



Switzerland Tourism.



Media Release

Lausanne/Beijing, December 7, 2017

Switzerland - China Year of Tourism 2017: a fruitful year of collaboration comes to an end.

To foster collaboration on all matters related to tourism between Switzerland and China, Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Federal Council, and Chinese President Xi Jinping declared 2017 Switzerland-China Year of Tourism in Davos last January. Today marked the end of a fruitful year of exchange between tourism specialists from both countries. The signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and Switzerland Tourism (ST) will ensure a continued cooperation between both countries.

The Switzerland-China Year of Tourism has primarily been focused on cooperation in the areas of sustainable mountain tourism, winter sports and hospitality. In this context, various events took place in 2017, such as a visit by the President of the Swiss Federal Council to the Great Wall at Beijing, a Swiss-Chinese hotel management conference, as well as the presence of Switzerland as the guest of honour at the World Winter Sports Expo in Beijing, the biggest fair dedicated to winter sports in China. In addition, the whole year provided opportunities to intensify collaboration and exchange between the national tourism organisations of both countries, the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and Switzerland Tourism (ST).

Swiss Winter Sports prominently featured.

This morning at Glacier 3000 (VD), a delegation of high-ranking officials from the CNTA, headed by Chairman Li Jinzao, together with journalists and travel agents from China, could get a first taste of winter sports and fun activities in Switzerland. This afternoon in Lausanne, at the Beaulieu Convention Center, over 150 tourism specialists from both countries attended the Sino-Swiss Tourism Forum. This event, focussing on future perspectives for tourism, the impact of international sports events and mountain tourism in both countries, was held in presence of Swiss State Secretary Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch and Geng Wenbin, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Switzerland.

Close collaboration on tourism to continue.

At the start of the Forum, the Chairman of CNTA, Li Jinzao and the designated Director of ST, Martin Nydegger, signed a memorandum of understanding to continue to deepen mutual knowledge and strengthen collaboration between both countries in the field of tourism. "With a travel industry booming in China, the upcoming Winter Olympic Games 2022 in Beijing, the Winter Youth Olympic Games 2020 in Lausanne, and the increasing interest for winter sports in China, the intensified exchange of mutual know-know comes at a crucial time for both our countries," commented Martin Nydegger upon the signature of the memorandum. "I look forward to strengthening the bonds we have forged during this year with our Chinese counterparts", he added.



Later on today, the closing ceremony of the Year of Tourism, organized by the CNTA for several hundred guests from China and Switzerland, will feature performances by the Heilongjiang provincial opera and theatre. Heilongjiang is considered the birthplace of winter tourism in China.

Over two million overnights of Chinese guests expected by 2022 in Switzerland.

In 2017, the number of overnights generated by Chinese guests (China and Hong Kong) in Switzerland will exceed 1.4 million* making China the fourth most important foreign market for tourism in Switzerland after Germany, the USA and the UK. By 2022, Chinese visitors are expected to account for two million hotel overnights in Switzerland**. Currently, they are visiting Switzerland primarily in the summer: over 60% of the overnights are registered between June and October. However, the appetite for overseas winter adventures is growing: 35 % of the Chinese skiers intend to spend a ski holiday overseas within the next two years.

With guaranteed snow, exceptional landscapes, the high quality of winter sports facilities and public transportation, Switzerland is ideally positioned to cater for the growing numbers of Chinese skiers; For example, the package “First Ski Experience” aims at offering beginners easy access to alpine ski. Available this winter at 24 destinations throughout Switzerland, it includes a ski ticket, complete ski equipment and a trial lesson with a ski instructor.

* *Estimation: Switzerland Tourism – Source: hotel overnights of Chinese guests from Jan.-Oct. 2017: 1'270'737, FSO.*

** *Estimation: Switzerland Tourism, Oxford Economics.*

Rights-free pictures of today's events, which took place at Glacier 3000 and of the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding during the Swiss-Sino Tourism Forum are available for download at: <http://db.pprmediarelations.ch/en/customer/Schweiz%20Tourismus/13113>

Additional pictures of the closing ceremony of the Switzerland-China Year of Tourism will be available before 9:00 tomorrow.

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