

Africa and Lombardy as hinterlands

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The Geneva volume gave a Part to Africa, a continent whose commodity producers, sovereign clients and elites form one of the hinterlands of Geneva's trading houses and banks. Lugano's hinterland is of a different kind. Lombardy is adjacent, rich and integrated into the same European market as Switzerland's largest trading partner. It supplies Lugano with clients, entrepreneurs, about 79,000 cross-border commuters and a metropolis an hour away by train. The legal instruments that govern the two relationships differ accordingly. Geneva's African business is governed by sanctions, anti-corruption law, commodity due diligence and the law of mutual assistance with distant states. Lugano's relationship with Lombardy is governed by a dense web of bilateral and European instruments: the double taxation convention of 1976, the agreement on cross-border workers of 2020, the Lugano Convention, the agreement on mutual assistance of 1998 and the free movement of persons (Part H). Proximity makes the relationship more intense and also more political. No Geneva vote on African clients corresponds to Ticino's *Prima i nostri* initiative of 2016.

1 French and Italian

The French language gives Geneva access to France, to francophone Africa and to a large share of the Swiss population. French is the main language of about 23 per cent of the permanent resident population, Italian of about 8 per cent.¹ Italian gives Lugano access to Italy and to Italian-speaking families worldwide. It also gives Lugano a minority position inside Switzerland that French does not give Geneva. Chapter J.I showed that the share of Italian speakers in senior federal positions has long remained below their share in the population and that Italian is practically absent as an internal working language of the federal administration. The constitutional guarantee is nonetheless the same for both languages. Geneva itself recognized the weight of that guarantee in 1938, when it

approved the recognition of Romansh as a national language, the amendment that also made the official status of the three administrative languages explicit, with 98.9 per cent of its votes, the highest approval of any canton.²

2 International Geneva and federal justice in Bellinzona

The last pair concerns the institutions that each city hosts beyond its own business. Geneva is the seat of international organizations, which the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs describes as a hub of multilateralism.³ Their presence gives the city a community of foreign residents, diplomatic immunities and a role in global governance that no other Swiss city shares. The Italian-speaking south hosts a federal institution of a different kind. Since 2004 the Federal Criminal Court in Bellinzona has tried the cases of money laundering, corruption and international economic crime that define the legal risks of Swiss banks and traders, and its Board of Appeal decides most appeals in international mutual assistance (Chapter J.II). Geneva's institutions speak to the world. Bellinzona's court speaks to the Swiss financial centre, judging banks from Zurich and Geneva as well as clans from Calabria.

3 Notes

1. FSO, "Languages" (above) (2020: French 23 per cent; Italian, Ticinese or Italian-Grisons dialect 8 per cent). ↩
2. Swissvotes, "Anerkennung des Rätoromanischen als Nationalsprache", short description of federal vote no. 124, <https://swissvotes.ch/vote/124.00/kurzbeschreibung-de.pdf> (91.6 per cent yes, all cantons in favour, highest approval in Geneva with 98.9 per cent), as cited in Chapter J.I. ↩
3. Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, "International Geneva", <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/foreign-policy/international-organizations/international-geneva.html> ("Switzerland is strengthening International Geneva – a hub of multilateralism"). ↩

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