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Editorial.



Jean-François Roth,
ST president

“Accelerate market diversification.”

What effect is the strong franc having on tourism?

Switzerland Tourism had been making up ground in recent years in terms of quality and competitiveness – but these achievements have been wiped out by the strong franc. It is frustrating. Now it is all the more important for us to strengthen our presence in future markets, thereby accelerating the process of client diversification.

Are you happy with parliamentary decisions regarding ST financing?

Yes. Even though the budget contribution that we requested for 2012 to 2015 was not granted, the increase compared with the preceding period, plus the contributions for the impulse programme, shows that parliament has great confidence in ST. I am very grateful for this.

Was the 2011 impulse programme necessary?

Absolutely. The 12 million Swiss francs invested from the Confederation and the 4.6 million Swiss francs from partners and ST boosted Switzerland's presence internationally and contributed to more than 981,000 additional overnights, clearly limiting the drop in overnight stays.



Jürg Schmid,
ST CEO

Editorial.

“Courage for critical self-assessment.”

Were you surprised by any of ST's successes in 2011?

We had tremendous international interest in our real-life “weather prophet”, and his predictions for exactly which day winter would arrive. This off-beat TV ad for our winter campaign showed courage and innovation. It should inspire us further.

But unconventional marketing can be risky...

Of course, and it wasn't easy when Facebook pulled the plug on our “Holidays without Internet” summer social-media campaign without any explanation. But its popularity showed that originality and a desire to innovate are the key to success in social media.

How do tourists view Switzerland?

Switzerland is as attractive as ever to holiday visitors, but a representative guest survey has opened our eyes. We must improve our levels of hospitality, understand the needs and customs of guests from other cultures better, and engage with them. To be successful in tourism in the years ahead, we must have the courage for constant critical self-assessment.



Jungfrau-Aletsch, UNESCO World Heritage, Valais