



Media release

Swiss travel lovers refuse to let the Coronavirus stand in their way

Zurich, 2 February 2020 – From A for Algeria to M for Martinique all the way to Z for Zimbabwe: this year's FESPO more than lived up to its motto "World of Travel". From 30 January to 2 February 2020, around 600 exhibitors presented the world's most beautiful destinations. Attendees appreciated the wide range of exhibitions and flocked to FESPO in large numbers – the event organiser BERNEXPO GROUPE reported more than 60,000 visitors.

In the past weeks, not a day has gone by without the Coronavirus making headlines. The city of Wuhan in the Central Chinese province of Hubei is still under quarantine. Swiss media outlets have also been closely covering the bush fires in Australia. "In times like these, it is even more important for persons interested in travel to be able to chat directly to travel specialists. At FESPO, around 1,200 experts at 600 booths were available to answer questions – no other Swiss travel event offers this much expertise in one place," said Exhibition Director Stephan Amstad, summing up the trade fair. He added: "It was clear that FESPO guests were worried about what they've been hearing about the Coronavirus, but that this won't discourage them from travelling to far-flung destinations." Another much-discussed topic keeping the travel industry on its toes is climate change and the concept of "flight shame". According to Stephan Amstad, visitors are thinking more about their impact on the climate, are more informed, and are asking more critical questions. That is why it is important for travel organisers to promote innovative solutions. "Our industry relies directly on unspoilt nature. I feel confident that the trend of sustainable tourism will continue to grow in the coming years." The Exhibition Director also sees a positive change in the cruise industry, which has gotten an increasingly negative reputation in recent years among climate activists. "Despite the climate debates, cruises remain as popular as ever. However, I am pleased that the offers are becoming more environmentally conscious. For example, there are cruise lines that are now using fuels that are more environmentally friendly." Another trend: hiking and backpacking trips in remote locations.

Moving from mass tourism towards individual trips

This year's guest country, Ras Al Khaimah (R.A.K.), also benefits from this trend. The northernmost of the seven United Arab Emirates, Ras Al Khaimah is a hidden gem. "Our cooperation with FESPO was excellent. We were not very well known in Switzerland before now, but our booth at FESPO has allowed us to change that. Over the four days of the event, we were able to organise a number of bookings and we look forward to welcoming FESPO attendees to Ras Al Khaimah in the near future," said Mohamed Khater, Director of Tourism Development for R.A.K., summing up his experience at FESPO. The Italian exhibitors were also able to make a number of contacts – the country boasted the largest booth at this year's event. "We were extremely pleased with our booth this year. We welcomed a lot of visitors and we were once again able to impress the Swiss population with all that our wonderful country has to offer," said Bianca Bartalena, consultant at ENIT Zürich.



This year's Golfmesse was a smashing success

The Golfmesse was already completely booked out at the end of November 2019. Around 160 exhibitors presented the best golf destinations, the latest equipment and the trendiest accessories at FESPO. "The Golfmesse launched ten years ago with around 60 exhibitors. I am extremely pleased that we have grown continuously over the past years and are able to offer the visitors this year all of our concentrated expertise," said organiser Roland Caprez. Two major highlights this year were the 42-metre-long driving range and the Golf Forum. During the event, keynote speaker and motivational coach Rüdiger Böhm shared some of the intimate details of his life with the audience, discussing how he was able to fight his way back after a serious accident and to successfully play golf despite his disability.

The next FESPO will be held from 14 to 17 January 2021 in Zurich together with the Golfmesse. In its 31st year, FESPO will once again serve as the most important networking platform for the travel industry and continue to grow and evolve.

Stay up to date

On our website and on social media, we keep you posted throughout the year on the top destinations and the latest travel trends.

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Further information

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