

The memory of the crises in Genevan identity

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

The trials of the Republic have left lasting traces in the collective memory. The Escalade of 1602 is commemorated every December with processions, songs and the famous chocolate cauldron. The Restoration of 31 December 1813 is the object of an official celebration, and the landing of the Confederates at Port-Noir in 1814 is likewise remembered.¹

These commemorations sustain an identity founded on resistance to external threats, attachment to independence and membership of Switzerland. They remind Genevans that the security of their city was won and that there is nothing self-evident about it. This historical awareness feeds a culture of vigilance, which can be seen in the way the financial centre approaches political and regulatory risk.

For international clients, this identity contributes to the image of a financial centre rooted in a long history, attached to its institutions and capable of coming through crises. That image forms part of Geneva's reputational capital, which bankers put forward in their communications. It has value only if it matches the reality of contemporary practice.

1 Notes

1. Wikipedia (fr), "Restauration genevoise": "Every year since 1814, the Restoration has been celebrated on the morning of 31 December, a public holiday in the canton. It begins at dawn with a salute of 26 cannon shots"; Archives d'État de Genève, "Arrivée des Suisses au Port-Noir le 1er juin 1814" (commemoration of 1 June). ↩

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