

Soft power and the name of the city

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

Art Basel has made the name of the city known among people who might otherwise never have heard of it. Part F, Chapter V, discussed the "Basel" brand in the context of global governance, from the Basel Committee to the Basel Convention. Art Basel adds a cultural and commercial dimension to that brand. When collectors in Miami, Hong Kong, Paris or Doha attend a fair called Art Basel, they associate the name of the city with quality, internationality and wealth. The fair's expansion has thus multiplied the visibility of the city, though it has also detached the brand from the place. Most visitors to Art Basel Miami Beach have never been to Basel. Some may not even know where it lies.¹

The canton has recognised this value and protects it through its shareholding in MCH Group and the shareholders' agreement on the location of the fair. The risk that the main fair might one day move elsewhere is small, since the Basel edition remains the flagship and its tradition is part of the brand. The experience of Baselworld nonetheless showed that no fair is secure in its location. A fair that depends on a small number of very large exhibitors, as Baselworld did, is vulnerable to their decisions. Art Basel depends on the participation of the leading galleries and the attendance of the leading collectors. As long as Basel offers them the best conditions, the fair will remain. Part J will consider the cultural foundations of that attraction, among them the museums, the foundations and the tradition of patronage that make Basel a city of art.²

1 Notes

1. On Art Basel as a factor in the international image of Basel and the relationship between the fair brand and the city, see Part F, Chapter V, and the publications of Basel Tourismus and the canton of Basel-Stadt on location marketing. To be verified. ↩

Soft power and the name of the city

2. On the cultural institutions of Basel and their contribution to the attraction of the city for collectors, see Part J, Chapter V. To be verified.



For general information only. This article does not constitute legal or tax advice, does not replace advice on an individual case and creates no lawyer-client relationship. It reflects the legal position as of September 2026.

Online version: helveticaregister.com/basel-soft-power-and-the-name-of-the-city