

Communication: press, publications and the image of the financial centre

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A financial centre needs a press that understands and criticises it in its own language. Geneva and French-speaking Switzerland have a daily newspaper of record, *Le Temps*, whose first issue appeared on 18 March 1998, born of the merger of the *Journal de Genève*, founded in 1826, the *Gazette de Lausanne*, founded in 1798, and the *Nouveau Quotidien*, founded in 1991. The newspaper, which has belonged to the Fondation Aventinus since January 2021, had a circulation of 35,667 copies in 2025.¹ The business press of French-speaking Switzerland also includes a financial daily, *L'Agefi*, and a business magazine, *Bilan*, whose investigations into private banking, commodity trading and taxation have accompanied, and sometimes anticipated, the developments described in Parts E to H.² The business desks of the French-speaking public radio and television complete this landscape.

This press plays a role that English-speaking financial centres do not always appreciate: it makes the financial centre legible to its political and social environment. Popular votes on taxation, debates on banking secrecy and corruption cases linked to commodity trading have been explained to the Geneva and French-speaking Swiss public in its own language, by journalists who know the financial centre from the inside. The financial institutions, for their part, communicate in French with this public: annual reports, press releases, position papers of the umbrella organisations, contributions to debates before popular votes. A financial centre that communicated only in English would lose contact with the population on which, through the ballot box, its conditions of existence depend.

The institutional communication of the large houses is today bilingual at the very least. Annual reports appear in French and English, sometimes in German. Websites offer several languages, while marketing documents are adapted to the markets. This output requires writers and translators

capable of producing clear financial prose in each language, a rare and often underestimated skill. Translation errors in an annual report or a marketing document carry a reputational cost, all the more so since the supervisory authorities pay attention to the consistency of the different versions.

1 Notes

1. “Le Temps”, en.wikipedia.org (accessed September 2026): first issue on 18 March 1998; Gazette de Lausanne founded in 1798, Journal de Genève in 1826, Le Nouveau Quotidien in 1991; acquired by the Fondation Aventinus in January 2021; 2025 circulation of 35,667 copies. ↩
2. Wikipédia (fr), article “L’Agefi (Suisse)”: financial daily founded in 1950 by the French journalist Jean Hussard, with its head office and central editorial team in Échandens and offices in Zurich and Geneva; taken over in 1980 by L’Agefi France, then by the Expansion group (1983-1987), by Alain Fabarez (1993), by Agefi Holding SA listed on the SWX (1999) and, as to 51 per cent of the press division, by Alain Duménil (2009); since the end of 2020 the title has appeared twice a week, with Frédéric Lelièvre as director and editor-in-chief. Wikipedia (en), article “Bilan (magazine)”: French-language business magazine launched in June 1989 by Alain Fabarez, the French-speaking counterpart of Bilanz, which passed from the Edipresse group to Tamedia in November 2011, fortnightly since 2005; circulation of 15,000 copies originally, 19,325 in 2007-2008, 11,448 in 2014. ↩

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