

Host State Switzerland



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Confederazione Svizzera
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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

“The Confederation (...) shall in particular assist in the alleviation of need and poverty in the world and promote respect for human rights and democracy, the peaceful coexistence of peoples as well as the conservation of natural resources.”

Article 54 of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation

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Introduction

Our world is constantly confronted with innumerable challenges as climate change, the battle against epidemics and poverty, promotion of peace, sustainable development, and respect for human rights that require a global and coordinated response from the states, the private sector, civil society, and the worlds of academia and science.

Switzerland not only has a long-standing tradition of engagement on behalf of the world's countries, as home to an exceptional number of international organisations, diplomatic representations (permanent missions), non-governmental organisations (NGO) academic institutions, and experts working together, it also plays an active role in responding to these global challenges.

The expertise Switzerland has acquired in this field, the initiatives it supports, the available infrastructure, and the living and working conditions it offers help create important synergies.

This brochure is intended for members of the international community who are based in Switzerland as well as anyone interested in Switzerland's activities as a host state. By combining a brief history with interesting facts, it reveals how Switzerland's ambitious and visionary host-state policy enabled it to become the foremost centre of global governance and international cooperation.

Switzerland, together with Geneva, the global humanitarian and human rights capital, is proud to play a part in meeting the challenges of our time.



Court of member state flags at the Palais des Nations in Geneva © DFAE Présence Suisse

Mont Blanc Bridge in Geneva © UN Photo / Jean-Marc Ferré



In brief*:

- » *The United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) is the second most important in the United Nations system after the New York headquarters and serves as the main operational base for multilateral activities.*
- » *41 international organisations, institutions, and bodies are based in Switzerland and officially recognised by the Swiss government; 35 of these are situated in Geneva, 3 in the canton of Vaud, 2 in Bern and 1 in Basel.*
- » *More than 170 states are represented in Geneva by around 250 permanent missions, representations, and delegations.*
- » *Geneva is home to more than 350 non-governmental organisations (NGOs).*
- » *Geneva hosts more than 2,500 international conferences and meetings each year attended by more than 200,000 experts and delegates from around the world.*
- » *It also receives around 4,400 visits by heads of state, heads of government, ministers, and other dignitaries.*
- » *The international community in Geneva currently comprises some 43,000 individuals. This figure includes staff working at international organisations and permanent missions, as well as their family members.*

* As of October 2017. For updated information:
www.eda.admin.ch/missions/mission-onu-geneve/en/home/geneve-international/faits-et-chiffres.html



A host by tradition

Located at the crossroads of Europe, where the main historic routes meet, Switzerland has a long tradition of hospitality and is seen as a “welcoming country” that fosters humanism, cultural exchanges, and commerce.

It began acting as host to the world’s countries and institutions when the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was founded in 1863 and the first Geneva Convention adopted in 1864.



Painting by French artist Charles Edouard Armand-Dumaresq depicting the 1864 signing of the first Geneva Convention in the Alabama room © Photo Canton of Geneva / S. Hunziker

The greater need for countries to work hand-in-hand, which emerged at the end of World War I, manifested itself in creation of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1919. Switzerland’s neutrality and Geneva’s embracing of the humanitarian tradition made them the obvious choice of location as host.

They marked the birth of “International Geneva”. The first international organisations were established during the same era, setting up their original head offices in Bern: the International Telegraphic Union, now known as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and headquartered in Geneva, in 1868; the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1874; and the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) in 1893.

The end of World War II marked the beginning of closer and longer-lasting cooperation between nations, leading to establishment in 1945 of the United Nations (UN), the pre-eminent universal-membership organisation, whose second most important office is located in Geneva. Subsequently, a wide range of specialised UN agencies

also set up their headquarters in Geneva, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1950, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1951, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 1970, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 1993. In 2006, Switzerland was involved in setting up the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). This body holds sessions in the Palais des Nations several times a year.

Some international organisations that are not part of the UN family also settled in Geneva. The European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) was born in 1954, initially forming in Geneva (Switzerland) before extending its activities into the metro area crossing the Franco-Swiss border in 1965. The World Trade Organization (WTO) came into being in 1995, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which had regulated global trade for 47 years.

Years when the main international organisations and secretariats were set up in Switzerland:

1863: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

1865: International Union of Telegraphs; renamed International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 1932

1874: General Postal Union (Bern); renamed the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1978

1893: Central Office for International Carriage by Rail (Bern); renamed the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) in 1985

1919: League of Nations

1919: International Labour Organization (ILO)

1945: United Nations (UN)

1948: World Health Organization (WHO)

1951: World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

1954: European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN)

1970: World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

1987: Bank for International Settlements (BIS) in Basel

1995: World Trade Organization (WTO) – formerly GATT

1996: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

2002: Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM)

2009: Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI)

2015: Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF)

2016: Secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

1 A complete list of the international organisations based in Switzerland can be found at: www.dfae.admin.ch/content/dam/mission-onu-omc-aele-geneve/en/documents/Tableau-des-OI_EN.pdf





The Human Rights and Alliance of Civilisations Room with a ceiling sculpture by Spanish artist Miquel Barceló © UN Photo / Jean-Marc Ferré

Global governance that in earlier times was determined by states has changed considerably during the past two decades. In the wake of their declining influence the power of other bodies became stronger such as groups of states, free-trade associations, metropolitan areas, multinational enterprises, and civil society's big non-governmental organisations. This fragmentation of global governance and proliferation of new actors began

to emerge during the early 2000s and created the right conditions to extend the global governance debate to include representatives of civil society and the private sector. Since then, Geneva sees itself hosting hundreds of international NGOs, primarily active in the fields of human rights, global health, and the environment.

Switzerland is home to hundreds of NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Amnesty International particularly active in the field of human rights, global health, and the environment.

Switzerland is also home to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), established in 1915, and more than 60 international sports organisations and federations. These include the Union of

European Football Associations (UEFA), the Union cycliste internationale (UCI), and the Fédération internationale de l'automobile (FIA) – the governing bodies of cycling and motor sport, respectively.

The Alabama Arbitration

Switzerland has been making its good offices available to the international community since as far back as the 19th century. The Geneva Arbitration – better known as the “Alabama Arbitration” – marked the beginning of international mediation as a means of peacefully resolving disputes between two opposing nations. On 15 September 1872, in the very same room in which the first Geneva Convention had been adopted a few years earlier, an arbitration tribunal ordered Great Britain to pay a hefty sum in damages to the United States for having failed to respect its international duties of neutrality during the American Civil War by permitting delivery from its territory of some 20 armed vessels – including the Alabama – to Southern Confederate states. Thus the tribunal ended the conflict between the USA and Britain after the American Civil War. The Swiss referee, former Federal Councillor Jakob Stämpfli, played a decisive role in the arbitration process. The outcome of this conflict promoted the reputation of Geneva and its development into an international scene.

Switzerland has often been the preferred venue for major international conferences and high-level diplomatic meetings, thanks to the principles of universality and neutrality through which Switzerland endeavours to maintain good relations with all nations, along with its expertise and tradition of providing good offices. Recently, Switzerland was chosen as the location for a series of peace negotiations on the conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, Libya, Yemen, and Cyprus.

The following events among others have entered the history books:

- » the 1954 peace accords that brought French colonial rule and the war in Indochina to an end and settled Vietnam's partition,
- » the 1985 summit between Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and US President Ronald Reagan that heralded the end of the Cold War,
- » the meeting between Iraqi and US foreign ministers Tariq Aziz and James Baker on the eve of the second Gulf War, and
- » the two encounters, in 1994 and 2000, between US President Bill Clinton and his Syrian counterpart Hafez el-Assad, aimed at resolving the political conflict between Syria and Israel.



US President Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, at the 1985 Geneva summit © Keystone

Commitment to a common cause

The Iran nuclear framework agreement was signed in Lausanne

After several years of negotiations, on 2 April 2015 in Lausanne, the E3/EU+ 3 (France, Germany, United Kingdom, China, Russia, and the United States) reached a framework agreement with Iran on its nuclear programme and the lifting of international sanctions. This paved the way for the historic signing on 14 July 2015 of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly referred to as the “nuclear deal”.

Secret negotiations in Geneva between the United States and Iran on consular issues led to the conclusion on 17 January 2016 of an agreement on the exchange of prisoners.



Representatives of China, France, Germany, the EU, Iran, Russia, the UK, and the USA announcing the agreement on the Iran nuclear deal in Lausanne © Keystone

Article 54 of the Federal Constitution states that Switzerland shall “assist in the alleviation of need and poverty in the world and promote respect for human rights and democracy, the peaceful coexistence of peoples as well as the conservation of natural resources.”

The international organisations present in Switzerland contribute with their activities to implement foreign policy aims mentioned above. The challenges our world now faces are increasingly complex and have an impact on many different areas. Take AIDS, for example: it has repercussions not only for individual health but for development, human rights, and the global economy. Another phenomenon that has enhanced the unpredictability, scope, and acuteness of these challenges without borders is globalisation. Solutions need to be sought and coordinated at the international level, as individual countries seldom possess the

skills and resources required to face these challenges on their own.

Switzerland, as host and member state rolled into one, is ideally placed to promote its values within the international community. This dual role reinforces its capacity to make itself heard worldwide while permitting better access to experts, representatives, and members of government.

This situation has allowed Switzerland, which is not a member of any alliance or regional group, to acquire major visibility for a country of its size – a position it is keen to maintain and develop. In this context, Switzerland’s host-state policy is continually adapting to a fast-changing world with the aim of promoting international cooperation in specific priority areas and providing the very best conditions for international organisations and conferences to work here effectively.



The ‘Peace’ beehive, one of 10 productive beehives presented by Switzerland in 2012 to mark the 10th anniversary of its joining the UN, flanked by the guard dogs of the Palais des Nations © UN Photo / Jean-Marc Ferré

Peace, security, and disarmament

Geneva, the “city of peace”, is an operational hub and centre for major negotiations. It is also the world’s foremost multilateral platform for disarmament and arms control. Several dozen institutions work here in the fields of mediation and peacebuilding as well as conducting research and training in relation to peace and security. Included among them are strategic partners of the Swiss government, such as:

- » *the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP),*
- » *the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), and*
- » *the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)*

These three are often referred to as the three Geneva Centres.

Other partners include the NGOs *Interpeace* and *Humanitarian Dialogue* (HD), as well as the *Quakers United Nations Office* (QUNO). Through their work in fragile regions or conflicts, many other international organisations make a direct or indirect contribution to peace.

The Maison de la paix, which houses the three Geneva Centres, as well as the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and other national and international partners, is a centre of excellence for peace and security policy unrivalled in Europe.



‘Frieden’ (peace), a knotted cannon by Swiss sculptor René Brandenberger, created especially for the 1983 Conference on Disarmament © Ludovic Courtès

Geneva is also home to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), established in 1979 by the UN General Assembly as the single permanent multilateral

disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. The Conference has negotiated key disarmament instruments such as the

Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The core issues on its current agenda are: the proposed treaty to prohibit further production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament, legally binding negative security assurances¹, and prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Several international disarmament treaties have their roots in Geneva, for example:

- » *the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention,*
- » *the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects,*
- » *the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and*
- » *the Convention on Cluster Munitions.*

¹ International arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon states against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons

The first Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), held in Cancun (Mexico) in August 2015, decided to make Geneva the base for this instrument’s permanent secretariat, which is tasked with regulating international trade in weapons and eradicating illicit arms trafficking.



View of International Geneva © Pierre-Michel Viot

Action and humanitarian law, human rights, and migration

The world's humanitarian capital, Geneva, is uniquely positioned as a platform to provide assistance and protection to people affected by conflicts and natural disasters. Alongside operational responses, Geneva is also known for promoting normative frameworks to protect the most vulnerable, as reflected in the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols as well as the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The diversity of actors present here, ranging from UN agencies to the bodies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement right through to non-governmental organisations, allows innovative approaches to be found to challenges currently facing the humanitarian community.

Geneva plays host to, e.g.:

- » *the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)*,
- » *the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)*,
- » *the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*,
- » *the International Organization for Migration (IOM)*, and
- » *the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)*.

The *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)* and the *United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)* also have important offices here.

The Geneva Conventions

International humanitarian law – also known as the law of war (jus in bello) – applies solely to armed conflict and has a two-fold purpose: to regulate conduct of hostilities and to protect victims of armed conflicts. However, it does not answer the question of whether or not a particular war is lawful (jus ad bellum). This is dealt with by the Charter of the United Nations (UN). International humanitarian law applies to all types of armed conflicts, whether lawful or not, and must be respected by all parties to the conflict.



Human rights are another key issue dealt with in Geneva. The Human Rights Council (HRC) has its headquarters there and meets several times a year. Created in 2006, the HRC is the main inter-governmental body within the United Nations structure for human rights matters. Its function is to ensure implementation of human rights as guaranteed by international law – a system that is based on ten treaties. Compliance is monitored by the related treaty bodies, likewise based in Geneva, as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Geneva's central role is also reflected in the growing presence of NGOs such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the World Organisation against Torture, and the International Commission of Jurists, all of whom actively participate in promoting human rights. The subjects addressed increasingly cover very broad thematic areas, touching for example on climate change, health, or development.



The common standard for protecting human rights is defined in treaties, such as those on elimination of racial discrimination, against torture, or on the rights of the child. Each of these treaties has a committee of experts mandated to monitor the state parties' compliance with their treaty obligations.

Health

Geneva is home to most of the major players in global health, including:

- » *the World Health Organization (WHO),*
- » *the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS),*
- » *the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM),*
- » *the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), and*
- » *a large number of NGOs, such as Médecins sans Frontières (MSF).*

In the field of research, organisations work to deliver innovative solutions for developing medicines and medical instruments that can be used to treat tropical diseases. They include:

- » *Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV),*
- » *the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND), and*
- » *the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi).*

The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies runs an academic programme devoted entirely to health issues: the *Global Health Centre (GHC)*.

Thanks to the commitment and expertise of the various partners based in Geneva, 90% of the world's children under the age of 5 are now immunised against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough).

Phase 1 trials to test the Ebola vaccine were conducted in Switzerland at the Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV) and the Geneva University Hospitals (HUG). The Ebola epidemic claimed more than 10,000 victims between 2013 and 2015.



Labour, economics, trade, science, and telecommunications

International Geneva is also a leading centre for science, technology, and labour.

- » *In its devotion to promoting social justice, improving the rights of workers everywhere, encouraging job creation, and stimulating worldwide economic growth, the International Labour Organization (ILO) cooperates with member state governments, workers, and employers all over the world.*
- » *The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) strives to ensure that inventions, literary and artistic works, designs and models, emblems, and names and images used in commerce are protected by patents, copyright, and trademarks.*
- » *At the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), one of the world's largest and most prestigious particle physics laboratories,*

scientists work together to advance our knowledge of the fundamental constituents and laws of the universe.

- » *The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations' specialised agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs), allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, develops the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies to remain seamlessly interconnected, and strives to improve access to ICTs to underserved communities worldwide.*
- » *Lastly, Geneva is the site of the headquarters for the only global international organisation dealing with rules of trade between nations, the World Trade Organization (WTO).*



The *International Organization for Standardization (ISO)*, the *United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)*, the *United Nations*

Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the *International Trade Centre (ITC)* based in Geneva also contribute their share.

Environment

More diplomats and experts actively committed to the environment and combating climate change can be found in Geneva and its surroundings than anywhere else. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) provides the framework for international cooperation on global challenges associated with climate change and distribution of water resources.

Switzerland makes premises available at the International Environment Houses I and II (IEH I and II) hosting among others:

- » *the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP),*
- » *the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm environmental Conventions – three international treaties which address all key*

aspects for sound management of hazardous chemicals and waste – and

- » *the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), plus*
- » *a number of NGOs.*

Two organisations have their head offices in the canton of Vaud:

- » *the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and*
- » *the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which is also home to the Secretariat of the RAMSAR Convention, an agreement governing international cooperation for conservation and use of wetlands and their resources.*

The headquarters of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), which integrates several platforms © DFAE / Christoph Dütschler

International Geneva's role



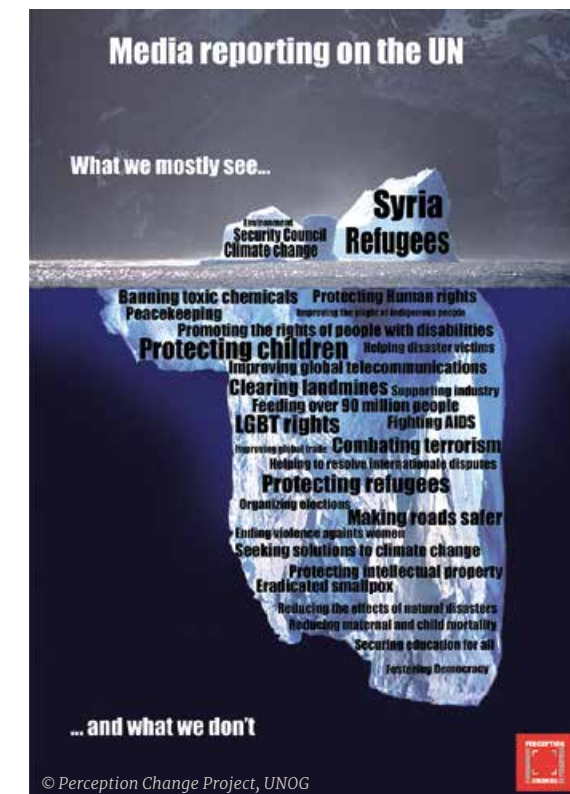
©Photo ONU / Pierre Albouy

“Everything that is done here in Geneva has a direct impact on every person on this planet in any 24 hour period.”

Michael Møller, Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva (2017)

Geneva has a unique concentration of global players who are active in a broad spectrum of fields, have a presence in every region of the world, and are engaged in interdisciplinary work. This – and the synergies created between all such actors through sharing information, experience, and knowledge – makes it the ideal place for addressing the many and complex challenges facing our world today.

International Geneva works every day for peace, rights, and well-being in the world, but the full scope of its activities is much more extensive and often less well known.



One example is the manufacture and use of a mobile phone – a product that combines the expertise and know-how of several international organisations based in Geneva.

- » *The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) ensures people can make phone calls from one country to another via satellite networks. It develops and manages the related international dialling codes.*
- » *The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) develops and publishes the international standards to which every component of a mobile phone must conform.*
- » *The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) issues patents that allow individual brands to protect their products.*
- » *The World Trade Organization (WTO) defines the rules of international commerce that cover the buying and selling of mobile phones between states.*

- » *The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the fundamental rights of workers who produce mobile phones.*
- » *The World Health Organization (WHO) protects mobile phone users from potential health risks.*
- » *The World Wide Web, developed at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva in 1989, lets people surf social networks and information sites.*
- » *The app that lets you look up a weather forecast all over the world uses data managed and developed through international cooperation efforts of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).*



Geneva is also the place where, for example:

- » *the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) strives to support and protect the forcibly displaced. At the end of 2015, this was more than 65 million people;*
- » *the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM) had saved 20 million lives by the end of 2015;*
- » *the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) sets out principles and criteria for controlling imports, exports, and transfers of conventional weapons worldwide;*
- » *the International Air Transport Association (IATA) creates international airport and airline codes;*
- » *the Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) provides and promotes an effective system of plant variety protection. It aims to encourage development of new varieties of plants that benefit society;*
- » *companies the world over can have their efforts to combat bribery and corruption certified, thanks to the ISO 37001 norm, created in autumn 2016 by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).*

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. They aim to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all.

The wealth of skills and actors present in International Geneva is of fundamental importance in realising these goals. The work involved requires inter-sector action: solutions can only be found by tackling problems in all their complexity. There can be no real development without peace, rights, and well-being.

The principal development actors, such as the *United Nations Development Programme* (PNUD), the *World Bank*, the *United Nations Children’s Fund* (UNICEF), and *UN Women*, are present in Geneva, where they work closely with partners such as the *World Health Organization* (WHO) and the *International Labour Organization* (ILO).

The 17 sustainable development goals



Platforms for reflection and coordination

In order to exploit International Geneva’s potential for synergies Switzerland, together with influential and recognised partners, has supported or developed a set of practical tools that includes platforms for exchange, cooperation, reflection, and collaboration with foreign think tanks. They work to strengthen the international organisations’ effectiveness and provide the international community with ideas and potential solutions to global challenges, which – in today’s hyper-connected world – have now become transversal.

These platforms bring together the actors, ideas, and know-how concentrated in International Geneva. They help create important stakeholder networks, develop, test, and spread strategic ideas, and provide access to critical knowledge in their fields. Geneva’s links with those working “on the ground” means these platforms are regularly confronted with local realities and can incorporate first-hand experience gained in the field into their deliberations.

A platform:

- » creates links between actors from the public and private sectors, civil society, and the universities
 - » educates and trains officers of permanent missions or provides them with support in preparing large international conferences
 - » reports on the outcome of negotiations or events
 - » organises and facilitates meetings, debates, conferences, workshops, and other events in innovative formats for small or large groups behind closed doors or in public
 - » produces and distributes publications and information bulletins (newsletters).
-

Switzerland was heavily involved in creating and developing a number of platforms whose activities it continues to support:

- » **The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (GPP)** facilitates interaction between various institutions and sectors involved in peacebuilding – in Geneva, New York, and on the ground. It builds knowledge, provides advice and services, and encourages pragmatic dialogue. The Platform’s network comprises more than 3,000 professionals and 60 institutions.
www.gppplatform.ch
- » **The Geneva Internet Platform (GIP)** is devoted to internet governance. GIP has developed a “Digital Watch” system that monitors the latest developments in this area through its worldwide network of associates. It also serves as a discussion facilitator and training centre.
www.gipplatform.org
- » **The Geneva Water Hub** is a centre of competence for water, peace, and security issues. Its aim is to develop a strategic understanding of hydro-politics while helping to shape the global agenda. It supports a variety of strategic platforms such as the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, for which it acts as secretariat. It also offers a discreet facilitation platform for reducing the risk of water-related conflicts breaking out or helping to resolve them.
www.genevawaterhub.org
- » **The Global Health Centre (GHC)**, a programme of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, analyses changes in global health governance, such as the growing influence of the emerging economies and non-governmental entities in training decision-makers and contributing to set the international agenda. The GCH focuses on global health governance and diplomacy.
www.graduateinstitute.ch/globalhealth
- » **The Geneva Environment Network (GEN)** actively promoted increased cooperation and networking between its members from the environmental community since 1999. To promote sustainable development, GEN aims to strengthen positive interactions between environmental organisations in order to encourage synergies between environmental activities and those relating to social and economic development.
www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org
- » **The Global initiative against transnational organized crime (GITOC)** is a network of prominent law enforcement, governance, and development experts who are dedicated to seeking global, innovative responses to transnational organised crime as well as promoting greater debate on the subject.
www.globalinitiative.net
- » **The Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP)** encourages widespread collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers

in order to promote and support transition to a green economy.

www.greengrowthknowledge.org

- » **The Geneva Humanitarian Connector**, in partnership with Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection (PHAP), is an information-sharing platform currently being developed for the humanitarian community in Geneva. It promotes exchange of relevant ideas and perspectives in the humanitarian sphere.
gvaconnector.phap.org
- » **The Geneva Disarmament Platform** provides a neutral and dynamic forum for increased interaction between various stakeholders in the disarmament process. It works to facilitate cooperation and information-sharing as well as providing an informal discussion forum that

enables new topics to be explored and thorny political issues to be addressed. The platform also works to strengthen dialogue between the disarmament community and actors in other fields in order to speed up the pace of disarmament.

www.disarmament.ch/

Complete and up-dated list of platforms: www.eda.admin.ch/missions/mission-onu-geneve/en/home/geneve-international/Plateformes.html



The Maison de la paix, which houses the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, the Global Health Centre (GHC) and the three Geneva Centres © IHEID

Think tanks consistently bring added-value to resolving complex global problems by providing decision-makers with evidence-based data. Therefore, attracting new think tanks to Geneva where they can benefit from its unique concentration of expertise is one of Switzerland's priorities. To this end, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

(FDFA) has set up the *Think Tank Hub*, a centre that provides neutral space for an exchange of ideas with special direct access to the main players in International Geneva.

www.thinktankhubgeneva.org

THINK
TANK HUB



Place des Nations in Geneva © FDFA Presence Switzerland

Instruments of Swiss host-state policy

Switzerland's host-state policy is based on the existence of unique instruments of cooperation between the federal, cantonal, and communal authorities. Switzerland grants international civil servants and members of foreign representations the privileges and immunities arising under international law along with a large number of

facilities. It also offers a high-quality institutional structure and real estate for office space and conference facilities. In addition, the host state takes the necessary steps in each situation to guarantee good working conditions and ensure the safety and security of the entire international community.



The Palais des Nations in Geneva © FDFA, Presence Switzerland

Legal instruments

In keeping with international law and practice, Switzerland grants privileges, immunities, and other facilities to foreign representations and international organisations, as well as to members of their staff and families.

The privileges and immunities are set out in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963, agreements with international organisations entered into by the Federal Council, and the Host State Act and Ordinance, which came into force in 2008.

Switzerland also grants additional facilities to the international community, such as access to the Swiss employment market; family reunification by way of exception for family members other than the spouse and unmarried children aged under 25; exemption from value-added tax for persons with diplomatic status; and access to real estate.

The Private Household Employees Ordinance, which came into force in 2011, governs the hiring by the international community's domestic staff, ensuring fair and decent working conditions. This ordinance conforms with both Vienna Conventions as well as the Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2011.



Planned extension for the Palais des Nations © Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Inc / Burckhardt + Partner SA

Financial instruments

Switzerland supports International Geneva through a range of other measures. For example, it works towards universal representation of UN member states in Geneva and supports the least developed countries (LDCs), as well as non-governmental organisations lacking sufficient resources. It also contributes to holding major international conferences on its territory. Switzerland provides support to a large number of partners working to promote International Geneva.

Main partners supported by Switzerland:

» *The Foundation for Buildings for International Organisations (FIPOI) is a private-law foundation established in 1964 by the federal government and the Canton of Geneva. Through FIPOI, the federal government grants interest-free construction loans repayable over 50 years and renovation loans repayable over 30 years at a preferential rate to international organisations*

upon request. For its part, the Canton of Geneva makes the land required by the international organisations for their construction projects available to them through FIPOI with free building rights. Since 2004, FIPOI has been

permitted to extend its services to international organisations based in the canton of Vaud. The foundation can also purchase or construct property which it may rent and manage.

In 2016, the Swiss Confederation, the Republic and Canton of Geneva, and the City of Geneva approved a loan of CHF 400 million to the United Nations (UN) to modernise its Geneva headquarters: the Palais des Nations. The total cost of the project is estimated at CHF 836.5 million. The Swiss authorities in 2016 also granted loans of more than CHF 290 million to the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) towards their construction or renovation projects.



The traditional 'Escalade' festival celebrated by diplomats newly posted to Geneva at La Pastorale, office of Geneva Welcome Centre (CAGI) © Ef-Figie Studio

» *The International Geneva Welcome Centre (CAGI) was founded in 1996 by the canton of Geneva and the federal government. Its aim is to help international civil servants, members of permanent missions, consulates, NGOs, and their families, as well as NGO delegates from disadvantaged regions to settle into their new environment.*

» *The mission of the Geneva Press Club, founded in 1997 by the Canton of Geneva and the federal government in partnership with a number of media representatives, is to welcome and assist*

journalists visiting Geneva and to inform the media about subjects being addressed here.

» *The Office of the Amiable Compositeur, established in 1995 by the Canton of Geneva, intervenes in labour disputes between an employee recruited locally and a foreign representation or between a private household employee and an employer who enjoys privileges and immunities. The Office tries to settle the dispute by coming to an arrangement acceptable to both parties.*

» The goal of the **Foundation for Geneva**, which was set up in 1976, is to strengthen Geneva's international profile by drawing attention to its many unique selling points. Its mission consists of launching, coordinating, promoting, and supporting initiatives that are in line with the city's traditions of hospitality and openness to the world. The foundation also supports the Diplomatic Club of Geneva and the International Circle of Geneva, which contribute to integrating the international community in Geneva.

» The **Centre pour l'Éducation et la Sensibilisation à la Coopération Internationale à Genève (Fondation EDUKI)** is a foundation under Swiss law, established in 2011. It specialises in organising visits and activities for schoolchildren of all ages that let them discover the world of international cooperation in Geneva. It is supported by the **Fondation pour Genève**, which runs its secretariat and plans its future development.



Celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the UN at the Open Day at the Palais des Nations in 2015 © Fondation EDUKI photo

» The **Association of former international civil servants for development Greycells** was founded in 2008 by a group of retired international civil servants who wished to offer their support to delegates and functionaries from developing countries on a voluntary basis (briefings on the agenda of UN meetings, training courses).

» The **Association Suisse-ONU (ASNU)** strengthens the partnership between Switzerland and the UN by raising awareness of the United Nations, Switzerland's actions in this context and International Geneva.

» The **Swiss Forum for International Affairs (FSPI)** is an independent forum for information and reflection on international relations, where Swiss and foreign nationals meet regularly to consider and refine their understanding of global issues.

Countless other partners work to enhance the standing of International Geneva, many of them expatriate associations such as the **United Nations Women's Guild**, **InterNations**, **Glocals**, **Expatrica**, and the **United Nations local expatriate spouse association (UNLESA)**.



Main entrance to Geneva's international conference centre CICG © FIP01 / Luca Fascini

Conferences

» Situated in the very heart of International Geneva, the **International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG)** has meeting rooms of various sizes, all equipped with the latest technology, which can accommodate close to 3,000 people. These rooms are available free of charge to international organisations and other institutions with links to International Geneva.

» The **Conference Centre Varembe (CCV)** is just a few steps away from the CICG and can host meetings for groups of 15 to 200 participants. It can be used independently of the CICG or in conjunction with it.

» The **Palexpo Congress Centre** likewise has a high-quality conference infrastructure, with a capacity of up to 11,000 participants. It is the venue for famous trade fairs such as the Geneva

International Motor Show, the watch industry's **Salon international de la haute horlogerie (SIHH)**, and the **ITU Telecom World**.

» The **Office of the United Nations at Geneva** and most of the international organisations have their own conference rooms.

» The **Maison de la paix**, a place to meet, think, and act towards promoting peace and security, located a few hundred metres from the main international organisations, has two modern auditoriums that can accommodate more than 600 participants in total.

Every large Swiss town and city can host important conferences and is accustomed to hosting meetings of international stature.

Security

- » *The Diplomatic Security Guard of the Geneva Police Force, a unit following diplomatic protocol, provides members of the diplomatic community with assistance 24/7 and informs the Swiss Mission in Geneva of cases involving persons granted privileges and immunities. It liaises between the international community, the cantonal police, and the Swiss federal services authorized in matters of security.*
- » *The Canton of Geneva's International Security Police (PSI) works closely with the Federal Security Service (SFS) to ensure permanent surveillance of diplomatic missions and ambassadors' residences through diplomatic prevention and rapid response patrols (PADI).*



You might also find it useful to know that:

- » *Switzerland, situated at the heart of Europe, is very well served by a large number of international flights and excellent rail connections.*
- » *The European and African time zones offer ideal conditions to speak with the entire world at least once a day.*
- » *Switzerland is not a member of any political or military alliances: it pursues a policy of armed neutrality.*
- » *The country enjoys a stable social climate and safe environment with a very low crime rate.*
- » *There is a wide range of top quality international schools offering international programmes in a bilingual environment.*
- » *The healthcare system is highly developed.*

More infographics on Switzerland can be found at:
www.eda.admin.ch/aboutswitzerland/en/home/infografiken.html





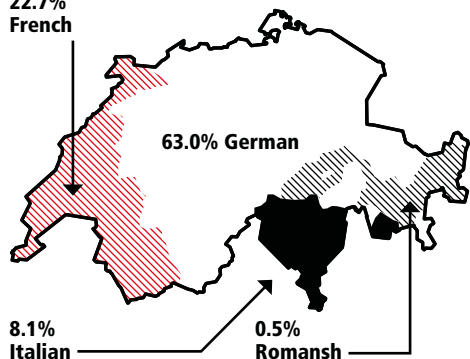
Switzerland.

SWITZERLAND IN BRIEF

4 LANGUAGES

Switzerland has four official languages

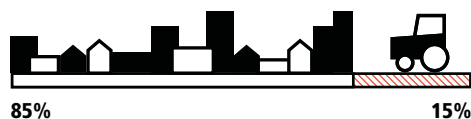
22.7%
French



8,419,600

 inhabitants

Its population lives mostly in urban areas



41,285 KM²

is the total surface area of Switzerland, which lies at the heart of Europe. The Alps cover 60% of Switzerland's total surface area, although they are home to only 11% of the total population.

4,634M 2,400 KM PER PERSON

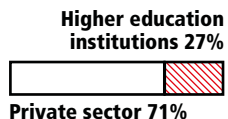
The highest peak measuring 4,634m is the "Dufourspitze" in the Monte Rosa massif. Of the 82 Alpine peaks over 4,000m, 48 are in Switzerland.

People travel the longest distance by rail in Switzerland than in any other country in the world. Each inhabitant travels on average 2,400 km by rail annually.

25%

Switzerland is home to 2.1 million foreign nationals, one of the highest proportions of foreigners in a European country.

Switzerland invests on average 3% of its GDP into research and development. Private business (esp. pharmaceuticals, chemicals and technology) and higher education are the major actors.



HIGHER EDUCATION

In Switzerland there are 12 universities and federal institutes of technology, 8 universities of applied sciences and 20 universities of teacher education.

HIGHEST RANKING

Global Competitiveness Report 2016-2017
Global Innovation Index 2017
European Innovation Scoreboard 2017

4x

The Swiss electorate votes four times a year for a total of around 15 federal proposals.



1+26+2250=1

Power is shared by the federal government, the 26 cantons and 2250 communes.

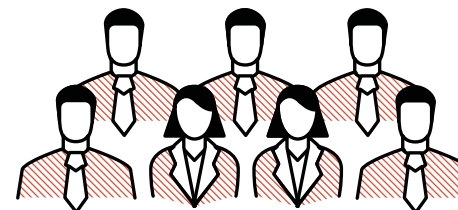
FEDERAL ASSEMBLY

The Swiss Parliament (Federal Assembly) is the highest legislative authority at federal level. It is made up of 246 representatives elected by the people. They belong to various parties and sit in two chambers.



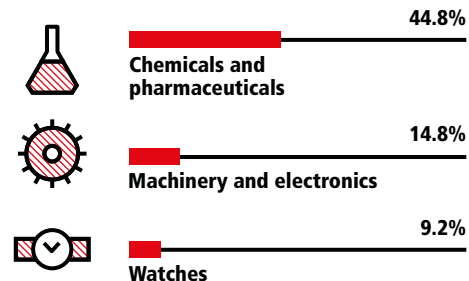
FEDERAL COUNCIL

Switzerland's government (Federal Council) is a collegial body with seven members elected for a four-year term by Parliament.

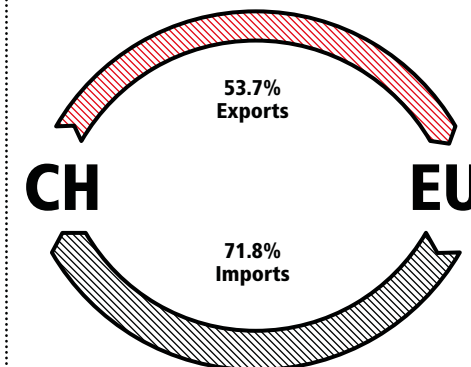


EXPORT

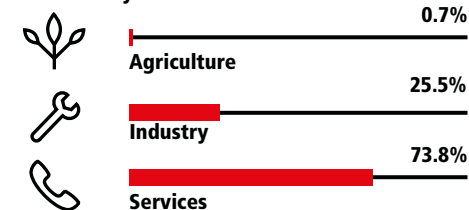
The largest exporting industries:



The EU is Switzerland's biggest trading partner.



Swiss GDP by sector:



99%

of registered businesses in Switzerland are SMEs with fewer than 250 staff.

Map of International Geneva

The list of international organisations benefiting from an agreement with Switzerland is available at:
www.dfae.admin.ch/content/dam/mission-onu-omc-aele-geneve/en/documents/Tableau-des-OI_EN.pdf



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- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. CICG
 | 2. Maison de la Paix
 | 3. ISO
 | 4. OMC
 | 5. UNHCR
 | 6. CCI / ITC
 | 7. MIE 1 et 2
 | 8. IATA
 | 9. UNICEF
 | 10. UPOV
 |
| 11. GAVI
 | 12. HCDH
 | 13. CERN
 | 14. CICR
 | 15. Campus Biotech & FIND
 | 16. FISCAR
 | 17. OIM
 | 18. OIT
 | 19. OMM
 | 20. OMPI
 |
| 21. OMS / ONUSIDA
 | 22. ONUG
 | 23. GAIN
 | 24. UIP
 | 25. UIT
 | 26. Fonds Mondial
 | 27. BIE/UNESCO
 | 28. Secrétariat ATT
 | 29. Cour OSCE
 | 30. GCERF
 |

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