

CNY Reception in Zurich (4 March 2026)

Welcome Remarks by DBL

Consul General CHEN, Minister-Counsellor XIE, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening. It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to our Chinese New Year reception. This is my first time joining this annual event, and I am delighted to celebrating the Year of the Horse in Zurich.

2. In Chinese culture, horse is a symbol of vitality, strength, and perseverance. I am proud to share that Hong Kong has shown remarkable resilience in last year. Our economy grew by a robust 3.5%. Our stock market returned as the world's leading IPO fundraising hub, raising more than EUR 30 billion (HK\$285.8 billion) from over 110 new listings, a testament to the strength of our financial sector and investor confidence. A record-high number of 11 000 foreign and Chinese Mainland companies were located in Hong Kong in 2025, 11 per cent more than the year before.

3. Hong Kong's common law system, free flow of capital, and simple and low tax regime, make us an indispensable hub for global trade and finance. As a Special Administrative Region of China, Hong Kong stands at the intersection and serves as the bridge — connecting China with the world, and the world with China. We facilitate the dual flow of trade and investment, bringing companies from Europe to Hong Kong and the greater China and Asia markets on one hand, and helping Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong enterprises to “Go Global” as a launchpad.

4. Hong Kong and Switzerland share many commonalities. Both economies are small yet highly open, and are international hubs where ideas, cultures, and people converge and flourish. We have long enjoyed a close relationship with strong bilateral economic ties, rooted in our shared commitment to free trade and the rule-based multilateral systems.

5. Looking ahead, I would like to highlight three significant opportunities for enhanced cooperation between Hong Kong and Switzerland.

6. **First, innovation and technology.** Switzerland's universities, including ETH Zurich and École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), partnered with universities in Hong Kong and set up two R&D centres as part of the InnoHK initiative. These centres promote global research collaboration in the development of AI chips and robotic systems. Not to mention that Hong Kong is the only city in the world to host five universities in the top 100, offering unique advantages and easy access to the Chinese mainland innovation market. I am confident that by combining Switzerland's academic strength with Hong Kong's vibrant research ecosystem, we can create powerful synergies.

7. **Second, people-to-people exchanges.** Hong Kong has always been a unique place where East meets West, which is renowned for its vibrant multi-cultural scene. Students and scholars from around the world have been choosing Hong Kong as their academic home, with around one out of five of our students come outside Hong Kong. Under the “Study in HK” initiative, we are committed to developing Hong Kong into an international education hub for high-calibre talents to pursue further studies and career development. International students and talents can expect excellent higher education, internationally recognised qualifications, and enormous employment opportunities.

8. **Third, financial services and capital markets.** Hong Kong’s capital markets can provide Swiss companies with access to Asian investors, while Swiss institutional investors can leverage Hong Kong as a base to explore opportunities in Chinese Mainland as well as other ASEAN countries. Family offices and cross-border wealth management and asset allocation will remain areas of strong growth.

9. So let us make today an opportunity to reach out, exchange ideas, and build new friendships. May the Year of the Horse brings us prosperity, stability and many more opportunities to collaborate. Thank you.

– Ends –

~605 words (~4 min)