

SWITZERLAND HOPING TO IMPROVE BLEAK FORECAST



After a record year in the tourism sector, one of Europe's most quality-driven tourism markets, Switzerland, aims to survive what has been one of the most depressing and pessimistic forecasts for the next few years. The Swiss tourist board has come up with a number of plans to combat the crisis period ahead.

Switzerland has always had a reputation for being a luxury jewel in the centre of Europe. Indeed, the CEO of the Swiss tourist board has gone on record stating that the quality of the product is absolutely no joke in his country. Such an attitude, albeit helped greatly by the co-hosting of the European football championships, led to **Switzerland enjoying a record year in 2008 in terms of tourism.**

However, the predictions for 2009 were bleak and the predictions for the time after this are even bleaker. **This year is expected to see a drop of 5%**, whereas the coming years could see Swiss tourism drop by 7.5%, leading to a plethora of empty hotel rooms and hills, which may not be so alive after all. The relationship between the Swiss Franc and the Euro, British pound and US Dollar has been touted as being the main reason for the pessimism.

The Swiss tourist organisations are intending to combat potential problems mostly by **promoting Switzerland's natural image**. The hotels are now the focal point for promoting what is supposed to be typical Swiss. On a financial note, Swiss citizens are now being encouraged to take their holiday within their own country and the affordability of Switzerland is now a selling point. The Swiss Franc is, in fact, 5% more affordable against the US Dollar compared to a year ago and the fact that free bicycle rental is available in major Swiss cities is also being stressed.

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