

The turbulence since 2025

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Since 2025 International Geneva has been passing through a period of turbulence without precedent since the end of the Cold War. According to an article published in June 2025, the institutions established on the shores of Lake Geneva have faced, since Donald Trump's return to the White House, a series of shocks: funding freezes, restructurings and redundancies that unsettle the balance and threaten a whole segment of the local economy.¹ The American decisions to reduce or suspend contributions to several organisations, and to withdraw from some of them, have struck institutions of which the United States was the largest contributor.²

These decisions have direct consequences for employment in Geneva. The organisations concerned have announced staff reductions, programme closures and the relocation of activities to less costly places. The fall in the number of jobs in the international organisations, recorded in 2023 for the first time in more than a decade, has become more pronounced.³ The non-governmental organisations, often funded by the same donors, are experiencing comparable difficulties.

The effects spread to the local economy: office and residential property, shops, services, international schools, and also the financial centre, part of whose clientele and business relationships are linked to International Geneva. The federal, cantonal and municipal authorities have taken support measures, within the limits of their means and their powers.⁴

This crisis recalls a truth that the history of the League of Nations had already taught: International Geneva depends on the willingness of the great powers to fund multilateralism and keep it alive. When that willingness weakens, the city suffers the consequences. The parallel with the financial centre, whose dependence on external decisions Part A has shown, is striking.

Caution. International Geneva depends on the contributions of States, and first and foremost of the great powers. The funding freezes and restructurings begun in 2025 show that this dependence can quickly translate into losses of jobs and activities for the region, including for the financial centre.

1 Notes

1. “L’avenir incertain de la Genève internationale”, Genève attractive, 24 June 2025. ↩
2. Focus 2030, “United States withdrawal from 66 international organizations” (focus2030.org): disengagements begun from 20 January 2025 (withdrawal from the WHO and UNESCO, end of participation in the Human Rights Council, closure of USAID); on 7 January 2026, announcement of the withdrawal from “66 international organizations, including 31 entities within the United Nations system”; suspension of some USD 377 million in contributions to UNFPA. ↩
3. “La Genève internationale en chiffres”, swissinfo.ch, 7 November 2024, for the 2023 finding. ↩
4. FDFA, “Le Conseil fédéral réaffirme le rôle de la Genève internationale en débloquant plus d’un quart de milliard de francs” (The Federal Council reaffirms the role of International Geneva by releasing more than a quarter of a billion francs) (eda.admin.ch): decision of 20 June 2025 concerning CHF 269 million up to 2029; suspension of loan repayments of CHF 38.7 million and CHF 21.75 million for infrastructure, conferences and data management in 2025; Host State dispatch 2026–2029 endowed with CHF 130.4 million; interest-free loan of CHF 78 million over fifty years to FIPOI for the renovation of four international organisation buildings. ↩

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