



MEDIA RELEASE

The 8th Sino-Swiss Economic Forum: Shaping the Future of Collaboration and Innovation; with the presence of Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, H.E. Guy Parmelin and H.E. Mr. Wang Wentao, Minister of Commerce, the People's Republic of China.

July 1, Beijing – The 8th edition of the Sino-Swiss Economic Forum (SSEF) was successfully held on July 1, 2024, at the China World Summit Wing Beijing with the noteworthy presence of H.E. Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin, Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, and H.E. Mr. Wang Wentao, Minister of Commerce, the People's Republic of China. The SSEF takes place every two years in Beijing. This edition was organized by the China Swiss Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Embassy of Switzerland in China.

The forum was attended by a prominent delegation focused on economics, education, and research, which was in China on a working visit with Federal Councillor H.E. Guy Parmelin. The event featured discussions on trending topics, with notable experts, leading entrepreneurs, companies leaders, and innovators sharing strategies and practical insights of Swiss companies within China's business landscape. Key areas of focus included sustainability, talent retention, digitalization, life sciences, supply chain management, market access and regulation. Additionally, a C-level forum provided macro-economic outlooks and valuable insights for 2024 and beyond. The event attracted over 400 guests, including leaders from Swiss and Chinese multinational companies, as well as high-level government representatives from both nations.

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H.E. Guy Parmelin, Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research

In a keynote speech, Swiss Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, H.E. Guy Parmelin recognized the evolving bilateral relations and the growing exchanges in education and research between the two countries, highlighting the strong interlinkages of Swiss companies with the Chinese market. H.E. Guy Parmelin stated: “The pandemic showed us that global value chains became strained but did not permanently break. As an economy strongly integrated in the global economy, gaining access to geographically diversified markets is beneficial to Switzerland and strengthens our resilience to crises. At the same time, we want to focus on our key economic partners. These are foremost the EU, but also the rest of Europe, the United States and certainly also China.”

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H.E. Mr. Minister of Commerce, the People's Republic of China

The Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, H.E. Wang Wentao stated in his keynote speech that “next year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Switzerland, presenting a new historical opportunity for the development of bilateral trade relations. The Federal Councillor, H.E. Guy Parmelin and I signed a Memorandum of Understanding, agreeing to formally launch the negotiations for upgrading the Sino-Swiss Free Trade Agreement as soon as possible. An early upgrade of the Sino-Swiss Free Trade Agreement will undoubtedly inject strong momentum into cooperation in areas such as goods trade, services trade, and investment between the two countries.”

To foster insightful dialogue and diverse perspectives, sub-forums were organized into specialized SwissCham committee groups. These groups enabled participants to delve deeply into their areas of expertise and share the most up-to-date news and developments within their respective industries or relevant topics.

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Life Science Sub-Forum:



In this Sub-forum, we gathered representatives from the Swiss Life Science Sector, Dr. Hong Shen, Senior Vice President and Head of China Innovation Center of Roche (CICoR), Liao Ning, General Manager of Geistlich China, Hattie Zhang, General Manager of Bien-Air China and Hong Cui, General Manager of Ypsomed China, to discuss the positive development of Sino-Swiss cooperation in localization and sustainable health care. The panel discussion explored how Swiss Education foster growth and development in the life science industry in China.

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Sustainability Sub-Forum:



This sub-forum examined how Swiss companies in China are addressing the low carbon transition, including energy efficiency improvements, renewable energy adoption, and waste reduction programs. Panelists including Sophia Slingerland, Founder and GM of SHINE, Qiuxiao Ren, Head of the Green Finance Team of Credit Management at Bank of China, Nero Luo, Head of Process Plants CN at Sulzer Chemtech, Eric C. Rupert, CEO of altPlus Technologies, talked about the impact of China's regulatory environment on corporate sustainability, sharing how they have utilized regulatory incentives to enhance their business operations.

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Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Sub-Forum



This sub-forum investigated supply chain management for manufacturing companies operating in China. In the company presentation, George Zhang, Robotics China Head of Business Development at ABB, delved into the specific challenges the company faced while managing supply chains in China and the practical solutions and strategies that were implemented to overcome these obstacles by providing a detailed case study. The panel discussion invited George Zhang, Yijun Zhu, Head of SCN Engineer Competence Center of Elevator at Schindler (China) Elevator Co., Ltd, Liah Zou, Leader of the Global Strategic Purchasing Team, Dewert Okin and Gangqiang Zhu, Director of Supply Chain Management at Endress Hausser to discuss the supply chain challenges and ways to optimize supply chain efficiency and build resilience to withstand disruptions, as well as the future trends of supply with the impact of technological advancements, such as AI and IoT, on supply chain operations for manufacturing companies in China.

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Talent Retention Sub-Forum



This sub-forum analyzed how Swiss companies in China are embracing human-centricity to enhance talent retention, innovation, and profitability. Panelists, including Dongchen Sun, General Manager of Education Ecology BU at Hexagon/Leica, Jenny Liu, China HR Head at Swiss Re, and Barbara Fontanellaz, Director of the Swiss Federal University for Education and Training, discussed the impact of human-centric strategies on employee satisfaction and loyalty, and how these efforts drive overall company success.

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Digitalization Sub-Forum



This sub-forum explored the integration of AI into digital transformation efforts by Swiss companies in China. Jared Wang, CIO of Swiss Re China, and Zhe Lu, Head of Volcano Engine Insurance Industry Solutions Team, shared their experiences and insights on implementing AI, the challenges they faced, and the strategies they employed to overcome them, culminating in a best practice case of AI implementation. The panel discussion, which included Jared Wang, Zhe Lu, Tony Yao, Head of Digital Product Delivery at Roche Diagnostics China, and Sam Guo, CEO and Founder of Fest Auto, highlighted the competitive advantages gained through AI integration, such as improved operational efficiency and enhanced customer experiences. Additionally, the panel examined the regulatory landscape for AI in China and its impact on digital transformation strategies.

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Market Access and Regulation Sub-Forum:



The Market Access and Regulation sub-forum focused on IP protection for Swiss companies in China. Yaqi Liu, Resident Partner of Weifei Law, presented a case on IP protection in China. Lily Shi, Managing Director of Hidrostal (Qingdao) Pumps Co., Ltd. and Hidrostal (Qingdao) M&E Engineering Co., Ltd., David Wang, General Manager of Kingnature APAC, Peng Yin, Vice General Manager of the Northern Operation Division and Engineering Surveying Channel at Hexagon/Leica, and Yaqi Liu discussed strategies for Swiss companies to safeguard their intellectual property in China.

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Macro-Economic Outlook Forum:



The forum aimed to discuss expectations for the second half of 2024, sharing insights into the most pressing economic issues. Jennifer Zhong, China Economist at UBS Securities and Liu Jing, Professor of Accounting and Finance and Director of the Investment Research Center at Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business (CKGSB), examined current challenges, macroeconomic trends impacting businesses today, and potential economic scenarios for 2025. They also explored strategies to navigate economic conditions and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

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The Sino-Swiss Economic Forum, the largest economic summit between Switzerland and China, offers a unique platform for dialogue, exchange, and partnership-building between the two countries. The forum concluded with an exclusive gala dinner, providing an evening of engaging networking opportunities for attendees and celebrating insights and forging collaborations.

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About Us

Founded in 1996, the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in China (SwissCham China) is the only Swiss non-profit and non-governmental business & trade association officially registered in Mainland China. Our main goal is to gather all actors of the Sino-Swiss business community on a common platform to strengthen the political and economic bonds between the two countries to stimulate interaction and develop business opportunities. Our close relations with Swiss and Chinese official institutions allow us to have the ability to make your voice heard in regard to your experience in doing business in China. Our 4 offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing gather in total more than 400 members.

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