual property for USD 1.6 billion (EUR 1.3 billion) to a fellow group undertaking. That sale resulted in a USD 102 million (EUR 88.1 million) profit gain for Wyeth.

Legal / Trade / Consulting / Services

[China Announces a Three-Year Tax Exemption on Bond Interest for Foreign Investors](#)

Published by pwccn.com, 5th September 2018

On 30 August 2018, the Standing Committee of the State Council proposed a three-year exemption from Corporate Income Tax (CIT) and Value Added Tax (VAT) on interest income derived by overseas investors from their investment in China's bond markets. This brings good news to foreign institutional investors – reducing their tax burdens and clarifying their uncertain tax positions. However, we are still waiting for clarity on some issues and expect these to be addressed when the Ministry of Finance and State Administration of Taxation issue detailed regulations.

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