

"Believe in the opportunities!"

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Objektyp: **Preface**

Zeitschrift: **Annual Report / Switzerland Tourism**

Band (Jahr): - **(2003)**

PDF erstellt am: **27.07.2024**

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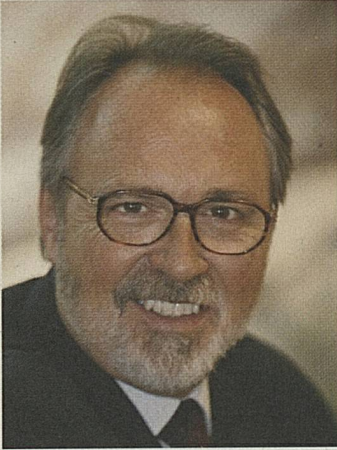
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“Communicate the value!”

Dick F. Marty, President of Switzerland Tourism



The values of Switzerland need to be communicated. This requires support. In 2004 the Swiss parliament will decide upon Switzerland Tourism's funding.

In uncertain times, holidays are the first thing people cut back on. Against the background of the Iraq war, the SARS epidemic, the pessimistic economic outlook and the precarious geopolitical situation, 2003 was a particularly difficult year for Swiss tourism, the third most important export sector of the country's economy. Thanks to flexibility and fervent efforts extending into the remotest parts of the country, the worst was avoided. Then, the seco price study unleashed a media storm of the like rarely seen. Switzerland was a much too expensive place to spend a holiday, concluded the press, without asking why.

Switzerland is expensive. There can be no denying it, because production costs are much higher in Switzerland. Compared with our direct competitors, wages, food and electricity cost our country as much as 40 percent more. But the seco study has a flaw, since it considers only prices, and not the corresponding value of the experiences on offer. If prices were the only criterion, then 18 million people would not spend a highly satisfying holiday in Switzerland every year. The nature experience, the cultural diversity and the emotional values of one of the most impressive countries in the world are valuable offsets.

As prices do not allow for change in the short term, it is necessary to communicate the values that justify them. This is precisely what Switzerland Tourism is staking on, because in the face of 190 competitors worldwide, Switzerland Tourism understands how to paint a unique picture of Switzerland and repeatedly attract an audience for it.

In 2004 the Swiss parliament will decide upon Switzerland Tourism's funding for the next five years and by extension, the future of an entire industry. The strong communication of the Switzerland holiday experience is of existential importance precisely because we are forced to charge higher prices. We would like to thank everyone who is working to ensure we are able to continue along the path that we have correctly chosen to travel.

Dick F. Marty

“Believe in the opportunities!”

Jürg Schmid, CEO of Switzerland Tourism



Switzerland is well positioned as a holiday destination, the perspectives are intact – provided there is professional marketing backing.

Just because Switzerland has had it better in the past, it does not mean we have it bad. Despite the collective pessimism pervading the country, Switzerland Tourism believes in our own strengths and opportunities. For tourism in Switzerland has a solid future; the foundations for gentle growth are in place.

The holiday destination of Switzerland is generally well placed, having lost nothing in terms of image and up-to-dateness. Recent setbacks bear no relation to the attractiveness of the experience on offer. Unspoilt nature, spectacular panoramas, great accessibility for young and old, the unrivalled density of attractions, an excellent public transport system and its central position in Europe are just some of Switzerland's trump cards. That is why Switzerland Tourism's Mountains® campaign is copyrighted. Because the original mountains – and the original mountain experience – are to be found in Switzerland.

Yet Swiss tourism has undeniably passed through a difficult phase, and Switzerland Tourism is faced with a challenge. It is now more important than ever to find and quickly implement new forms of cooperation. With the global launch of the new corporate design, the theme routes and the Snowtime campaign, we have shown that we can attract global attention, that we are capable of enthusing new markets such as the Russian Federation, and that we understand how to adapt campaigns quickly and flexibly, as we did when China opened up in November.

Global tourism can survive without Switzerland. But Switzerland cannot survive without global tourism. This year we will continue to use all the means at our disposal and spare no personal effort to bring about an upturn.

Jürg Schmid