

Trading Places



贸易协定回顾

The free trade agreement between China and Switzerland came into effect two years ago. David Braun, Head of Economic, Financial and Commercial Section of the Swiss Embassy in the People's Republic of China talks to **The Bridge** about what it has meant to trade between the two countries on a macro level.

by **Mark Andrews**

在中瑞贸易协定正式执行两年后，瑞士驻中华人民共和国大使馆经济、金融和商业部负责人 David Braun 从宏观经济层面向《桥》介绍了它对两国的贸易意义。

作者：**Mark Andrews**

Two years on from the implementation of the Sino-Swiss Free Trade Agreement FTA what do you feel the key benefits have been?

Generally speaking, the FTA created supportive framework conditions for the exchange of goods, and for contributing to a greener and more sustainable economy. Looking at the trade figures, the strongest increase in terms of absolute growth in the past year was in the area of chemicals: pharmaceuticals and biotech (+13%), and watches (+4.9%).

In recent years, Switzerland has become China's ninth largest import partner, whereas China consistently ranks as the number six source of imports to Switzerland. This being said, the FTA needs time to develop to its full potential, but existing issues are being addressed through the well-established communication channels between the Chinese and Swiss experts.

中在自由贸易协定执行两年后，它带来了哪些关键的利益？

总的来说，自由贸易协定为商品贸易和更为环保、可持续性的经济发展创造了支持性框架条件。贸易数据显示，在过去一年里，绝对增幅最大的分别是化学药品领域——医药、生物科技（+13%）和手表领域（+4.9%）。

近年来，瑞士已经发展成为中国第九大进口伙伴，而中国一直以来都是瑞士的第六大进口来源。基于此，自由贸易协定需要一定的时间来发挥全部威力，而现存的问题也都通过中瑞专家间有效的交流渠道得到了解决。

Has it benefited importers and exporters equally?

Looking at the overall figure, the increase in exports from Switzerland to China (+14.3%) was larger than the increase of imports from China to Switzerland. However, the difference is mainly accounted for by the export of precious metals out of Switzerland. Overall, exports from China to Switzerland in 2015 compared very positively with Chinese exports to its most important trading partners, where a number of key markets saw declining figures.

What effect has the FTA had on the growth of trade? In the past Switzerland was not running a trade deficit with China, is this still the case?

Last year, the total volume of Swiss goods traded with Mainland China stood at CHF 31.7 billion. That is 9% more than the total trade volume of 2014. China's trade growth with most of its partners was negative during the same period which shows our bilateral trade was clearly bucking the trend. In all likelihood, the FTA has positively contributed to that growth.

Back in 2007, trade between China and Switzerland grew by more than 20%. Trade growth, while predominantly positive in the past 15 years, has always been quite volatile. During the financial crisis, trade slowed down drastically, but recovered again in 2010. Since 2012, because of a global economic cool down, trade growth again declined. Since the implementation of the FTA, we have seen again a gradual increase in trade growth.

In fact, trade between both countries was growing in 2015 at 9%, while trade with most other important trading partners of Switzerland decreased in the same period, or increased only slightly. The 9% increase with China marks the highest increase among Switzerland's top 10 trading partners. In 2015 Switzerland had a positive trade balance (+CHF6,872 million) with China. This has continued in Q1 and Q2 of 2016 with +CHF2,801 million and +CHF1,643 million respectively.

As the first continental European country to have such an agreement what advantage do you feel it has given Swiss companies over EU competitors?

The Sino-Swiss FTA covers the elimination or substantial reduction of tariffs on more than 95% of bilateral trade, thus ensuring significant improvements in most sectors. There are substantive provisions on technical barriers to trade, trade facilitation and customs procedures, on trade in services and on intellectual property rights. The FTA also includes provisions promoting the environmental and social aspects of sustainable development. More generally, the FTA enhances transparency and legal certainty for companies engaged in bilateral trade.

Due to the fact that Switzerland was the first continental European country to conclude such an agreement with China, Swiss companies have the chance to benefit from a first-mover advantage. An FTA always needs some time for the implementation and Swiss companies are to that extent several steps ahead of their competitors.

Architecture
Architecture
Interior
Industrial
Industrial
Portrait
Portrait

Photography

Yolanda vom Hagen Degree Photo-Designer 13601947647

www.YovohaGrafie.de

它为进口商和出口商带来的利益是等同的吗?

整体数据显示,瑞士对中国的出口额增幅(+14.3%)大于中国从瑞士的进口额增幅。不过,这种差异主要是由瑞士出口的贵金属引起的。总的来看,2015年,中国对瑞士的出口数据相比中国对其他主要贸易伙伴的出口数据(对一些主要市场的出口有所下滑)更为乐观。

自由贸易协定对贸易增长有哪些影响?过去,瑞士对中国从未出现过贸易赤字的情况,现在仍是如此吗?

去年,瑞士商品至中国内地的贸易额达317亿瑞士法郎,较2014年的总贸易额提高了8%。而同期,中国与多数贸易伙伴间的贸易数据显示为负增长,这表明,中瑞双边贸易逆趋势而行。可以说,自由贸易协定对贸易增长有促进作用。

早在2007年,中瑞贸易协定曾达到过20%以上的增长。在过去15年里,贸易增长数据波动较大,但整体的基调仍以增长为主。在金融危机期间,贸易活动大幅放缓,但在2010年得到了恢复。自2012年以来,由于全球经济放缓,贸易增长再次下滑。自中瑞自由贸易协定执行以来,我们又一次看到了贸易增长正逐步恢复的趋势。

事实上,2015年两国间的贸易增幅为9%,而同期瑞士与多数其他重要贸易伙伴间的贸易出现了下滑或是小幅增长。与中国间9%的贸易增长是瑞士十大

Has the agreement led to an increase in Chinese companies looking to export to Switzerland and vice versa?

The agreement has certainly received a lot of attention among Swiss exporters. On the other hand, with Chinese companies they first have to be fully informed about the possibilities provided to them by the FTA. This is among the aims of the Swiss Business Hub, organizing three roadshows in different provinces in China every year. Their experience shows that there seems to be interest among Chinese companies, especially with regard to the high reputation of Switzerland as a centre of innovation, precision engineering and quality. Thus we can also see increased attention of Chinese companies planning to invest in Switzerland as a European centre for R&D or even production.

Tasly a Tianjin based pharmaceutical company has already opened its first European office in Geneva and is now considering investing in a production facility to take advantage of Switzerland's excellent pharmaceutical eco-structure. China Construction Bank has opened in Zurich helping make Switzerland an important international offshore hub for Renminbi trading, along with London, Frankfurt and Luxembourg.

What problems do exporters from China still face when entering the Swiss market?

We are not aware of any major problems for Chinese exporters in making use of the FTA. However, it is still common among Swiss consumers to have a "quantity over quality" impression of Chinese products. This not only concerns manufactured goods, but also agricultural products. Also, the Swiss market is already very competitive. It is therefore difficult to compete with the existing companies, especially if a Chinese exporter doesn't produce niche-products. Innovative and high quality Chinese products, such as smart phones are, however, slowly changing this perception.

Are there any areas where you believe the FTA is failing to deliver or needs change?

The FTA has been the result of a bilateral negotiation, and thus in our opinion reflects an optimal result. With its review clause, the FTA offers the flexibility to discuss further improvements to the framework two years after its entry into force.

This being said, as with every new agreement, the Sino-Swiss FTA has also faced a number of challenges during the early implementation phase. Due to the well-established consultation mechanisms between China and Switzerland, for a majority of these issues pragmatic solutions were found within the first 12 months of entry into force. ○

“Trade between both countries was growing in 2015 at 9%, while trade with most other important trading partners of Switzerland decreased.”

2015 年两国间的贸易增幅为 9%，而同期瑞士与多数其他重要贸易伙伴间的贸易出现了下滑。”

贸易伙伴中最好的成绩。2015 年，瑞士对中国实现了贸易顺差（6,872 瑞士法郎），这种趋势在 2016 年第一季度和第二季度得到了延续，分别实现了 2,801 瑞士法郎和 1,643 瑞士法郎的顺差。

作为首个与中国达成自由贸易协定的欧洲大陆国家，瑞士企业是否因此比其他欧盟企业获得了更多竞争优势？

中瑞自由贸易协定涉及到双边贸易中 95% 以上的商品的关税取消或大幅减让，因此，也大大的改善了多个行业的竞争环境。协定中包括贸易技术壁垒、贸易便利化和通关手续以及服务贸易和知识产权问题等多个方面的实质性条款，它还包含促进环保和可持续发展的社会层面的条款。概括来讲，自由贸易协定提升了双边贸易中企业的透明度和法律确定性。

由于瑞士是首个与中国达成该协定的欧洲大陆国家，瑞士企业享有先发优势。自由贸易协定的执行需要时间，这样就给了瑞士企业先于竞争对手行动的机会。

协定有没有提高中国企业对瑞士市场的关注，以及有没有提高瑞士企业对中国市场的关注？

一方面，协定受到了瑞士出口商的广泛关注。

另一方面，中国企业首要的是获取足够的信息以确定自由贸易协定带给它们的可能性。这也是瑞士商业促进中心（Swiss Business Hub）的目标之一，中心每年都会在中国不同的省份举办三次路演活动。他们的经验发现，中国企业对瑞士有兴趣，尤其是在瑞士作为创新、精密工程和高品质产品中心的声誉方面。因此，我们也发现越来越多的中国企业计划在瑞士投资建立欧洲研发或生产中心。

位于天津的医药公司天士力将其首个欧洲办公室设在了日内瓦，并打算投资建厂，以利用瑞士优质的医药生态结构。中国建设银行在苏黎世设立了分支，这有助于瑞士成为人民币重要的国际离岸交易中心，其他分支分别设在了伦敦、法兰克福和卢森堡。

中国出口商在进入瑞士市场时会遇到哪些问题呢？

我们不太清楚中国出口商在通过自由贸易协定向瑞士出口时会遇到哪些问题。但是，瑞士消费者对中国的商品仍保持着既有的“数量过于品质”的印象，这不仅是指制成品，还包括农产品。另外，瑞士市场竞争十分激烈，与现有企业竞争十分困难，尤其是对于那些生产大众产品的中国出口商而言。不过，中国创新含量高的高品质产品如智能手机等正改变人们对中国的看法。

在你看来，有没有哪些方面是被自由贸易协定遗漏的或是需要改变的？

自由贸易协定是双边谈判的结果，因此，我们认为它反映的是最优的结果。协定的复查条款给了双方在协定执行两年后进一步改进框架的灵活性。基于此，与所有的新协定一样，中瑞自由贸易协定在执行初期也面对着多项挑战。中瑞间有效的协商机制使得多数问题都在协定执行的前 12 个月内得到了实际的解决方案。○