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Cities on the up.

Swiss cities design on a Stuttgart metro train.

Cities are back in demand. Not only as places to live and go out, but also more and more as destinations for short breaks and longer stays. To make the most of this upturn and ensure a stronger common presence on the various markets, the Swiss Cities association transferred its management to Switzerland Tourism in February 2001. The Swiss cities wish to occupy a more prominent position in Switzerland Tourism's overall marketing operations in future and increase their standing as destinations for leisure breaks.

Swiss cities have plenty to offer visitors from Switzerland, Germany, France and Italy, the markets in which Switzerland Tourism is concentrating its city marketing efforts, and are easy to find your way around. There are cities nestling in different landscapes, some with a Germanic, some with a Latin note, and all with a fantastic offering of culture, architecture, shopping and leisure opportunities, not to mention first-class hotels, bars, clubs and discos.

The more extensive the offering, the greater the target audience. A comprehensive City Guide, which in Switzerland was inserted for the second time in 180,000 copies of Facts magazine and in Germany for the first time in 300,000 copies of the magazine published by the ADAC motoring association, is designed to communicate the offering accordingly.

A special attraction during the city promotional campaign was reserved for Stuttgart, the regional centre for southwest Germany, where most German visitors to Switzerland come from. An entire 60-metre long metropolitan train was bedecked in a Swiss cities design and sent the length and breadth of Baden-Württemberg state. The Swiss cities are easy to spot in the large-sized photographs adorning the train. The images depict major events, famous works of art, and well-known landscapes. In the coming year the slogan «More culture, more charm, more pleasure. Swiss cities.» will convey the message and draw attention to the great variety on offer in the urban setting.

Despite the dramatic drop in the number of overnights in most Swiss cities in the wake of 11 September, the five biggest (Zurich, Basle, Geneva, Lausanne and Berne) posted a collective 0.6% increase for the whole of 2001. The first signs of an upturn in the economy and the marketing efforts of the cities give good grounds to believe they will return to the path of growth this year.