

Geneva's African diaspora

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Geneva is home to a large and diverse African diaspora, made up of international civil servants, diplomats, students, entrepreneurs, professionals and workers from across the continent. This community, whose demographic weight in the canton is significant, maintains economic ties with the countries of origin — remittances, investment, trade — and it constitutes a pool of talent for the companies and institutions that work with Africa.¹

Diaspora remittances to Africa exceed, at the scale of the continent, official development assistance. For many countries they constitute an essential source of foreign currency.² Transfer services, whose cost remains high, are the subject of innovation, notably through mobile technologies and crypto-assets and digital assets, which Chapter V of the present Part will discuss. The Geneva financial centre, which brings together banks, payment providers and technology players, takes part in these innovations.

The diaspora also constitutes a cultural and political link. African associations in Geneva maintain a dialogue with the international institutions, take part in debates on development and governance and cast a critical eye on the financial centre when it receives assets diverted from their countries. That scrutiny, expressed from Geneva itself, contributes to the demand for accountability that the preceding Parts have described.

1 Notes

1. OCSTAT, Bilan et état de la population du canton de Genève en 2024 (statistique.ge.ch): “At the end of December 2024, the canton of Geneva had 530,246 inhabitants, of whom 41.5% were foreign nationals” (220,024 foreign residents); of these, 58% are nationals of the EU27/EFTA, 13% of other European countries, 10% of Asia, 9% of the Americas and 9% of Africa (Eritrea, Morocco and Tunisia cited among

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the African nationalities); remittance flows are not the subject of any cantonal statistics. ↩

2. World Bank, blogs.worldbank.org, 18 December 2024: remittances to sub-Saharan Africa estimated at approximately USD 56 billion in 2024; across low- and middle-income countries, USD 685 billion, an amount exceeding foreign direct investment and official development assistance combined. ↩

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