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PRESS RELEASE/COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE

Chinese discover Switzerland through eyes of Swiss youth

“The negative effects of an unfavorable exchange rate were partially offset by strong growth in Chinese tourist overnight stays, up 48.8%” (press release, MySwitzerland, 22 February 2011)

BEIJING, CHINA (27 July 2011) – Alpine horns and wine aged in the Rhone glacier, award-winning Swiss army chefs, mountain rescues with Air Zermatt and summer skiing, sunrise cheesemaking high in the Swiss Alps: Swiss clichés but also much more are part of an unusual effort to woo the Chinese travel market.

Chinese TV star Liam Bates, a Swiss 23-year-old, fluent in Chinese who regularly presents shows on travelling in China for the country's only TV channel dedicated to travel, is taking Chinese viewers abroad to discover his own country.

He and a film crew from The Travel Channel (China) arrive in Zurich Friday 29 July for 12 days of intense filming across seven cantons.

According to Swiss statistics, in 2010 Chinese tourists spent 404,218 overnights in Switzerland, up by 48.8% from the previous year.

Bates grew up in Saint Prex, Vaud, and Mollens, near Sierre, Valais. He stepped into Chinese TV work after winning first prize in the international university students 2010 Chinese Bridge Chinese language and performance contest sponsored by the government in Beijing, becoming the first Swiss host on Chinese television. Bates also regularly performs traditional Chinese shows and comedy, while continuing post-graduate studies in Beijing. This year he finished directing his first film, a documentary about a motorcycle adventure across China, now showing in film festivals in the USA.

The TV crew will be visiting several cities, including Lucerne for the 1st of August national holiday, and Geneva, where Bates will take part in the SlowUp and dance to the music at the Geneva Festival (Fêtes de Genève). But he will show the Chinese, who often focus on visiting cities, Switzerland's special mix of urban and close-at-hand spectacular mountain scenery and outdoor activities, such as mountain biking. Every Chinese person knows how to ride a bike, but the concept of mountain biking is virtually unknown.

The team will film five episodes of 30 minutes each, focusing on beautiful locations, interesting stories and characters that bring out a Switzerland less familiar to Chinese audiences.

Visits scheduled for filming: see attached document.

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