

The private bankers in the life of the Geneva financial centre

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In the twentieth century, the private bankers occupy an eminent place in the life of the Geneva financial centre that goes beyond their economic weight. Their partners sit on the governing bodies of banking associations, cultural institutions and foundations. They take part in debates on regulation and on the future of the financial centre. Their reputation contributes to the international image of Geneva.

They also maintain close relations with the other players in the financial centre: commercial banks, foreign banks, independent asset managers, lawyers and fiduciaries. Many of Geneva's independent asset managers began their careers in a private bank before founding their own firm, and they frequently continue to deposit their clients' assets with their former employer. This ecosystem, which Part E will describe, rests in part on the skills and networks formed within the private banking houses.

The Fondation Genève Place Financière, created in 1991 by the eighty member banks of the Geneva Stock Exchange, today brings together the players in the financial centre, among them the private bankers.¹ It conveys their concerns to the authorities and the public, and it publishes regular surveys on the state of the sector. The tradition of the private bankers, who long gave the financial centre its structure, thus lives on in collective institutions open to all establishments.

Key points. The death or withdrawal of a partner, the comparison with the Anglo-Saxon *partnerships* and the role of the private bankers in the Geneva ecosystem show that personal liability is not enough on its own to guarantee the solidity of a house: it must go hand in hand with succession planning, rigorous internal controls and active involvement in the financial centre.

1 Notes

1. Fondation Genève Place Financière, presentation, geneve-finance.ch (accessed September 2026). ↩

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Online version: helveticaregister.com/geneva-the-private-bankers-in-the-life-of-the-geneva-financial-centre