

# Press Release

Zurich, 26 October 2017, 10.00 a.m.

## KOF Forecasts for Swiss Tourism: Is Swiss Tourism Picking Up?

**Swiss tourism is set to complete a good summer season with numbers of overnight stays rising by 4.7%. If the weather is benign and brings more snow than last winter, the increase in overnight stays in the coming winter season will be robust at 3.6%. For the first time in a few years, tourists from neighbouring countries are expected to contribute positively. In the coming years, visitors from long-distance markets will continue to provide a strong impetus for the Swiss tourism industry. The importance of the Chinese tourism market is growing.**

### **2017 summer season: Swiss tourism is picking up**

After a number of difficult years, Swiss tourism is picking up again. Long-distance markets are still growing at a fast pace. In contrast, the positive development in domestic demand is restrained. Compared to the previous year, the number of overnight stays in this summer season is up to 4.7%. However, the result is slightly distorted due to the first-time inclusion of youth hostels in the statistics. The recovery is present in all Alpine tourism regions, with the highest growth rates recorded by the Bern and Valais regions. Growth in urban regions continues unabated.

### **2017/18 winter season: positive outlook for tourism...**

Due to low levels of precipitation, the last winter season had its ups and downs. If precipitation reaches average levels this winter, growth in the number of overnight stays should be stronger in the coming winter season (+3.6%), especially given a significant recovery in demand among foreign tourists. Thanks to the economic upturn in the Eurozone and the slight devaluation of the CHF, rising numbers of overnight stays by German, French and Italian guests are expected for the first time in the coming winter. However, domestic tourists, who account for over 50% of winter overnight stays, have a particularly important impact on the winter season development. Nevertheless, with the Swiss economy also on the path of recovery, domestic demand is expected to record solid growth figures in the coming winter. The projected increase in domestic overnight stays is 2.8% over the previous year. All regions are likely to benefit from the expected increase in demand among domestic and foreign tourists. However, urban tourism is still recording the most dynamic development.

### **...until 2019**

Given the gradual increase in domestic demand, strong dynamics from long-distance markets and recovering demand in the Eurozone, prospects for Swiss tourism in the coming two tourism years are clearly looking up. A robust increase in the number of overnight stays is already being observed this year. All regions are likely to record a positive trend. While the Alpine region benefits from catch-up effects, the urban regions will account for the highest dynamics throughout the entire forecast period. Although prospects for higher numbers of skier days have improved for ski lift operators thanks to a rise in overnight stays in the Alpine region, the long-term trend is pointing down rather than up. Consequently, the number of skier days is expected to stagnate in the 2018/19 winter season.

### **Special analysis: Chinese tourism in Switzerland**

In the last ten years, the number of overnight stays spent by Chinese visitors in Swiss hotels has been growing yearly in the two-digit region. Within a short period, China has become the no. 5 among Swiss tourism's top countries of origin. Daily spending is high at an average CHF 330 per person, although outlays on overnight accommodation are relatively low. This also applies to the average length of stay of 1.3 nights that is due to a high percentage of group travellers. Bern and Zurich, the central Swiss tourism regions, are the most popular destinations. China will remain an important market for Swiss tourism. Although economic growth is still slowing down, consumer spending continues to rise. In addition, the share of first-time visitors among current tourists is very high and the average age is low. The Chinese market is still enormous, considering that only 6% of the population were in possession of a passport in 2014. Given this background, KOF expects an increase in overnight stays by Chinese tourists of just under 20% in 2018 and 15% in 2019.

**The full report on forecasts for Swiss tourism in German or French is available here:**

<http://www.kof.ethz.ch/en/news-and-events/media/press-releases.html> →

**Further information regarding the KOF forecasts for Swiss Tourism are available at:**

<https://www.kof.ethz.ch/en/forecasts-and-indicators/forecasts/kof-forecasts-of-tourism-in-switzerland.html> →

The KOF tourism forecasts are prepared on behalf of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). SECO is in a position to finance tourism forecasts via the Swiss Federal Act on the promotion of innovation, cooperation and the expansion of expertise in the tourism sector (Innotour). The primary addressees of the tourism forecasts are the tourist sector and the cantons.

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