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The Chinese deputy prime minister visits Germany

The Chinese deputy prime minister, Chin Li Keqiang, was discussing the condition of mutual economic relations with key German politicians and representatives of business circles during his visit to Germany on 6–8 January. Contracts worth in total 8.7 billion euros were signed. The rapid development of mutual trade exchange and the strong export orientation in the two countries will result in more frequent meetings aimed at enhancing economic co-operation.

During his visit, Li Keqiang met Chancellor Angela Merkel, Economy Minister Rainer Brüderle and Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle. Both sides emphasised the very good condition of their economic relations. According to Ifo, a German research institute, German exports to China will increase this year by 32% (mutual trade turnover between January and October 2010 reached 105.4 billion euros). If this forecast turns out to be true, China will become the second largest (after Holland) supplier of products to the German market. Eleven business contracts were signed during the visit, including one with Volkswagen worth 2.6 billion euros and one with Mercedes-Benz worth 2.1 billion euros. The other contracts concerned the modernisation of Chinese nuclear power plants and the supply of three German container ships to China. The German minister for the economy also raised the issue of China's reducing exports of rare metals (used in high technologies) and pointed to difficulties German firms encounter in attempts to access China's internal market. While fortifying co-operation, Germany will make efforts to maintain the rapid development of economic exchange with China and derive benefits from China's high rate of economic development. It will also be closely watching the situation on the rare metal market because improved access to those metals is at present one of the priority issues in German economic policy towards China. <pop>