

International mediation and good offices

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

Beyond arbitration, Geneva hosts numerous international negotiations and mediations. Switzerland offers its good offices to facilitate dialogue between parties to conflicts, and Geneva frequently serves as the meeting place, owing to its neutrality, its infrastructure and the presence of the international organisations.¹ These negotiations, which are often confidential, belong to the sphere of diplomacy and contribute to Geneva's image as a place where disputes are settled.

Mediation has also developed in the commercial and financial field. The Swiss Rules of Mediation, administered by the Swiss Arbitration Centre, provide a framework for commercial mediations.² The Financial Services Act has made it compulsory for providers serving private clients to affiliate with an ombudsman body, as described in Part E. Mediation allows a great many disputes to be resolved quickly, confidentially and economically, without contentious proceedings.

For the financial centre, mediation is a useful complement to arbitration and to the courts. It preserves business relationships, which matters in a sector where trust and long-standing relationships are essential. It requires trained mediators and credible institutions, both of which Geneva is in a position to offer.

1 Notes

1. Wikipedia (en), art. "Geneva II Conference on Syria": Geneva I conference of 30 June 2012 under the auspices of Kofi Annan (communiqué providing for a transitional governing body), Geneva II conference opened in Montreux on 22 January 2014 and continued in Geneva from 23 to 31 January and from 10 to 15 February 2014 under the mediation of Lakhdar Brahimi, without tangible result; art. "Joint Plan of Action": joint plan of action on the Iranian nuclear programme

International mediation and good offices

signed in Geneva on 24 November 2013 between Iran and the P5+1 group, the prelude to the Vienna agreement of 14 July 2015. ↩

2. *Chambre de commerce bernoise* (Bern Chamber of Commerce), “Arbitrage”, bern-cci.ch (accessed September 2026). ↩

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/geneva-international-mediation-and-good-offices