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Jean-François Roth, President Switzerland Tourism



Jürg Schmid, CEO Switzerland Tourism

“Further development, despite a difficult market environment.”

Is ST's dual strategy still justified?

The removal of the euro currency peg at the start of 2015 had far-reaching effects on tourism. In 2014, tourists from the Eurozone made up 36.2% of all overnights. It is therefore imperative for ST to continue to remain active in these markets. In parallel, ST needs to expand the presence of Switzerland as a tourist destination in markets which are less affected by the strong franc. The Swiss market will also be decisive in determining the extent of the crisis. We have to respond as a unified industry to emerging competition.

What do you anticipate for 2015?

The tourism industry faces an enormous challenge in 2015: in a particularly unfavourable economic environment, it needs not only to preserve its market share, but also to continue to improve the quality of its offerings, as well as driving innovation forward. That said, I remain confident: all of the industry's stakeholders are working together to find solutions.

Do you have a special message for the tourism industry?

More than ever, the industry needs to cooperate and put individual interests last. The situation is too serious, and Switzerland is too small, to lose focus.

“We need excitement and relaxation to co-exist intelligently.”

Which 2014 ST marketing project did you particularly like?

Our partnership with the photographer Yann Arthus-Bertrand. For our “Views” campaign, he took a series of images entitled “Switzerland from above”, which were warmly received around the world, from Paris to Rio de Janeiro, Moscow to New York. The project launched in France, with the goal of helping Switzerland to boost its global visibility.

What do you make of the rapid changes in tourism marketing?

Everything is becoming more interlinked through social media. We need to be more attentive and react faster, and this requires more human resources. Above all though, I see an enormous opportunity for smart marketing – appealing to the visitor personally and individually on the platform which suits them and with the experiences they are seeking.
(go to “Outlook” on p. 49 for more on this)

150 years on: where next for winter tourism?

Switzerland must achieve an intelligent balance between the respective needs of its winter visitors – on one hand, speed on the slopes; on the other, relaxation and peace of mind. We should be sensitive to the needs of an aging society, but also include families, who increasingly seek safe sports and activities.