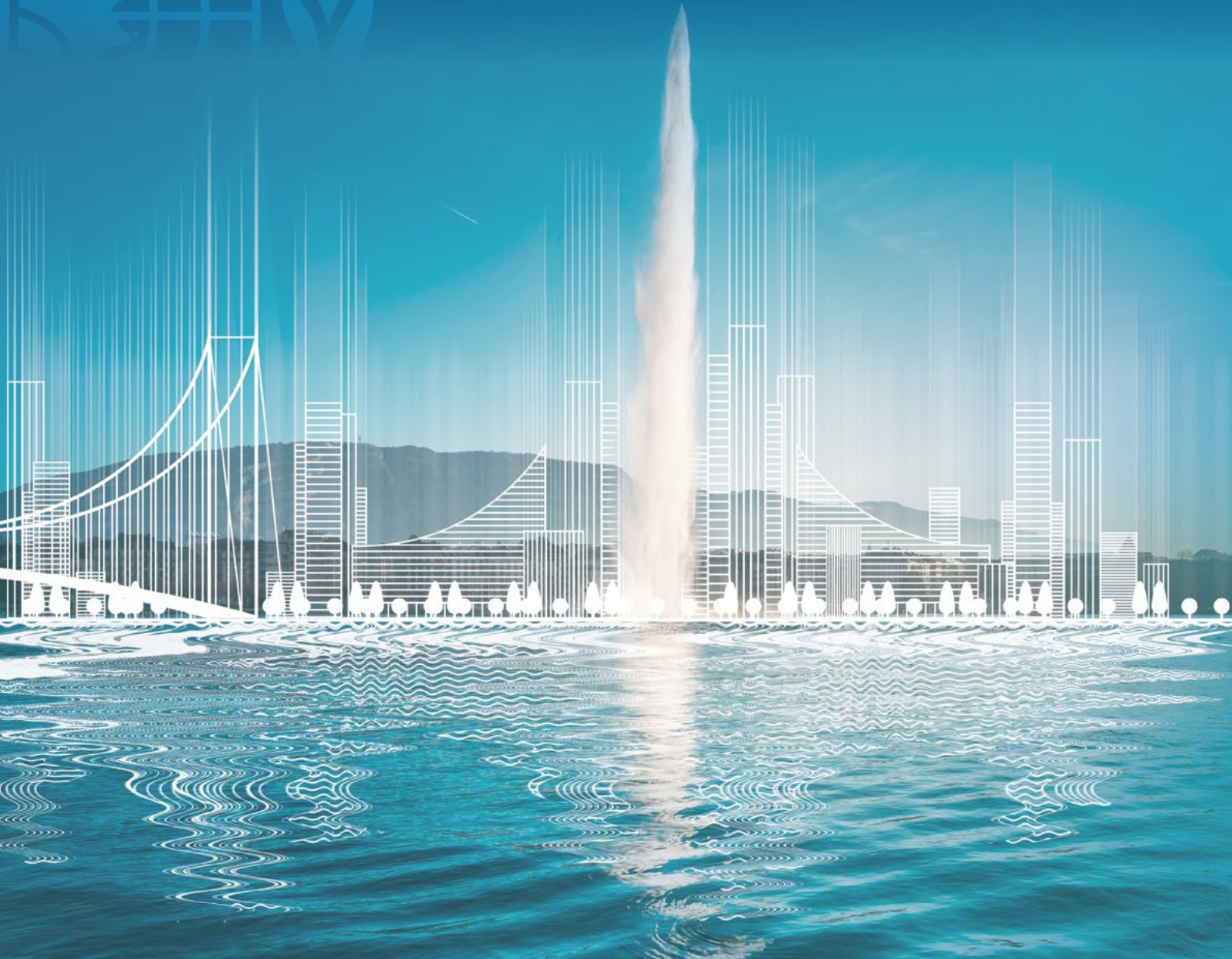


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Le futur de Genève The future of Geneva

822 - SEP 2022

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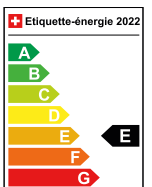
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GARRY ASLANYAN
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The future of Geneva

We could not find a better focus of our opening articles for this issue, upon your return from summer holiday, than to look at the future of Geneva. From evolving the meaning of “spirit of Geneva”, to banking and the emerging global health hub. These are just some of the aspects unpacked in the articles, we are sure there is more, and you may have your own visions of what Geneva of the future would look like. If these articles inspire you, and you have your own thoughts, please be in touch, and we may include them in our future issues.

If you experienced heatwaves while away, you may want to check out the article on the simple answer to how we got into this mess in the first place – climate change. And, as always, we have a lot more for you in this issue. What is happening with health costs in Switzerland? Want to know about Queen Victoria's love affair with Aix-les-Bains? Or global trends in population growth or how the future of humanity is linked to the oceans? We have got it all and more!

Enjoy the reading! ■

L'avenir de Genève

Difficile, pour entamer ce numéro et pour accompagner le retour de vos vacances d'été, de trouver un centre d'intérêt aussi passionnant que l'avenir de Genève. En visualisant l'évolution de la signification de « l'esprit de Genève », nous abordons le secteur bancaire et l'émergence du centre de santé mondial. Ces quelques aspects, examinés dans nos articles, ne sont pas exhaustifs. Nous sommes même certains et que vous imaginez vous-même à quoi ressemblerait la Genève du futur. Si ces lectures vous inspirent, et que vous souhaitez partager vos propres réflexions, n'hésitez pas à nous contacter et nous pourrions les inclure dans nos prochains numéros.

Si vous avez été touchés par la canicule, vous serez certainement intéressés par la lecture de l'article sur ce sujet et vous découvrirez de quelle façon nous en sommes arrivés à ce point – le changement climatique. Comme toujours, Vous trouverez un large choix de thématiques. Que se passe-t-il avec les frais de santé en Suisse ? Voulez-vous en savoir davantage sur l'histoire d'amour de la reine Victoria avec Aix-les-Bains ? Connaître les tendances mondiales de la croissance démographique ou comment l'avenir de l'humanité est lié aux océans? Nous avons tout et plus encore !

Bonne lecture ! ■

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Réf. 36226



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GENTHOD (GE)

JOLIE MAISON CONTIGÜE DE 6 PIÈCES

Cadre verdoyant et ensoleillé / 175 m² habitables sur 3 niveaux / Salon avec poêle / Cuisine spacieuse aménagée et équipée / 3 chambres et une salle de bains au 1^{er} étage / Deux belles pièces polyvalentes dans les combles / Sous-sol complet / 2 places de parking privées.

Réf. 36059



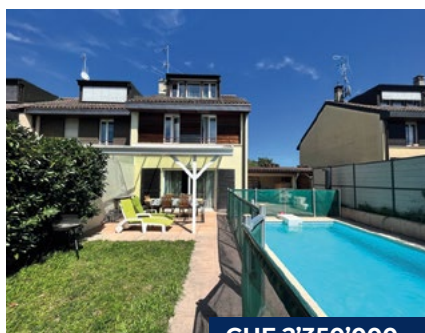
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COLLEX-BOSSY (GE)

MAGNIFIQUE MAISON DE VILLAGE

225 m² habitables / 8 pièces dont 5 chambres / Entièrement rénovée en 2020 / Beau jardin avec piscine chauffée / Un jacuzzi et une terrasse complètent ce bien.

Réf. 36112



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LE GRAND-SACONNEX (GE)

AGRÉABLE MAISON MITOYENNE

Dans quartier résidentiel et prisé / 155 m² sur 3 niveaux / 6 pièces dont 3 chambres et 2 salles d'eau / Cuisine agencée, équipée ouverte sur partie jour donnant accès au jardin / Terrasse avec pergola / Piscine chauffée / Combles offrant un espace polyvalent / Box fermé et 2/3 places de parkings extérieures.

Réf. 36187



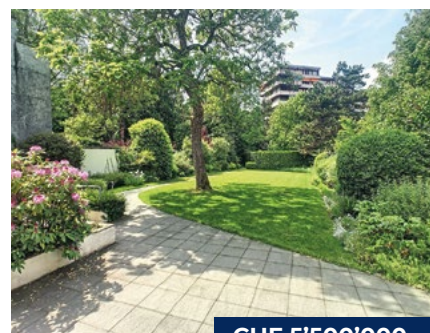
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Réf. 36235



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LE GRAND-SACONNEX (GE)

MAGNIFIQUE TOWNHOUSE AU CALME

Au coeur du quartier des Organisations Internationales / Généreux townhouse de 11 pièces d'env. 370 m² / Parcelle arborée de 900 m² / 3 niveaux dont un sous-sol / Bel ensoleillement / 6 chambres / 4 salles d'eau / A découvrir.

Réf. 35817

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The Geneva of the future

What do we mean by the “future”?

**ALFRED DE ZAYAS,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS**

Surely the future is what we try to make of it now and what other factors like climate change and health emergencies will produce. This future is in a very real sense the constant flux of Heraclitus, the continuous evolution of the seasons, of our thoughts and perceptions, of our beliefs and expectations. Our generation should consciously and responsibly shape it so that we can advance day by day toward a better world of human dignity in peace and solidarity.

That is part of the vocation of Geneva as articulated in the “*esprit de Genève*”¹, expression of humanitarian principles based on Geneva’s heritage as a city of refuge, hub of international cooperation, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations. A future of social

justice and stability must be built with due respect to all cultures, without, however, diminishing the glories of Helvetian history and its many contributions to the modern world.

The Geneva of tomorrow will not cease being the Geneva of Jean Jacques Rousseau², Henri Dunant³ and the Red Cross, of the Geneva Conventions, the Protestant Reformation and Calvinistic ethics, the Geneva of the League of Nations and the UN, of the WHO, ILO, WIPO, OHCHR and UNHCR. It will continue to be at the centre of global human rights initiatives, of advisory services and technical assistance, of committed activists who give more than just lip service to human rights. Many peace initiatives have originated in Geneva, and Switzerland’s neutrality predestines it as an honest broker of international disputes.

Of course, we shall not underestimate Geneva’s role as an effective manager of international business transactions, which largely contributes to its prestige and prosperity.

On the other hand, there are developments in the present that will surely impact Geneva’s future. In the post-Covid 19 World, the World Health Organization with its headquarters in Geneva is likely to grow in importance, since the coronavirus pandemic demonstrated a high level of unpreparedness by most countries and a regrettable absence of international solidarity. Budget priorities must be recast, away from military-first economies and toward human security economies with an emphasis on public health. Surely the International Health Regulations will have to be renegotiated and strengthened and a “Global Compact

on Health” could be envisaged. Post-Covid Geneva will be one of greater flexibility with tele-travail, greater use of video-conferencing, less mass events like the Salon de l’Auto. I would hope, however, that the Salon du livre⁴ will survive.

Geneva also hosts the UN Disarmament Conference⁵. It is crucial for the survival of mankind that the Disarmament Conference delivers on its promise and that there be effective and verifiable nuclear disarmament, followed by disarmament in conventional weapons and a prohibition of the production, stockpiling and sale of all existing and future indiscriminate weapons, including land mines⁶, cluster bombs, lethal autonomous weapon systems.

Meanwhile, in the post-Ukraine-war context, Geneva may no longer be a hub of global trade regulation, bearing in mind that the principles of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and of the World Trade Organization have been sabotaged by illegal unilateral coercive measures and unprecedented economic and trade sanctions – which are incompatible with fundamental principles of freedom of commerce, the freedom of the seas (recognized since Hugo Grotius’ *Mare liberum*⁷), the UN Charter and norms of customary international law. Not only the sanctions against Russia and Belarus, but the whole system of unilateral coercive measures⁸, already condemned by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1997, by the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in 2000, in a long and multifaceted thematic report, by UN High Commissioner Navi Pillay in her 2012 reports (A/HRC/19/33) and in the 2016-19 reports of the UN rapporteur Dr. Idriss Jazairy, and the 2020-22 reports of Rapporteur Alena Douhan⁹.



© Alfred de Zayas

Of course, the Geneva of the future will still be the Geneva of the **Jet d’eau**, of the **Bol d’or**¹⁰, of the flower clock, of the Place du Molard, of haut cuisine (think of the fabulous menus of the Domaine de Châteauevieux in Satigny, 2 stars Michelin), the Geneva of the Mère Royaume¹¹, the marmite, the longeoile, of fine vineyards and excellent wines¹², of the **Musée Ariana**¹³ with its magnificent porcelain collection, including priceless originals of the Yuan and Ming dynasties, of the now defunct Nyon factory, faïences of Mesopotamia, Bohemian crystal. The citizens and visitors of a future Geneva will still be able to stroll through beautiful parcs like Eaux-Vives, Jardin Anglais¹⁴, Trembley¹⁵, Mon Repos, and newer ones yet to be built.

There is something very spiritual and very real which we like to call the “esprit de Genève” – it is this spirit that will guide developments in the 45 municipalities of the Canton de Genève. Personally, I do not expect the citizens of the Canton ever to agree by referendum or otherwise on whether Lac Léman should be crossed by new bridge or by a tunnel. The solution of pollution and traffic problems in the future will have to be less cars, not more, less roads, not more. The Geneva of the future should be a Geneva of mostly hybrid- or electric cars, public transport at affordable prices or even free of charge for all. It should

be a Geneva with safer bicycle paths, and more pedestrian areas. The Geneva airport located in the municipality of Grand Saconnex¹⁶ will probably continue to be closed from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. and the noise pollution should be reduced as airliners develop more silent and efficient jet propulsion motors. Notwithstanding the constant demand to build additional runways, there is really not much space to do so, and the trend should be to reduce, not increase air traffic and the nuisances to the Geneva population.

I see a future Geneva as an energy-conscious and self-sufficient canton, heated mostly by solar energy, with solar panels installed on most buildings and even on zones of Lac Léman. I see a future Geneva with a healthy Salève, allowing nature to heal the scars left by the infamous quarry¹⁷, a Geneva that allows you to enjoy the panorama of the Mont Blanc and the Aravis chain from the Wilsonian Globe in the park of the Palais des Nations¹⁸. The above scenario is only valid if the major powers do not succeed in destroying the entire planet in a nuclear confrontation. Hence the importance of Geneva as a neutral country with vast experience as peace negotiator and a true commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. ■

- 1 https://www.lebendige-traditionen.ch/tradition/en/home/traditions/l_esprit-de-geneve-spirit-of-geneva-.html
- 2 <https://www.biography.com/scholar/jean-jacques-rousseau>
- 3 <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1901/dunant/facts/>
- 4 <https://salondulivre.ch/>
- 5 <https://www.un.org/disarmament/conference-on-disarmament/>
- 6 <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/switzerland/articles/a-brief-history-of-genevas-broken-chair/>
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- 8 <https://www.geneve.ch/en/actualites/mirabaud-2022>
- 9 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-unilateral-coercive-measures/professor-alena-douhan-special-rapporteur-negative-impact-unilateral-coercive-measures>
- 10 <https://www.geneve.ch/en/actualites/mirabaud-2022>
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- 14 https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g188057-d6987949-Reviews-Jardin_Anglais-Geneva.html
- 15 <https://www.geneve.ch/fr/actualites/inauguration-oeuvre-reverberes-memoire-parc-trembley>
- 16 <https://ge.ch/noms-geographiques/recherche-par-commune>
- 17 <http://www.carrieres-descombes.fr/la-carriere/la-carriere-du-saleve/>
- 18 <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/palais-des-nations>



THE NEW X7



Emil Frey SA

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Future of Digital Finance in Geneva

The concepts of money, finance and banking institutions, are being overhauled and reinvented.¹ Geneva has long been famous for its banking industry, although not always in the most favourable light (consider the Volcker study of the late 1990s or the image of Genevan bankers in the movie, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio).

PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU

Predictions about the **death of cash** are likely over-hyped. Criminal organizations, terrorist networks and mafiosi still all rely on cash and money laundering to buy influence, move money around and support their activities. In what has been termed “the paradox of banknotes”, economists estimate that there is some 1.5 trillion US dollars literally ‘missing’ in unaccounted for banknotes.

Meta Pay lets Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp users send money and shop online. Mark Zuckerberg told CNBC’s Jim Cramer (22 June, CNBC; 24 June, Source Protocol), “we hope to get a billion people in the metaverse doing hundreds of dollars of commerce, each buying digital goods, digital content, different things to express themselves”. Other fintech firms dream of bank account portability and mortgage portability, just as we have developed mobile number portability.

China leads the world in mobile payments and the death of cash. Alipay is a hugely popular Chinese digital wallet with over 800 million active users, while WeChat Pay is a platform operated by Tenpay, making it possible to pay for goods with consumers’ faces and micro-payments.

Although Geneva banks will



continue to offer cutting-edge, innovative services to retail customers, their strength and power rest with their reputation and innovations in high-end finance and tax law. It seems unlikely that the super-rich will desert Geneva any time soon. One way to know what the financial industry in the Geneva of the future will look like is **to look at the leading financial powerhouse of the US**, as firms – and regulators – are generally further along with digital finance than their equivalent counterparts in the rest of the world.

As with the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933 (which separated commercial banking from investment banking to protect ordinary savers from having their money gambled away, distinguishing Main Street from Wall Street), the US is likely to lead the rest of the world in commercialising fintech and digital finance

globally over the coming years. The US has a mature banking industry, and several innovative hubs for fintech, with the combination of computer scientists and machine-learning engineers vital for powering digital finance.

Cryptocurrencies are illiquid, volatile and hard to spend in the legitimate economy. They are also very difficult to define. Regulators in the US and elsewhere are struggling with how to regulate cryptocurrencies and whether to define them as securities, or even how to define cryptocurrency exchanges.

The US definition of a security relies on the “Howey test”, derived from a Supreme Court ruling, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) v WJ Howey Co. in 1946, long before cryptocurrencies were invented. This summer, the SEC initially listed

nine out of 25 cryptocurrencies as securities during an insider trading case involving an ex-employee of the crypto exchange Coinbase. This ruling attracted criticism from a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), Caroline D. Pham, who has called for a transparent process that engages the public to develop appropriate policy with expert input.

In the face of different views by different regulators, cryptocurrencies are rebuilding and rebranding themselves. In the UK, in April 2022, Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey made headlines when he said that cryptocurrencies are bringing a good deal of innovation to financial services, but have also created an “opportunity for the downright criminal”, as a “new frontline” in criminal scams. Another major concern with cryptocurrencies is the rapid

increase in carbon emissions accompanying growth in cryptocurrency mining, that is driving up American power consumption and utility costs.

The US Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) does not consider cryptocurrencies to be legal tender, but considers cryptocurrency exchanges to be money transmitters on the basis that cryptocurrency tokens are “other value that substitutes for currency”.

Efforts are underway in the US Congress to write legislation for the cryptocurrency industry. Legislation has been initiated, such as the Lummis-Gillibrand and Stabenow-Boozman bills.

In June 2022, Senators Cynthia Lummis (R., Wyoming) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D., New York) outlined a draft bill, the Responsible Financial Innovation Act,

to create a “complete regulatory framework for digital assets” and seeking to balance the crypto market’s need for guardrails and consumer protections with a desire to promote financial innovation. Another draft bill proposes to give the CFTC direct oversight of tokens that qualify as “digital commodities” (including bitcoin and ether). Online exchanges and other services that facilitate trading of the tokens would be required to register with the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC). But for now, in the US, legal battles are likely to continue in court as the initial battleground for regulators.

In Europe, Members of the European Parliament agreed draft rules for the supervision, consumer protection and environmental costs, and sustainability of crypto-assets, including cryptocurrencies. MEPs want the European Securities and

Markets Authority (ESMA) to supervise the issuance of asset-referenced tokens, whereas the European Banking Authority (EBA) will be in charge of supervising electronic money tokens. The proposed EU Markets in Crypto-Assets Act divides crypto-assets into: non-fungible tokens (NFTs), or virtual gadgets; stablecoins, whose value is meant to be linked to a real-world asset; and digital currencies, which represent a fixed exchange rate to a hard currency.

As they did with international banking and the Basel Accords, Geneva and Switzerland more broadly will continue to innovate, as well as following a middle path encompassing developments in both the US and EU, where Swiss skills of compromise and negotiation are tested to the full. ■



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Geneva Health Files

Tracking the Story of Global Health

This is a story of an interdisciplinary reporting initiative on global health from the heart of Geneva. How it began and the mission it seeks to fulfil.



PRITHI PATNAIK

In the span of less than three years, Geneva Health Files, has come to assume a space that we have successfully created as a source of trusted and critical news. As our many hundreds of readers will agree, it is something they await every week.

Without doubt, self-publishing is revolutionary. And in these epochal times, when all our assumptions about reality have been challenged, we have made complex choices. And publishing on something as political as global health has not been straightforward. But we have held steadfast to our objectives. Prior to COVID-19 hitting the world, Geneva – the capital of global health – was considered quiet backwaters for most newsrooms. Technical discussions were held behind closed doors in cloistered settings with scant interest or scrutiny. The current pandemic blew away the ostensible tranquility and the lack of attention that Geneva generally received.

As a journalist for 20 years, half of which have been spent reporting in Geneva, I was always struck by the pre-pandemic lack of media interest in the way international health policy was being shaped here. I wrote about global health for a few years, but often struggled to convey the importance of these policy matters to a readership outside of the rarefied confines

of this policy capital, replete with multi-disciplinary expertise.

I launched *Geneva Health Files* one night in April 2020, by self-publishing on a WordPress site when information came my way. I quickly realised that there was no time to lose trying to convince circumspect editors I was working with. I had hoped some of my prior readers would follow my work. They did. And more.

We were, and are, witnessing one of the most important stories unfolding in Geneva, and it had to be captured here and now. After nearly 250 comprehensive stories and analyses on global health governance as of August 2022, this weekly investigative newsletter, published on the self-publishing platform Substack, is read by negotiators, diplomats, scholars, activists and students across the world.

While our intention initially was to serve trade and health negotiators in Geneva, we ended up reaching other interested experts working in global health and those interested in keeping an eye on global health policy matters negotiated here.

Our goal is to report and write on complex, technical information in a way that is accessible, so that it feeds into people's work directly. We strive to give information that is actionable and

useful. This also gave us confidence to ask our readers to pay for our reporting. And they did.

Our distinguishing factor is in our emphasis of looking at global health from a trans-disciplinary perspective. The idea is to look at global health policy, as crafted in Geneva, by taking into account the myriad of influences both private and public, both political and commercial. This entails looking at the field through the lens of governance, diplomacy, politics, trade, and science.

We have reported on global health governance, WHO reforms, vaccine politics, and pandemic-related trade policy discussions at WTO, among other issues. Our unique, blended approach to reporting presents the big picture while being totally immersed in the details.

Our reporting priorities require us to track everything, but we consciously choose to focus on a few key matters to analyse them at great length. We strive to write on matters that we feel do not get adequately treated in mainstream media. From reporting on the emergence and the politics of the COVAX Facility, to the discussions on the financing of WHO, from reporting on the TRIPS Waiver discussions at the WTO, to tracking the negotiations towards a new pandemic instrument, we consistently follow these areas of

reporting so that readers can follow the thread of developments in our rich archives that can be accessed at genevahealthfiles.substack.com.

We have primarily been self-funded, which (to not mince words) is tough. Our readers, by supporting us through subscriptions, enable us to be independent. Subscriptions go towards meeting a quarter of our total costs of operations. This allows us to tackle topics and make editorial choices that do not please everyone. Our journalism is often critical. And yet, a cross-section of professionals read us, even though they may not agree with us.

As this pandemic has shown, global health is everybody's business. Geneva alone is home to over 200 global health organizations, and nearly 200 permanent missions to the United Nations. Critical and independent global health journalism needs support from all stakeholders who directly stand to benefit from public interest journalism.

Building on our reportage during this period, we have authored reports, worked with civil society actors, offered our editorial expertise to governments and public auditors. Our journalism has been cited by universities, other institutions, and we have also contributed to several panel

discussions on global health. We have been profiled as one of the top five investigative newsletters by the Global Investigative Journalism Network. In addition, we currently rank on top in the paid category of newsletters classified as international on Substack.

In time, we have also expanded our offerings to include podcasts and workshops on key global health topics. We also have an annual summer fellowship program for interested professionals who want to engage in critical global health journalism and media entrepreneurship.

We aspire to be the most trusted global health journalistic initiative with convening power. We hope to become financially sustainable while maintaining independence and reach. We are keen on diversifying our products to include due-diligence research reports and offer advice based on our editorial expertise. We are seeking financial support to sustain our operations to absorb reporting costs and to help expand our team to be able to ensure high quality journalism and research.

Our journalism seeks to contribute towards greater accountability and transparency in global health. By way of our reporting, we also seek to bring greater diversity into global health reporting.

I also say “we”, because although we are, currently, a one-person newsroom, this initiative would have not survived without the constant support and engagement of the wider community. We have been supported by volunteers from around the world, from discerning readers who give us feedback. And most of all, our sources who trust us with their time and insights.

Read us, and talk to us!

There is much to uncover, scrutinize and report on in the years to come. Geneva will never be the same again.

At a time when multilateralism in Geneva is being shaped by geopolitics and systemic changes in governance, and when the global health architecture is being remade, Geneva Health Files is chronicling these shifts for you. ■

Priti Patnaik is the Founding Editor of Geneva Health Files. She can be reached at [Patnaik.reporting@gmail.com](mailto:reporting@gmail.com)



L'avenir de l'humanité est dans l'océan

La conférence des Nations Unies sur les océans s'est déroulée du 27 juin au 1^{er} juillet à Lisbonne. L'ambition affichée par l'ONU et son Secrétaire général consistait avant tout et en cohérence avec l'Objectif de Développement Durable N° 14, à « Conserver et exploiter de manière durable les océans, les mers et les ressources marines aux fins du développement durable ».



Secretary-General Attends Youth and Innovation Forum on Side of UN Oceans Conference.

CHRISTIAN DAVID, ONUG

A Lisbonne, sur les bords du Tage, le site qui hébergea l'exposition universelle de 1998 a été préservé. Une longue esplanade longe la rive. De nombreux restaurants, des sculptures et décors, un océanarium somptueux rendaient ce lieu propice à la tenue d'un événement dédié aux océans. Il y régnait, en cette fin juin 2022, une certaine agitation. Les nacelles du téléphérique qui permettent aux touristes de profiter de la vue offraient une perspective particulière sur le fourmillement de la mise en place de la conférence.

Tout avait commencé par une cérémonie protocolaire. Les drapeaux du Portugal et de l'ONU pavoisaient la cour d'honneur. 40 agents de sécurité de l'ONU et parmi eux cinq genevois pouvaient prendre la mesure de l'évènement.

Pour entrer dans le vif du sujet, les dignitaires et participants entamaient les premiers échanges. Les salles de conférences étaient prêtes, les bancs des délégations occupés. Les intervenants défilaient les uns après les autres sur les différentes tribunes. Sur le podium

de la plénière et des salles parallèles, les orateurs se succédaient, s'interpellaient et dialoguaient.

Avec 6000 participants dont 2000 représentants de la société civile, 24 chefs d'Etat, la problématique de la sauvegarde de notre planète liquide constituée par les mers et océans à plus de 70 % (comme d'ailleurs le corps humain) était clairement reconnue par tous, même si cette dimension ne l'avait jamais placée au centre des débats. Encore fallait-il trouver des engagements forts, susceptibles de freiner l'irréversible menace que fait peser

L'être humain sera-t-il capable de changer ses habitudes néfastes pour permettre à l'Océan de reprendre normalement sa respiration climatique?

l'homme sur son environnement, reconnue comme un «échec collectif» alors que nos océans produisent la moitié de l'oxygène de la planète. La pollution, les plastiques, la surpêche, le transport maritime: tout contribue également à une perte incommensurable de la biodiversité.

Au-delà des enjeux géopolitiques, le constat est en effet clair: en plus de son action sur les océans, la prédation de l'homme sur son environnement a détruit en quelques siècles près de 90% des zones humides qui ne sont pas assez protégées. Tout est lié: depuis la déforestation jusqu'aux fleuves

et rivières qui se jettent dans les océans, tout le cycle de l'eau est concerné et engendre les problématiques qui jusqu'alors restaient invisibles mais qui, comme la canicule de l'été dernier, annoncent la catastrophe.

La technologie permet, d'ores et déjà, d'aller encore plus loin dans ce scénario néfaste puisqu'elle pourrait favoriser l'exploitation des grands fonds marins riches de ressources comme le pétrole ou les nodules polymétalliques.

La science, largement abordée pendant la conférence, permettra t'elle au contraire, en cohérence avec les savoir faire locaux,

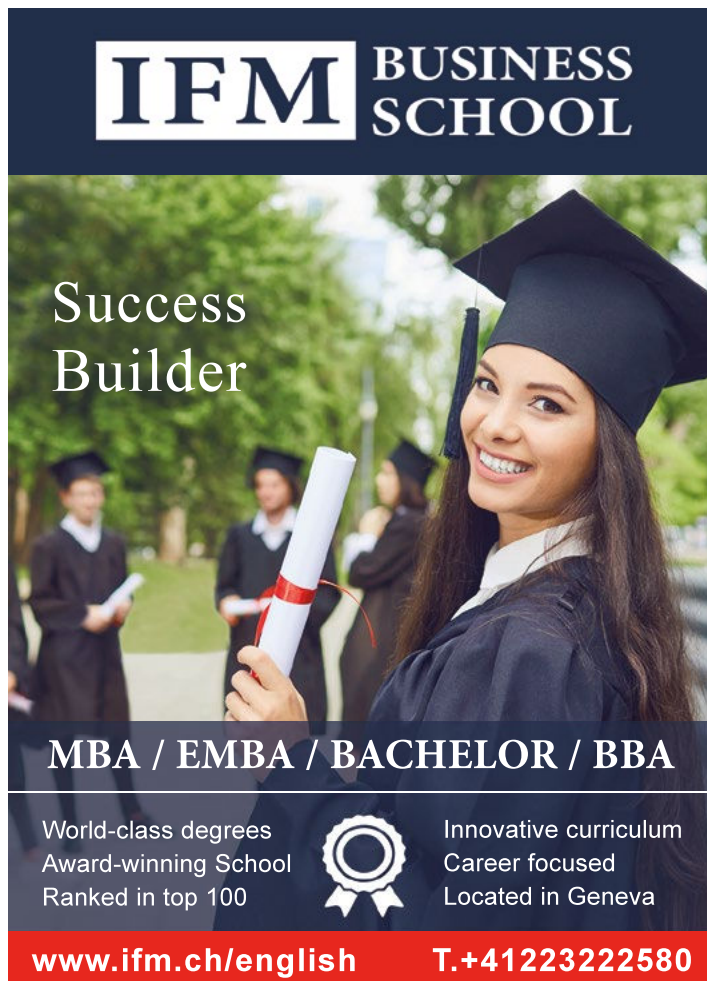
d'apporter des solutions visant à freiner, voire à inverser cette tendance?

Une de ces solutions qui consiste à utiliser les algues pour capter le carbone et pour leur valeur nutritionnelle avait été évoquée dans nos colonnes.¹

Un certain nombre d'instances se sont engagées pour débloquent des initiatives visant à offrir une meilleure connaissance du monde marin qui reste négligé par la recherche scientifique mondiale. Plusieurs acteurs se sont enfin mobilisés pour que la «finance bleue» puisse servir la cause.

Quelques 700 engagements et une déclaration permettent d'espérer que la mesure du problème sera désormais connue de tous, que cette priorité prédominera sur tous les autres agendas à court terme de nos sociétés et que les futures conférences organisées sur ce même thème serviront de points d'ancrage pour passer de la négociation à l'action. Avant tout, chacun d'entre nous peut agir à son niveau sans attendre, en partageant ses convictions ou par son attitude au quotidien, la jeunesse semble l'avoir entendu! ■

¹ synergies-internationales.ch




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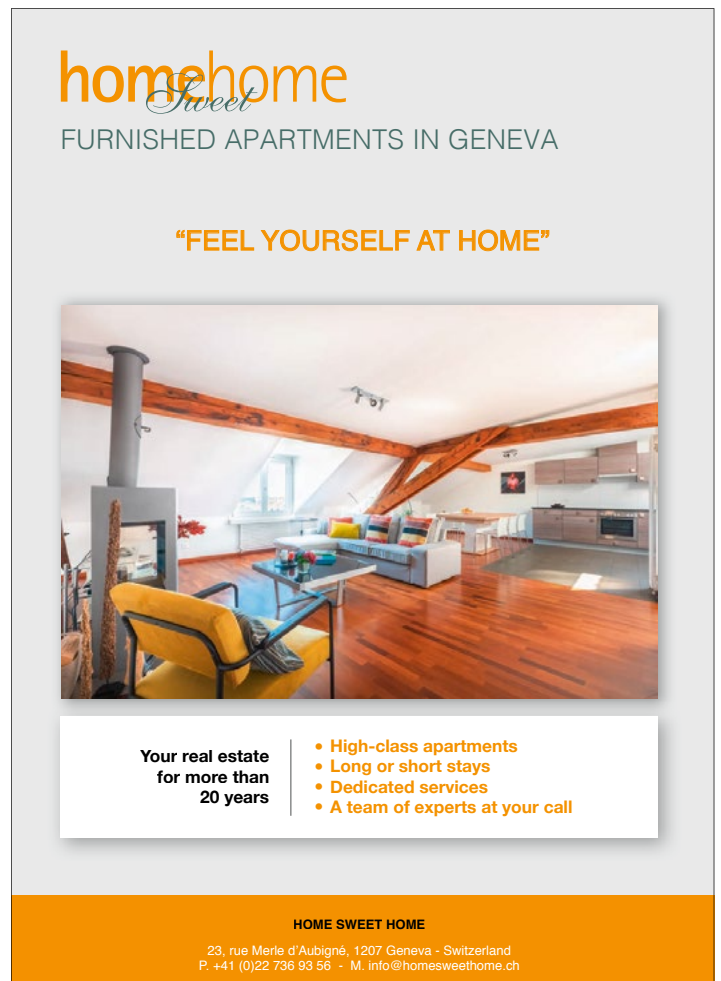
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Questions à M. Olivier Poivre d'Arvor

Ambassadeur de France pour les pôles et les enjeux maritimes

Une opportunité se présente, pendant le sommet des océans à Lisbonne, de rencontrer M. Olivier Poivre d'Arvor, envoyé spécial du Président de la République Française et d'évoquer avec lui son parcours et ses convictions.



© J. Sarago/MEAE

M. Olivier Poivre d'Arvor.

CHRISTIAN DAVID, ONUG

Vous avez été nommé Ambassadeur par le gouvernement français. Votre passion pour l'océan, exprimée notamment dans vos ouvrages, vous donne-t-elle une perception et une approche particulières?

Je ne suis pas un technicien de la mer. De mon enfance, je ne retiens que mes étés bretons, privé que j'étais de la mer, mes parents ayant installé notre famille, pour des raisons professionnelles, non loin de Paris. Deux mois durant, je revivais. Les dix autres mois, j'en rêvais de cette mer, je me projetais en elle et m'accomplissais à travers la lecture des exploits des grands marins. Ce «manque de mer» m'a poussé à écrire. L'écriture, cet autre oxygène, cette indispensable iode. Puis j'ai navigué vers d'autres eaux avec le temps, principalement en Méditerranée où j'ai vécu de nombreuses années à Alexandrie en Egypte, à La Marsa en Tunisie et chez moi, en Grèce, dans ma maison de l'île de Skyros. Marqué profondément par les grandes marées noires des années 70 / 80, je suis devenu peu à peu un militant de la cause océanique, d'où une réelle sympathie pour les organisations non gouvernementales, y compris parfois les plus extrêmes, qui nous alertent sur cette coupable mise à mort des 80% de la

surface du globe que représentent les mers et les pôles. Ecrivain, diplomate ou acteur culturel, je suis définitivement un «merrien». Quand le ministre de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères et le Président de la République m'ont proposé de reprendre la mission pour les pôles de Michel Rocard et de Ségolène Royal, j'ai demandé à y ajouter les océans. J'essaie depuis plus d'un an et demi de faire de la diplomatie bleue et blanche une réalité puissante des relations internationales. C'est je crois le cas, de notre côté français, avec le One Ocean¹ (février 2022, Brest) et la production de la première Stratégie polaire française au printemps. Et par tempérament breton, sur ces sujets, je ne lâcherai rien.

Ne croyez-vous pas que les dirigeants de la planète soient davantage préoccupés par une prédominance de l'économie et des intérêts à court terme, voire immédiats, correspondants à la durée de leurs mandats et les décisions pouvant amener à une véritable action générale et coordonnée ne sont-elles pas étouffées par ce mode de fonctionnement?

Les dirigeants agissent en fonction de ce qu'ils savent et de ce qui menace ou comble ceux qui les ont élus. Or, la mer, très peu documentée, est un «objet»



© Rodrigo Cabrita/UNPhoto

M. Peter Thompson.

La mer, très peu documentée, est un «objet» nouveau.

nouveau. On sait moins d'elle que du monde spatial ou du cyber espace. Depuis quelques années, les scientifiques effectuent un travail exceptionnel, avec des moyens qui ne sont pas suffisants, pour connaître l'océan, ses espèces, les impacts du changement climatique. Et paradoxalement, c'est la menace, celle entre autres de la disparition de la biodiversité et de l'élévation du niveau des mers, qui aujourd'hui fait entrer la mer dans la tête de nos dirigeants autrement que comme une ressource inépuisable, mais qu'il faut tenir à distance pour ce qu'elle recèle d'inconnu. Quant à la prédominance de l'économie, c'est elle qui probablement place la mer au cœur des enjeux globaux. Les 92% du commerce mondial que représente le transport maritime n'échappent à personne. Pas plus

que la maîtrise des détroits, des canaux: du détroit de Taïwan au canal de Suez en passant par les routes arctiques ou celles de la Mer Noire, l'actualité la plus brûlante conduit les dirigeants à comprendre que la guerre, commerciale ou militaire, a pris ses aises en mer ou sous la mer (avec les câbles sous-marins) et que qui contrôle l'océan, contrôle le monde.

La conférence des Nations Unies sur les océans de Lisbonne a-t-elle, selon vous ouvert de nouvelles perspectives et permettra-t-elle une prise de conscience qui se transformera en action(s) concrète(s)?

2022 restera une année clef dans cette prise de conscience. En plaçant – et c'était une première- l'océan en haut de l'agenda

européen lors de la Présidence Française de l'Union, le Président Macron a montré que prendre le leadership océanique était un acte politique fort. 41 chefs d'États et de gouvernements sont intervenus et les Engagements de Brest sont désormais un marqueur. Je voudrais également saluer le rôle absolument déterminant des Nations Unies, celui du Secrétaire Général et de son envoyé spécial pour les Océans, Peter Thomson.

En accueillant la conférence des Nations Unies en ce mois de juin, le Portugal, grand peuple maritime, en tandem avec le Kenya, a réussi à mobiliser l'ensemble des pays et des organisations non gouvernementales. Ce pourquoi la France et le Costa Rica ont, par la volonté de leurs Présidents respectifs, proposé d'organiser la prochaine conférence en 2025.

Réaliser en France, dix ans après, ce qui a été fait à Paris en 2015 pour le Climat avec la Cop 21 reste notre objectif. Les accords de 2025 pour l'Océan devront donc sur tous les grands sujets (grands fonds marins, lutte contre les pollutions, la pêche INN et la surpêche, décarbonation du transport maritime, protection des espèces et de la biodiversité, mobilisation polaire...) marquer l'engagement le plus ambitieux et unanime des nations pour la préservation de ces espaces indispensables à la survie de la planète. ■

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It is my future that is being taken away from me.

Climate Change in the Future

All of Europe seems to have experienced a heatwave throughout the month of July. Many countries reached a high of 40°, leaving a lot of us feeling lethargic and wondering how we got into this mess in the first place. The very simple answer? Climate change.

LISANNE HOPKIN, EDITORIAL ASSISTANT, NEWSPECIAL

The earth's average temperature has been rising since the 1900s, but the rate of warming has increased at a much more rapid rate since the 1970s or 1980s. (Sources that I looked at seemed to be undecided on the exact date.) But, the key part of this information is that in the last forty to fifty years, the earth's temperature has more than doubled, going from 0.08°Celsius per decade, to 0.18°Celsius per decade.¹ On the whole, it might not seem like much, but nine out of the ten hottest years so far have been recorded this decade.² If you want even bigger picture context, let me tell you this: a one to two degree change in global earth temperature caused the Little Ice Age in 1303.³

It doesn't take a lot for the planet to be overwhelmed by degree

changes. According to Sir David Attenborough, there have already been five mass extinctions, and we are heading towards the sixth at an incredibly fast pace.⁴ A lot of us are aware of climate change, but we are all reacting to the reality of it very differently. Some of us are facing it head-on by going to rallies and protests, finding ecological ways to travel, not buying anything that contains single-use plastics. Others are more reluctant to change their consumerism ways. Perhaps they think that they don't need to worry, as they're not the ones who are causing the most damage to our planet. And while that may be true in some instances, one person's actions can make an incredible difference. People in Europe and Central Asia created a total of 392 million of tonnes of waste per year in 2016 out of a total of 2.01 billion tonnes. On average, one person creates 0.74 kilogrammes

of waste per day, though that varies a lot, as high-income countries create 683 million tonnes of waste per year.⁵ And while individuals themselves may not be creating the most waste, or while they are working hard to fight against climate change, it seems that big corporations and companies, and public figures, are not doing their best to fight climate change.

For instance, Boris Johnson has officially resigned as the English Prime Minister. However, neither Liz Truss nor Rishi Sunak, either one of which will be Johnson's successor, has mentioned anything about what they will do regarding climate change in their bid to be the new Prime Minister. I won't get into much detail about what they have said, as politics is not the topic of this article, but surely if you are to be the face of England for the next five years (supposedly), you should focus on

issues that really matter, like climate change, rather than focusing solely on economic issues.

I think the fight against climate change also varies depending on your age. Young adults and teenagers are very vocal and aware about climate change. We are being brought up in this world that is falling apart, it is our future, and we are the ones who are doing our best to make the world a better place to live, generally speaking. Older generations, who perhaps have not been taught the same things we have, are less concerned, less educated about climate change, and the effects and impacts it is having on our planet. And why should they worry about a planet when they may not be here in the next forty years? They may have other things to worry about.

Let's take a look at how everything might have changed in the future. How we will hopefully adapt and learn to live in new ways.

Housing is already adapting to climate change. We are installing sustainable ways of heating the houses, using solar panels to provide electricity, we are in fact already building more sustainable homes for people to live in. However, the price of housing is doing nothing but increasing, and will most likely continue to do so, due to the fact that all housing will need to be built ready for any

major weather events that may come their way.⁶ Insurance for floods, fires, hurricanes may be a given in the future, but currently, these insurances are adding to the cost of a house. On top of this, there is also the issue that due to extreme weather changes, many people will be left homeless, unable to pay for any damages, so more and more of us will be looking for new homes.⁷

In Switzerland, buildings account for over 25% of all CO2 emissions. In fact, 'Switzerland is the European country which has the highest percentage of buildings using heating oil'.⁸ On top of that, as a lot of houses have been built before 1980, a lot of them struggle to keep heat in, which is contributing to an increase in heating, which in turn is more costly, and in turn, is affecting our climate. Due to the fact that houses are not being renovated, it is thought that 'it would take about 100 years for all buildings in Switzerland to be brought to acceptable levels of sustainability'.⁹ Unfortunately, we do not have 100 years to reach an acceptable level of sustainability, and as one of the richest countries in the world, this is not such a great look. If we can't afford a sustainable lifestyle, then how are all the rest of the countries going to be able to afford it?

The biggest issue is that it's not just one problem that needs to be solved in order for us to improve the world we're living in. By 2030,

the world 'may be facing a 40% gap between water supply and demand'.¹⁰ Again, this summer a lot of areas in Switzerland have had to follow a restriction on water usage, and I've noticed that the grass by the lake near where I live is incredibly dry and brown, and it's disheartening to see. We need to find ways to make sure that access to safe and clean water is possible everywhere. This is for everyone's health and future. According to Future Agenda, it's not just unclean water and a lack of water that we will be struggling with. They predict that by 2050, there will be more plastic in the oceans than fish¹¹, and it's already been said that humans now have microplastics living inside them.¹² However, there is some good news in that some companies are already cutting down their usage of single-use plastics. In fact, straws that are neither metal, nor plastic, nor paper-based are also becoming increasingly popular. I have found some made out of pasta, some made out of rice, tapioca, and potatoes. There are many new and innovative ways that straws are being created. And though straws are definitely not the biggest pollutants, it is a step toward a better life.

All in all, the future itself is unclear. Who knows what it will be like? How many more people will be living on planet Earth? Will any more planets be inhabitable? Will we still be sending people

into space just because we can? Will we have stopped the sixth mass extinction from occurring? Will we live in a healthier, more sustainable way? Unfortunately, I do not have the answers to any of these questions. I don't know if anyone has the answers to these questions. However, I do know that if we work together against climate change, we may be able to stop the sixth mass extinction, and we may end up living a more healthy and sustainable lifestyle. ■

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2 "World of Change: Global Temperatures." [NASA Earth Observatory](https://www.nasa.gov/earth-observatory), NASA, 2022, website.

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5 "What a Waste 2.0 | A Global Snapshot of Solid Waste Management to 2050." *Trends in Solid Waste Management*, The World Bank, website.

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JORDAN

Ayman Hijjawi...

... the man who came from the future to shake the present

- *Salmiya-Kuwait, 1963*
- *Serial entrepreneurship – Geneva Singularity University*
- *“A cosmopolitan hub of dynamic people capable of bringing about change.”*

newSpecial is delighted to include profiles presented by Zahi Haddad, in his recently-published book “126 Heartbeats for International Geneva”.

We thank the author and his publisher, Slatkine, for this exclusivity.

With a bright smile and serene demeanor, Ayman Hijjawi presents himself as a serial entrepreneur. Simply. Like someone who lives at the rhythm of a mind that is always listening, yet in turmoil, ready to create, to innovate. To envision change, wherever on the planet he goes. However, his journey begins in a relatively classic way. In Kuwait City, he finishes his college before flying to the United States. In Illinois he earns a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from Bradley University. It was then time to resist entering the family business, which represents a major electronics brand in the Middle East. Ayman prefers his independence and a career in tennis, a game he has always played.

If he crosses paths with all the tennis champions of the time, he devotes himself to teaching. In an academy in Kentucky. Still, it does not take long for him to realize that the job is too “mechanical” for him and that he needs something different. His father finally offers a position in the small Kuwaiti town

of Fahaheel, at the bottom of his company ladder. This is a move that stimulates Ayman to launch himself. He will never stop and invest more and more in family affairs, a direction he takes at the time of the Iraqi invasion in August 1990. To manage the business, he moves to Amman in 1991. Then he sets up one of the most highly rated advertising companies in the Middle East, before leaving for Egypt in 1999. He buys the national telephone company and, in the same stride, puts the first Arab cell phone on the market.

During the “Arab Spring”, he returns to Switzerland, where he had resided before. From Geneva, Ayman manages his world with happiness and enthusiasm. Always full of ideas, he launches new businesses, joining others, including Lymo, a transport platform with drivers that envisions unlimited geographic ambitions. “And the good thing is, I just need my phone and my couch.” Thus, Ayman remains agile, always alert. He also wants to have time for his family, for his children,

nor forgetting the Hijjawi Foundation, founded by his father in 1983. The Foundation is actually a college in Irbid for future engineers, to which Ayman added an establishment in Nablus to talk about technology. One of his workhorses. “We want to bring a solid education to our students and also to our professors. Talk about the current great economic success stories that rely on innovations and the Web in their response to the challenges facing humanity. It is about improving the present, while shaping the future.”

This desire to transform societies finds its echo in the “Singularity University”, the true lung of Silicon Valley, hosted by NASA, which brings together specialists in the fields of biotechnology, aerospace, robotics, nanotechnologies, blockchain, and artificial intelligence. Keeping to his vision, Ayman has been inspired and now organizes conferences in Geneva with the most eminent representatives of this powerful start-up incubator. Visionary presentations for which business

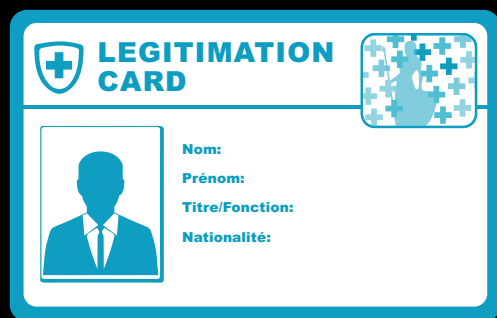
leaders and thought leaders jostle. A true “man of the future”, Ayman relies on the Young President's Organization (YPO) to achieve his ideas. This global network of business leaders, which he chairs, employs some sixteen million people around the world.

Insatiable and curious, Ayman still finds time to get involved in flagship associations, such as B8 of Hope, a Geneva-based non-profit aimed at supporting peace efforts in the Middle East, and Challenge to Change that inspires health and well-being and helps women occupy positions of high responsibility. Ayman Hijjawi is a creative and “disruptive” soul committed to democratizing know-how and improving living conditions in the world. ■



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Media professionals. Interacting with journalists, filmmakers, and other media professionals for responsible reporting of suicidal behaviours is one of the core interventions recommended by WHO.

Preventing suicide – creating hope through action

Suicide can affect every one of us. There are more than 700,000 deaths by suicide worldwide every year – each one a tragedy, with far-reaching impact on families, friends and communities. It is estimated that for each suicide, 20 people make a suicide attempt.

PIUMEE BANDARA, WHO

Concerns around mental health and particularly suicide have intensified in the context of the global pandemic, armed conflict, and fluctuating inflation. There is evidence that social isolation, trauma, domestic abuse, and financial loss have increased during this turbulent time, placing already vulnerable individuals at increased risk. The lack of available mental health care as well as stigma are factors that prevent vulnerable individuals in accessing much needed support. This is especially concerning in low- and middle-income countries, where most of the world's suicides (77%) occur. These striking facts and the lack of timely interventions make suicide a serious global public health problem that requires urgent attention.

Although some countries have placed suicide prevention high on their agendas, too many countries remain uncommitted. The targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for reducing the global suicide mortality rate by one third will not be achieved unless we transform our efforts to implement effective actions to prevent suicide. World Suicide Prevention Day, observed on 10 September every year, is an opportunity to raise awareness of suicide and to promote action. This year's theme is "creating hope through action". Fortunately, there are proven means that can reduce the number of suicides and suicide attempts globally.

What can we do?

Governments have a key role in

taking the lead in suicide prevention and their commitment is needed in order to develop and implement comprehensive multi-sectoral national suicide prevention strategies. As a starting point, the WHO has developed LIVE LIFE, a guide to support countries to implement key effective evidence-based interventions for preventing suicide. WHO is actively seeking to work with countries to support the implementation of LIVE LIFE. The guide details the practical aspects of implementing four key evidence-based interventions for suicide prevention, plus six cross-cutting pillars, which are fundamental for their implementation.

The four interventions are:

1 Limiting access to the means of

suicide: Limiting access to lethal suicide methods for example by banning highly hazardous pesticides, restricting/regulating firearms, and installing barriers at jump sites has been shown to reduce suicides. In particular, the banning of highly hazardous pesticides (which account for 20% of suicides globally) has been shown to significantly reduce overall suicide rates and is cost-effective. In Sri Lanka, for instance, the removal of just a few specific highly hazardous pesticides contributed to a greater than 70% reduction in all deaths from suicide, equivalent to an estimated 93,000 lives saved over 20 years. The WHO has developed a resource for pesticide registrars and regulators to support regulatory action to phase out hazardous



pesticides, along with advice on low-risk alternatives.

2 Interacting with media for responsible reporting of suicide:

Sensational and prominent media reporting of suicide (especially of high profile or celebrity deaths) can lead to an increase in suicides. In response, guidance for media professionals and filmmakers for the responsible reporting of suicide have been developed by WHO and are advocated, with evidence emerging that guidelines can prevent imitative suicides.

3 Fostering socio-emotional life skills in adolescents:

Adolescence is a period of great risk for the onset of mental health conditions and suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-29 year-olds. The formation of socio-emotional skills, including problem-solving skills is thus critical in adolescence. School-based programs centred on fostering socio-emotional life skills can have a protective effect in reducing suicide attempts among young people.

The Helping Adolescents Thrive (HAT) guidelines, developed by the WHO provide evidence-informed recommendations on preventive mental health interventions for adolescents.

4 Early identification and follow up of people affected by suicidal behaviours:

A prior suicide attempt is one of the strongest predictors of suicide, and people bereaved by suicide require support. Furthermore, discharge from the hospital following an attempt or suicidal crisis represents a period of great risk of suicide. Targeted interventions for people affected by suicidal behaviours including active follow-up, psychosocial support, and case management has been shown to reduce suicide attempts. The WHO Mental Health Gap Intervention Guide includes a module on suicide and self-harm to assist non-specialist health-care providers to support people in distress.

While government action is crucial in implementing national

multisectoral strategies for suicide prevention, communities can incorporate and enhance these efforts by considering their local community needs, priorities and circumstances. Variations in the suicide rates within countries (e.g., by geographical regions) suggest that top-down suicide prevention must go hand-in-hand with local bottom-up processes.

Given the importance of multi-level action, the WHO has also produced a toolkit for engaging communities in suicide prevention. The toolkit aims to assist with identifying and implementing suicide prevention priorities and directing appropriate community activities towards the whole community, specific groups and/or individuals. An e-learning course for the toolkit is available in English and French. The toolkit provides guidance for establishing supportive networks to assist communities in suicide prevention activities or in enhancing activities that may already be in place. Each section provides advice on

how to move forward with community engagement and suggests tools that can be used to further the process of building a suicide prevention action plan that is relevant to the community.

We cannot – and must not – ignore suicide. As a friend, partner, parent, child, colleague, employer or as a neighbour, we can all create hope through action through reaching out and supporting those experiencing distress of those bereaved by suicide. By raising awareness, reducing the stigma around suicide and implementing well-informed action, individuals, communities and nations can reduce instances of suicide and suicide attempts around the world. ■

If you, or someone you know needs support, reach out for help. You are not alone. Help is available.

Experiencing distress? Seek guidance here: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/mental-health/depression/life-worth-living-03-handouts-depression.pdf?sfvrsn=a4fb25b5_2

Do you know someone who needs support? Seek guidance here: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/mental-health/depression/suicide-04-handouts-depression.pdf?sfvrsn=7c5eaac4_2

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Nothing for us, without us!

WHO's growing commitment to meaningful engagement of people living with noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions.

JACK FISHER & SAMUEL SIEBER,
WHO¹

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people living with noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and mental health conditions often faced additional barriers to the already complicated access to care, medication, and peer-support. Lockdowns, isolation measures, and shortages of lifesaving drugs disproportionately affected people with pre-existing health conditions, and many were at higher risk of falling severely ill with COVID-19. Furthermore, the pandemic also caused a major blow to already fragile health systems, interrupting routine healthcare services and exacerbating existing health inequalities.

In the long shadow of the pandemic, the once unheard voices of people with lived experiences are now becoming increasingly recognized and amplified as

a crucial element to building back stronger, more resilient, and inclusive health policy and practice. Since late 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been activating new and scaling-up existing activities dedicated to the meaningful engagement of individuals living with NCDs and mental health conditions.

Meaningful engagement: a human right and linchpin to achieving healthy lives and well-being for all

Globally, fewer than one-fifth of countries are on track to cut a third of premature deaths from NCDs by 2030, posing a major challenge to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3.4 and healthy lives and well-being for all. To understand the often-complex and overlapping determinants of health conditions and break-down barriers in accessing

and sustaining care, the first-hand experience and expertise of individuals and communities living with NCDs and mental health conditions offers potentially game-changing insights.

Including people with lived experiences into health policy-governance and decision-making has already proven successful in multiple other public health programs, including in the areas of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, maternal and child health, and disability.

Not least, the right to participate in one's care is a fundamental part of the human right to the highest attainable standard of health and is included in the constitution of WHO. The meaningful engagement of people with lived experience hence builds on and upholds principles of respect, value and dignity.



© John Enghart

Still from the WHO short film on the meaningful engagement of people living with NCDs and mental health conditions.

From passive people to active agents

Crucially, meaningful engagement and co-designing health policies imply a shift from the individual as a passive user to an empowered and emboldened agent of change. People with lived experience do not only require a seat at the decision-making table, but should be able to set the table, drive processes, co-create programs, and implement contextual solutions together with those currently holding power.

Meaningful engagement of people living with NCDs and mental health conditions emphasizes the diversity and intersectionality of individuals and communities. Aspects of social and political identities, such as gender, ethnicity, religion and socioeconomic status to name but a few, overlap and create multiple forms of power and privilege.

By understanding and integrating these multiple layers, perspectives and structures of privilege and power, policy-makers, health professionals, health providers and people with lived experiences can move from traditional top-down or one-size-fits-all models of care to being bottom up and lead to co-designing health programs that tackle the global epidemic of NCDs and mental health conditions, leaving no-one behind.

Creating platforms for people with lived experiences, partners, and Member States

At WHO, the Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs (GCM/NCD) within the Global NCD Platform has been leading the dedicated workstream committed to the meaningful engagement of people living with NCDs and mental health conditions. In early 2022, the GCM/NCD co-organized

several regional consultations and focus groups in all WHO-regions, providing a platform for people with lived experiences, interest groups and relevant organizations to reflect on key elements to meaningful engagement.

Insights from the consultations feed directly into the co-development of a WHO Framework for meaningful engagement of people living with NCDs and mental health conditions, which is scheduled to be released in 2023.

Leveraging WHO's role as the leading health agency, the Framework is set to be implemented jointly with Member States and will offer actionable steps across all three levels of the organization and the wider UN system. In a strong cross-disciplinary and collaborative ethos, the framework is being designed to engage with individuals with lived experiences, interest

groups, and technical teams of a variety of health issues.

As part of its work around meaningful engagement of people with lived experiences, WHO closely worked with six individuals to tell their stories in a short film over the course of 2021, spanning diverse health conditions including rheumatic heart disease, Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, cancer, bipolar affective disorder, and an auto-immune disease. The film series is released in early September 2022 as part of the Global Week of Action on NCDs, and features intimate perspectives from Australia, Brazil, Lebanon, Nepal, Nigeria, and the United Kingdom. ■

¹ WHO Coordination Mechanism on Noncommunicable Diseases

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Short film

Amplifying the voices of people living with noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions

As part of its commitment to scaling up the meaningful engagement of individuals living with NCDs and mental health conditions, the World Health Organization (WHO) co-produced a short film with six people telling their stories of living with rheumatic heart disease, Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, cancer, bipolar affective disorder, and an auto-immune disease. Their voices offer a glimpse into the potentially game-changing insights people with lived experience have to offer to co-designing better, more inclusive health policy and practice. With inputs from regional consultations and focus groups from all around the world, WHO is currently developing a framework for meaningful engagement of people living with NCDs and mental health conditions, which is scheduled to be released in 2023.

The short film is available in all six UN languages. (<https://bit.ly/wholivedexperiencefilms>)



"I went from being a very active, very dynamic paediatrician, mother, and athlete... [...] to being in a wheelchair. I was extremely independent, and – as a woman – felt very strongly about being a role model for my boys. I think that is what you have to learn to hang onto, that on the inside, you haven't changed."

DR. HELENA DAVIES, THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
RETIRED PEDIATRIC ONCOLOGIST, TRUSTEE WORLDWIDE HOSPICE
PALLIATIVE CARE ALLIANCE.



"We know what is best for us. That is why our needs, our choices, voices, and experiences have to be prioritized. We need to tell you what support looks like for us. We need to tell you what a system that is just and equal and fair looks like for us. We need to tell you what human rights respecting treatment looks like for us."

HAUWA OJEIFO, NIGERIA
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SHE WRITES WOMAN MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE



“When I received the diagnosis, it was [...] difficult to deal with a situation that was now mine. Even though I saw other people with diabetes [...], they were much older, and I didn’t know anyone my age who had diabetes. That’s why it’s not easy to face it.”

DR. MARK BARONE, BRAZIL VICE-PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL DIABETES FEDERATION



“People may not be taking care of themselves, not because they can’t buy medicine, or are without access to healthy food. They would have all the tools, but they are unable to use them for underlying mental reasons.”

**ALI FARHAT, LEBANON
FREELANCE TEXTILE PAINTER**



“We have screening days where we bring the mammogram bus. We have lunch, we get hairdressers in, beauty practitioners. It’s a real ladies’ day. It enables them to feel free and talk among themselves. Aboriginal women, you know, young women, they don’t want to go and take all their clothes off and get tested [for breast cancer].”

**LAVERNE BELLEAR, AUSTRALIA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ABORIGINAL MEDICAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE LIMITED, REDFERN**



“I am learning how to undertake advocacy in this sector, [...] as I found that not all people with Rheumatic Heart Disease are united and there is no group or support system. If we can come as one, we can share our challenges or experiences as my problem could be a solution for someone else.”

**ANU GOMANJU, NEPAL
PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONAL, GRADUATE STUDENT**

Inclusion should be at the heart of education

The upcoming UN Transforming Education Summit is a key opportunity for leaders to ensure that students with disabilities are not left behind in education plans.

GERTRUDE OFORIWA FEFOAME, UNCRPD – SIGHTSAVERS

There used to be many days when Saio in Sierra Leone would find herself unable to walk the long distance to her school. As a result, she would take days off and miss classes. When in school, she would often face bullying from other students and exclusion by teachers. But since [Sightsavers provided] inclusive interventions and training to reduce disability stigma in the school, her experience has radically changed. Teachers are more sensitive to her needs, the building is more accessible, and she gets taken to school on a motorbike. Saio has said that now, “I feel good whenever I go to school”.

Globally, there are nearly 240 million children like Saio with disabilities, but many are not getting the help she did. Despite progress in some areas of education, children with disabilities are 2.5 times less likely to go to school than other children. This means missing out on life-changing education and potentially becoming trapped in a cycle of poverty and dependence.¹

Sadly, the gap between children with and without disabilities is growing. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, children with disabilities were less likely to be learning even if they were in school. Their

rate of progression was much lower, and they were less likely to achieve minimum proficiency in reading compared to their peers.²

Since the start of the pandemic, school closures have led to a greater learning crisis, creating increased exclusion, marginalisation and poverty for children with disabilities and a growing digital divide. Many countries relied on technology to mitigate learning loss, but at least 31% of children were unable to benefit from this due to inaccessible tools or limited access to internet and technology.³ The International Disability Alliance has also estimated that around 17% of children with disabilities dropped out of education during the pandemic – a loss that will be felt for years to come.⁴

None of this is inevitable – we have the power to create transformational change. We must therefore seize the opportunity of the upcoming UN Transforming Education Summit on September 19 to raise our voices for children with disabilities.

At the summit, more than 150 Heads of State will come together in New York to set out their plans for education transformation. They will consider five themes: inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools, learning and



Fallou, visually impaired student sitting in the class's front row using adapted braille mathematics material to do his exercises.

skills for life, work and sustainable development, teachers, teaching and the teaching profession, digital learning and transformation and financing of education.

Sightsavers and partners are calling on these global leaders⁵ to put the principles of inclusion and equity at the heart of their discussion, and to include children with disabilities in all national and global education policies and plans. It is crucial that all discussions uphold their right, enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), to quality, inclusive education.

Education policies should be backed up by evidence. Gaps in data collection, disaggregating data by disability, gender and

other factors, must urgently be addressed. Only this will ensure that the most marginalised learners are not invisible to policy-makers.

Teachers and school staff need to be encouraged as they learn how to best support their pupils with disabilities. They need to be trained in low and no-tech options and alternatives to digital learning to mitigate the impact of another potential crisis like the pandemic.

The summit is an opportune time to hear directly from people with disabilities and their families, representative networks and teachers. We should listen to young people and students with disabilities, to really understand how they are engaged, or dis-engaged, with education.



Saio attends an inclusive school in Sierra Leone. The school has installed ramps to help Saio and other students with physical disabilities to attend classes.



Saio on the motorbike on her way to school in Sierra Leone.

By involving the people who are experts by experience, we can help ensure policies will be impactful and sustainable.

All of us within the UN system have a duty to ensure that our work is inclusive and accessible to all. The UN's Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) outlines the need to embed the rights of people with disabilities across all the work of the UN system. For the summit, this means making sure that any activities (online and in person) are accessible to all. This can be done by incorporating accessibility features, such as sign language interpretation, captioning, and remote participation options.

Inclusive education is very close to my heart. I began losing my vision as a young girl in Ghana at

age 10 and needed glasses to read in class. By 14, I was no longer able to read much, even with my glasses. Some teachers supported me by reading out what was written on the blackboard, but at the time, Ghana had no policies to cater to students with low vision. Without specialised support and alternative learning methods like braille books, I struggled.

We have the tools and expertise to help students with disabilities thrive in school environments. When I was 17, I learned to type and use braille and audio-books. I was introduced to audio cassettes and met other blind students. Thanks to this, I acquired the skills I needed to go to college and enter the world of work. Without my education, I wouldn't be where I am today.

The CRPD states a commitment to “an inclusive education system at all levels”. We need transformational, not incremental, change in order to achieve SDG4, inclusive and equitable quality education for all. The Transforming Education Summit is an opportunity to make this change and reimagine a better future for every child and student. ■

- 1 United Nations Children's Fund (2021). Seen, Counted, Included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/children-with-disabilities-report-2021/>
- 2 Inclusion and Education: All Means All (UNESCO, 2020) <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2020/inclusion>
- 3 Covid-19: Are children able to continue learning during school closures? UNICEF (2020)
- 4 IDDC, GLAD, IDA, GCE Call to Action: Transforming Education Summit (IDDC, 2022) https://www.iddcconsortium.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/IDDC-TES-Statement-FINAL_with-logos-pdf
- 5 <https://www.iddcconsortium.net/blog/call-for-action-ahead-of-the-transforming-education-summit/>

Queen Victoria's love affair with Aix-les-Bains

The quiet lakeside town of Aix-les-Bains has a surprising connection with the English Queen Victoria, who visited three times at the end of the 19th century, established the town as a fashionable spa resort and took home a donkey as a souvenir.



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Queen Victoria photographed for her Diamond jubilee, 1897.

KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

An hour's drive south from Geneva on the A41 brings you to the shores of Lac du Bourget and the pretty spa town of Aix-les-Bains. It's a pleasant day trip to wander the pedestrian streets, stroll along the beach with its modern water park, and gaze out over the waters towards the west side of the lake. On that opposite shore is the Abbaye d'Hautecombe, the resting place of generations of Savoy Royalty from when this area was its own independent country, the Duchy of Savoy. It was the Savoy Duke, King Victor Amedeus III that built the first modern baths in Aix at the end of the 18th century, although the Romans had already discovered the waters centuries before.

It's an unassuming town with an air of lingering glory of former days; elegant hotels next to bustling street cafés and antique shops. The town is often overlooked by day trippers heading to Aix's more famous cousin Annecy or speeding south on their way to Grenoble and Lyon.

If you do visit Aix and explore the compact town centre you may

be surprised to come across a bronze bust of the English monarch Queen Victoria, staring out imperiously over the tourist crowds thronging the terraces. Surrounded by a small square of flowers, the monument pays tribute to the three visits that the Queen made to the spa town in 1885, 1887 and 1890, effectively catapulting it to international fame as a fashionable resort and earning it the epithet "the English spa town".

Queen Victoria travelled under the pseudonym the "Countess of Balmoral" to avoid official duties and came, initially, for her youngest daughter Beatrice who suffered from rheumatism. The Queen was 66 at the time of her first visit and spoke French fluently. She stayed in the Hotel de l'Europe, which has now been converted into apartments, but the building still bears the Royal crest as witness to its famous occupant. A railway from Paris had been opened in the 1860s and the journey from the French capital was a mere 10 to 17 hours in a sleeper coach, the Queen accompanied by a retinue of about 60 people.



Bronze bust of Queen Victoria in Aix-les-Bains.



Queen Victoria and family beside the Grotto in the grounds of the Grand Cercle des Bains, 10th April, 1890.

© Kevin Crampton

© Royal Collection Trust/Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022

Victoria fell in love with the place and actually purchased land on the lake shore which she kept for nine years. She visited local attractions such as the Gorge du Fier and the Gorge du Serrioz and was the first woman allowed to enter the Grande Chartreuse monastery, a double honour since she was not a Catholic. An exception for her to visit was granted by the Pope himself.

The Queen did not visit the spas, but took her treatment privately, inviting her masseuse, Charlotte Nantet, back to London to continue her care.

As well as her sightseeing and treatment, the Queen kept a diary of her visits and was a keen observer of local life. She noted in April 1885 that,

“Bears are to be found, who, in severe winters, come right down to the villages, carrying off animals, and sometimes even children!”

She was also concerned for the welfare of the numerous donkeys, which transported the visitors from their hotels to the

spa resorts, but which were put to work in the fields in the quiet non-tourist season. In 1890, she purchased a Savoyard mule named Jacquot for 200 Francs and employed him to pull her pony chair since she walked with difficulty. She was so pleased with Jacquot’s service that he returned with her to Buckingham Palace, where he was henceforth the Royal Mule, charged with conveying her on all overseas visits and also distributing presents to the Royal children at Christmas.

According to the *Idler* magazine in 1893, Jacquot was “an exceedingly strong, handsome donkey” but with “a rather strong objection to work, and a great love of good living”, no doubt spoiled by the Queen!

Others followed in Victoria’s footsteps. Pierpont Morgan, the American financier, was in Aix when he heard about the sinking of the Titanic, and must’ve been relieved, as he’d been undecided that year for his holiday between a trip to Aix and a cruise on the ill-fated liner. The fame of Aix lasted until the start of the 20th century, bringing new hotels in the Art

Nouveau and Art Deco style. For a time, there were two distinct tourist seasons – the Anglo-American billionaires in the cooler months of April to June and the social security-funded curistes in July, giving Aix an unusually long season. The curistes benefitted from changes to the French health system in 1939 that included state-funded thermal cures.

Today, you won’t bump into many millionaires strolling around Aix, but you can still take the waters, gaze upon the opulent hotel “palaces” and easily imagine the brief moment when this quiet corner of Savoy was the most fashionable European destination for the English-speaking elite. ■

Jacquot the Donkey has his own dedicated website at <https://www.jacquot.online> and a children’s book put together by French and British authors who have also published the fruits of their two-year research into the Queen’s stay in Aix in the bilingual book, “Victoria en Savoie: trois séjours d’une reine à Aix les Bains”.

Latest trends in Global Population

The study of 'demography' and 'demographics' has long been the domain of statisticians and actuaries. In fact, demography drives many other issues either directly or indirectly – including climate change, water shortages, or even wars over access to natural resources.

PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU

Population trends underpin policy-making and many other decisions made by individuals and societies as a whole. The core issue of population growth should be discussed more often, and more widely, in mainstream debates over development.

Total global population reflects the net impact of other key demographic trends – most importantly, fertility rates, mortality rates and associated life expectancy. Migration affects the distribution of population between countries at the national level, but does not affect global population directly (unless or until we succeed in colonizing the Moon or Mars!).

Different policy measures affect these drivers in different ways. For example, in the short-term, improvements in medical treatments and healthcare can help reduce mortality rates and extend life expectancy (including reductions in infant and maternal mortality rates). However, improved medical care may also reduce fertility rates over the long-term, as women and mothers expect more of their children to survive, or are able to access effective family planning services.

Growing population is one reason why Earth Overshoot Day continues to advance in our calendar year. Earth Overshoot Day, the day on which the carrying capacity of the Earth is exceeded, first crept forward from the month of August into July in 2013 (below). In 2019, it fell on July 29, and has advanced to 28 July for 2022, in part due to the economic slowdown with the global pandemic. But growth in population is only one story – even if the global population were to stabilize today, the rate of consumption in wealthy nations is much higher than the world can sustain.

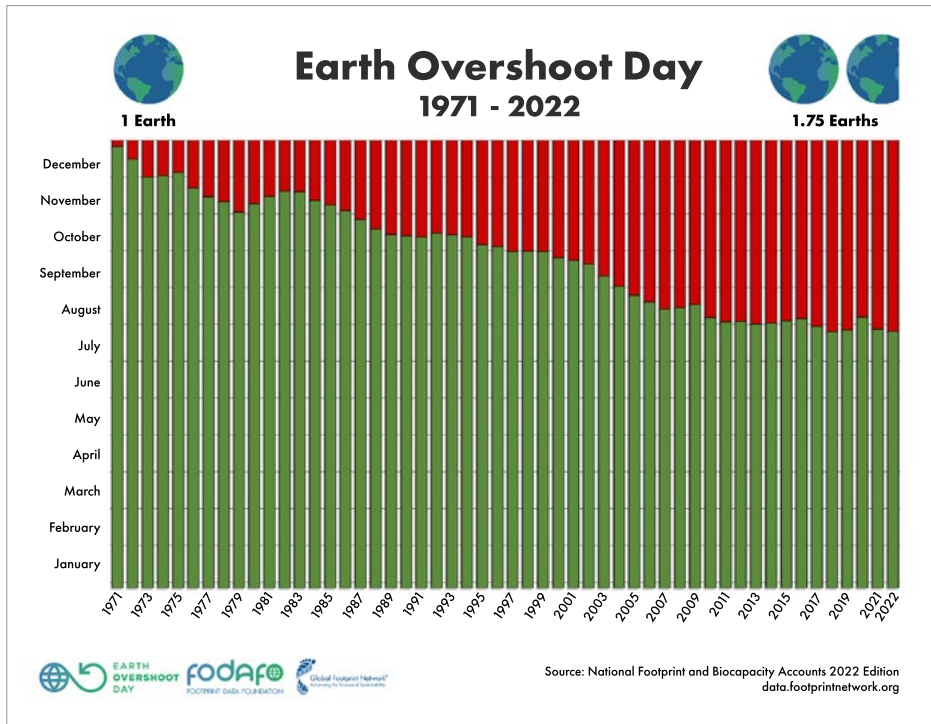
UNDESA's Latest Findings

World Population Day on 11 July 2022 saw the publication of UNDESA's latest set of population statistics and projections. Based on its latest estimates, UNDESA forecasts that global population will exceed 8 billion around 15 November 2022, and reach around 8.5 billion in 2030 and 9.7 billion by 2050, reaching a peak of 10.4 billion, some time in the 2080s, a level it will roughly maintain until 2100. India is projected to surpass China in terms of population as early as next year, by 2023.

This ultimate peak has already been revised downwards by half a billion fewer people, compared to predictions from 3 years ago (when 11 billion was forecast to be achieved by 2100). This reduction in projected future population is mainly due to reductions in population estimates for China and reduced fertility rates in China and Nigeria, most notably.

UNDESA noted ten key messages – firstly, the total world population continues to grow, albeit with a slower overall rate of growth. Indeed, in 2020, the growth rate of the global population fell below 1% per year for the first time since 1950. Secondly, national policies aiming to reduce fertility rates have little immediate impact on the pace of population growth, although cumulatively, they can have a significant future impact on total global population over the long-term, after 2050.

Population growth presents challenges to sustainable development, but conversely, achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could reduce fertility rates significantly over the longer term (SDG 3 for improving health and wellbeing, SDG 4 on improving education and SDG



5 for achieving gender equality are specifically key to reducing fertility rates sooner).

Global life expectancy had generally increased until the COVID-19 pandemic hit (although large disparities still persist between countries). Global life expectancy had reached 72.8 years in 2019, an improvement of almost 9 years since 1990. However, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a reduction of global life expectancy at birth, from 72.8 years in 2019 to 71.0 years in 2021. The pandemic has also disrupted the 2020 round of population censuses.

What Does Slowing Population Growth Mean

Governments and policy-makers face different challenges for different age groups in feeding and schooling children, providing training and jobs for youth, but also in providing pensions and healthcare for older citizens. They also have to guarantee security and food supply for everyone, despite rapidly accelerating climate change.

In some developing countries, a rising share of population in the working age group could help boost economic growth

per capita. This so-called 'demographic dividend' or share of the population in the working age has increased in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Meanwhile, in some other countries, the population of older persons is increasing (both in numbers and as a share of total population), with major impacts on healthcare and the sustainability of social security and pension systems. In industrialized countries, there has been extensive news coverage about reduced pensions and the greater burden of healthcare for aging populations. These countries may also start to face labor shortages, due to the lack of younger workers.

International migration is having important effects on population levels for certain countries, and over the next few decades will be the sole driver of population growth in high-income countries. Migration may create significant local impact, due to changing distributions of population. Housing, employment, transport and social security systems may struggle to cope with sudden influxes or departures of local populations, as will agricultural

and food supply systems, over the longer term. Combining migration effects with climate change could create significant challenges for authorities to handle, in certain regions.

More countries are experiencing overall population declines. UNDESA identified 61 countries projected to see a 1% or more reduction in population between 2022 and 2050, owing to sustained low levels of fertility and/or high rates of emigration.

UNDESA enters the big data era with confidence – the new population database provides more detailed and more granular data, including yearly estimates (rather than five-year periods, as previously). UNDESA has clearly invested significant effort in greater transparency about its methods, the data it uses, and its data sources.

It is to be hoped that Governments and policy-makers find this data useful on our increasingly crowded planet. ■

The section on UNDESA's findings is adapted under a Creative Commons license (CC BY 3.0 IGO), <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/igo/>.

More work of the Population Division is available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/>.



Costs of health in Switzerland

the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

After two and half years of experience, and with the pandemic being – hopefully – behind us, the time has come for drawing conclusions and assessments on various aspects of this episode.

CHRISTIAN PAULETTO

One of the many questions that attracts attention concerns the impact of the pandemic on the cost of health. The reason for that goes beyond just knowing, for the sake of it, who paid how much. Having a fair idea of the cost may be a valuable piece of information in case the world faces a pandemic again. It is also a valuable parameter in the debate about how much it is worth to invest in preventing the next pandemic. Moreover, for Swiss people, an enduring question relates to the high cost of statutory health insurance premiums. The COVID-19 episode brought to the fore the problem of the high financial reserves accumulated by private health insurers, which led the federal authorities to act.

Since 2021, the Swiss Federal Council (the Government) has been monitoring the costs incurred by the national health system as a consequence of COVID-19. The impetus actually came from the Swiss Parliament. As in all parliamentary systems, MPs or a parliamentary commission may ask the government to submit reports on any relevant political issues. This is called a “postulat” in Switzerland. In April 2020, the Commission for Social Security and Public Health of the Council of States (the Swiss Upper Chamber), submitted a postulat requesting the Government to prepare a report about “the consequences of the pandemic on the costs of health”. In June 2021,

the Federal Council submitted a first, merely qualitative, short report. Last June, it submitted a second report incorporating quantitative estimates. The final report is due for 2023.

The case is interesting for those who want to better understand Switzerland, a federal country, where competences are often shared between the federal and the cantonal (sub-federal) levels. In the case of health, competences for health-related measures are shared, and so too are the related costs. What's more, the Swiss social security system is based on cost-sharing between private insurers and their patients. A collateral effect of this complex system is, in the case at hand, a number of transfer payments between actors. Those aspects make it difficult, but also insightful, to estimate who disbursed how much and for what.

As alluded to, the so-called paying agents (agents payeurs) are the Confederation (central government), the cantons, the insurers, and the insured persons. Jumping to the conclusions, the estimates currently available show that major cost categories rose in 2021 compared to 2020. The total costs for both years reached an estimated 5.6 billion Swiss francs. The lion share pertains to the cost of COVID-19 tests in 2021 for the Confederation, namely 2.3 billion francs. This, in spite of the fact that some tests had to be paid by people, especially at the beginning of the pandemic (until end of June 2020). Those tests that were paid by the insurance system were, normally, then re-billed to the central government.

By virtue of the federal competence sharing, the Confederation is not involved in any activities related to the treatment of patients. For stationary treatments (hospitalisation), the costs accruing to cantons is estimated to lie between 284-335 million for 2020 and 341-404 million for

2021; while the insurers disbursed 233-274 million, respectively 279-330 million. This is based on an estimate of the average cost of a day of hospitalisation. During 2021, 243,471 days of "normal" hospitalisation and 67,759 days of intensive care hospitalisation were recorded, for a population of eight million people. This reflects the fact that the cantons charge 45% of the hospitalisation costs to the insurers. The Federal Council warns that caution is needed to interpret these figures. It is difficult to disaggregate "real" COVID-19 hospitalisation and patients admitted for another treatment and who turn out to be positive to a COVID-19 test.

The cost estimate of vaccination is tricky due to the complexity of the system. The vaccines as such are first bought (and paid) by the Confederation, at a price agreed in each purchase contract with the producer ("pre-financing"). Then, the insurer would pay back to the Confederation a lump-sum amount for vaccines taken by their clients. The cost of injection is mainly supported by the cantons, as they are in charge of running the vaccination centres. International civil servants and diplomats residing in Geneva have noted that being vaccinated was free of charge for them as well, though they are often not affiliated to a Swiss insurer.

For people not having an insurer, the vaccination cost was taken over by a central institution. Similarly, for COVID-19 tests. That said, it is estimated that insurers incurred a cost of 264 million (in 2021) for vaccines, while the approximate cost for the Confederation is circa 600 million in 2021 (a purchase of 647 million and reimbursements of about 45 million), plus a first purchase of 190 million late 2020. Another cost covered by the Confederation relates to material and equipment. This item dropped from 428 million in 2020 to a mere 19 million in 2021.

A hot topic in Switzerland is the cost that people have to pay for their health insurance policies. During the height of the pandemic, in 2020-2021, a number of routine treatments had to be postponed. As a consequence, the insurers had a positive financial result in their 2020 accounts, and could even increase their financial reserves. In light of these abnormally high reserves, the central government decided to act. On 14 April 2021, it modified a federal Ordinance with a view to relax the conditions for giving back excessive reserves to insurers' clients. On that basis, the Federal Office of Public Health (OFSP) approved the reimbursement of 28 million francs in 2021 and 380 million in 2022. With this, the OFSP anticipates a significant drop of the insurers' reserves in 2022. More crucially, insured people paid less for their insurances in that year, with a reduction of 0.2 percent of the actual premiums and an additional 1.2 percent of reimbursement. Nevertheless, insurers' reserves should be reduced further, and more reforms are necessary to control the cost of health.

The army was involved at times as well; For logistics, building of emergency infrastructures, transport, monitoring of patients, hospital services (cooking and cleaning), vaccine logistics (storage and transport), etc. In two years, the army was involved three times, for a total of 380,000 days of service, which corresponds to circa 150 million francs.

Many questions remain open. First, it has not been possible to extract reliable estimates of the costs incurred by the patients. That is why they are not mentioned in the above summary. Second, while stationary treatment is (relatively) easy to quantify, it is more difficult to relate ambulatory treatments (e.g. consultation with a doctor) to COVID-19 versus any other purpose. Third, the report insists that its scope is limited to

"direct" costs of the pandemic, and goes on stating that this includes the cost of "medical treatment in case of COVID-19 illness". Thus, it seems that the cost of treatment against conditions caused by vaccination were disregarded (or simply not monitored). ■

Christian Pauletto is a member of the Board and lecturer on the Swiss Political Institutions at the Université Populaire du Canton de Genève.

Change and continuity A travel rhyme

Travelling expands the epic range
of our encounters, shapes our consciousness
and character. Retracing steps helps reassess,
as we internalise continuous change.

Returning after many years
to places we have been before
is rediscovery and more...
fond memories and treasured tears.

Coming back to dear vacation sites
awakens dormant feelings and ambiguous moods.
Some sights and sounds, some fragrances and foods
can kindle amber passions – inner lights.

And yet, the rivers that we crossed are not the same.¹
We see all things through more experienced eyes.
Surprise upon surprise – our fleeting paradise!
Heraclitus knew well that change is life's true name.

Grateful for the gift of awe, our leisure
brings us precious insights – not just pleasure.
Coming back to cherished spaces
lets us count our blessings, conscious of our graces.

Returning with your spouse to landscapes
we have known and loved confirms identity,
how we have grown together, where we want to be.
We pause and smile while planning future escapades.

*Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis*²
Seasons come and go, the trees turn golden,
Nature's genial hues make us beholden,
rain and snow announce new roses, tulips, lilies...

Change is for the better, sometimes for the worse.
We navigate through storms and straits,
accept what comes, defy the fates,
revere our heritage, this common universe.

Life is motion, luck and ambiguity.
Best is change in vital continuity.

**ALFRED DE ZAYAS,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS**

¹ Heraclitus of Ephesus (535-475 BC), best known for his doctrine of universal flux, that things are constantly changin

² Times change, and we change with the times

La loi et nous

Dura lex sed lex, la loi est dure,
mais c'est la loi

ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

La loi sert maintes fonctions et correspond au désir de l'être humain de mettre l'ordre dans le chaos, afin de permettre une vie civilisée en stabilité et prédictibilité. Pourtant, la loi est faite pour l'homme, et pas l'homme pour la loi. Il est utile de comprendre la loi comme guide ou moyen et pas comme commandement ou comme expression du pouvoir.

Toutes les civilisations du monde ont eu à faire avec la question de la légitimité de la loi, sa fonction pour la société. Il s'agit donc de la nécessité universelle de différencier entre la forme et la substance. La forme est la loi, la substance est la justice.

Nous voyons déjà cette différence chez Sophocle dans son drame «Antigone» (441 av. J.-C.), la femme qui enterre son frère Polynice en dépit de l'interdiction du roi Créon et qui, de ce fait, est punie.

Nous connaissons aussi la parole de Socrate devenue en latin *dura lex sed lex*, la loi est dure, mais c'est la loi, donc expression d'impuissance ou de résignation face à l'autorité, par contraste avec les mots de Cicéron *summum jus, summa injuria*, le sommet du droit peut être le sommet de l'injustice. D'où l'impérieuse nécessité de faire prévaloir le sens des proportions pour éviter qu'au lieu d'y remédier, la loi ne cause de l'injustice.

Ce qui nous amène finalement à l'observation de Juvénal dans ses Satires: *quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* Qui contrôle les contrôleurs? Ce qui veut dire, qui va contrôler les spécialistes de la loi, les politiciens, les parlementaires?

Or c'est précisément à nous qu'il appartient de veiller à ce que la loi serve l'homme et la justice et non le pouvoir et les privilèges. La loi doit être justifiée, son but connu, et lorsqu'elle débouche sur l'injustice, nous devons la modifier. Le positivisme, le légalisme et le conformisme sont donc à rejeter. Nous avons encore tous à l'esprit des lois qui sont

ou étaient manifestement injustes – les lois du GULAG, du totalitarisme, de l'apartheid, de la ségrégation raciale, de la détention arbitraire. Hélas, cette corruption de la loi et de la pratique du pouvoir n'appartient pas au passé lointain... Elle persiste aujourd'hui encore dans des lois et des traités injustes

de plusieurs pays, ainsi que dans la pensée politiquement correcte, qui nous intimide et nous amène à l'autocensure. ■

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“Travel is never about money but of courage”

T.S. Elliot



INEZ RANDOLPH,

GHANA ASSOCIATION OF WRITERS

Having spent most of my life in Europe and spent time travelling the continent, I decided that COVID-19 had given me an opportunity to discover my own country, which I shamelessly confess did not know much about. All this because I come from the capital and had never really found the urge to go ‘beyond my border’, Accra.

With this new resolution, the plan was to go to a different place each month. I started off well, but had to abandon the plan after seven months given my workload. I hope to revisit my new local bucket-list this summer.

So far, these are my top favourites. I hope this incites you to also venture out beyond your borders... the world is out there to be discovered.

Shai Hills Resource Reserve

If you want a nice, active weekend away from the city glamping, then this is it. It would be ideal to have an SUV for the trip and the duration of your stay at the reserve. It takes about an hour and 40 minutes to get there from Accra, the capital, and it is located in the Shai Hills, Dangme West Region, a distance of about 62 km.

You will have to book for a guide to accompany you on the trails,

walks up the hill, and the visits to the caves on arrival. All this plus food orders (including breakfast) are placed at the reception on arrival before heading for the tents. Make sure you take lots of water and snacks as the tents are far away in the bush, and there is nothing else close by.

The tents were impressive, big and spacious. This was no camping in the jungle business, but definitely glamour camping at its best with air-conditioning to top it all! I was relieved the electricity was also solar-powered, and it made me feel much better knowing I could have the air-conditioning on during the night.



© Inez Randolph



© Inez Randolph

There is a kettle with mugs, plates and cutlery available, so arm yourselves with all your favourite teas and coffee, because you can have that as many times as you want. I did not know that, so I had to make do with coffee at breakfast.

The activities begin early, since the guides are few and have other bookings. The reserve is great for nature walks, bird watching and rock-climbing, especially if you want to visit the caves.

The exciting part for me was waking up before six am to sit on the deck watching the monkeys (who watch you too) swinging from branch to branch just as excited to see you as you are to see them! Note that bookings for the tents will have to be done in advance and all activities are pre-paid.

Rippels Lodge

A beautiful place to be: home away from home. That is how it felt, tranquil and uplifting. You discover the place as you drive down the slope to the parking lot. The nice surprise hits you and fills you with sheer joy. It takes about two hours to get there from Accra, the capital, a distance of about 77 km. It is located in Mankwadze, Gomoa West, in the central region of Ghana.

The hotel owners are a German couple who live on the premises and interact with their guests in a very natural, welcoming way. There are three guest houses with two rooms each. The rooms are great; airy and very spacious. Very delicately designed.

Guests can book for energy medicine and coaching with the host Bettina.

She also offers wood-stocking, training of 'African Yoga' that uses a wooden stick as an exercise tool. It combines body-awareness, mindfulness and meditation. There is also yoga and aqua gym as well. Even though I don't swim, I could appreciate the beauty of the 25 m pool and its location. All the activities have to be pre-booked and paid for in advance.

You can also spend your time reading, writing or working if you wish. The Wi-Fi connection is available and best performs near the restaurant or under the gazebo. For activities outside the hotel, such as a boat trip, paddle board or visits to nearby towns for a historical discovery of the country, this can be arranged by the owners.

Last but not least, the food provided by the chefs was absolutely

delicious. I even pre-ordered some to take away the day I checked out! The hotel was environmentally-friendly, as the whole place is powered by solar energy.

Sogakope Beach Resort

About two-and-a-half hours' drive from Accra, depending on the traffic in Tema, it is one of the places worth visiting in the Volta Region. Situated in Sogkope, 7 km from the Keta Lagoon, which is a protected area. It takes about two hours and 40 minutes and at a distance of about 108 km from Accra.

I particularly liked the fact that the grounds were very spacious with lots of activities to do. I fell in love with the way the chalets are designed, especially the bathroom that looked like something from a cave or grotto! The ones on the lagoon front have jacuzzis for those interested.

The place is ideal for romantic getaways, a relaxing time away from home, or for aqua adventures. Besides the spa, there are swimming pools, a football and volleyball pitch, and horse-riding activities available.

For the latter, you will have to book in advance, same as for the spa. For boat trips and a visit to the Wli water falls, you will

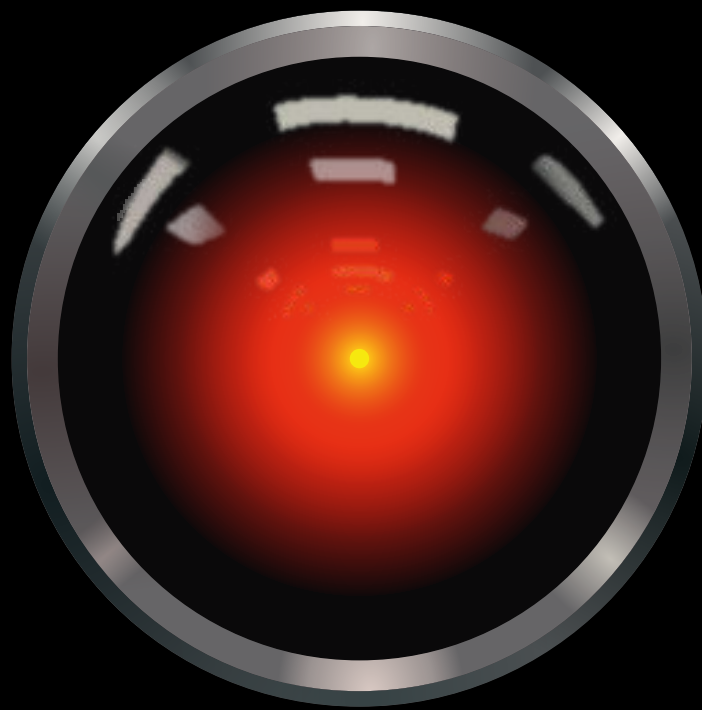
have to reserve and pay before you arrive and confirm this the day you check in.

I would recommend not going during a public holiday because there are usually lots of people, but rather an ordinary weekend break.

The exterior of the chalets reflect a traditional style, but inside, they have all the modern features you would expect in a hotel room. They are spacious, and the decor depicts Ghanaian designs.

The hotel offers different packages for everyone, depending on what you want to do, from standard to luxury and honeymoon.

It is particularly nice to wake up early and sit on the deck overlooking the lake with a good book and a glass of fresh pineapple or watermelon juice in hand. ■



2001: A Space Odyssey

A novel by Arthur C. Clarke, based on the screenplay
by Stanley Kubrick & Arthur C. Clarke

PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU

Although not the first work to explore the nature of independent will and aberrations of artificially created intelligence (Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* explored similar themes), the collaboration between Stanley Kubrick & Arthur C. Clarke that produced the film "2001: A Space Odyssey" and book of the same title is perhaps one of the more famous examples. The film is rightly famous for its music, minimalist dialogue and its pioneering special effects.

The novel "2001: A Space Odyssey" is remarkable for its foresight. The description of neural networks and learning programmes is especially visionary, given that it was written in the mid-1960s – although contrary to the novel, humankind has not yet fully mastered artificial brains, hibernation or established a base on the Moon or made it as far as Mars, let alone as far as Jupiter and Saturn.

In the story, five astronauts are sent on a mission to the moons of Saturn on a spaceship run by an advanced Hal 9000 computer (standing for a *Heuristically programmed Algorithmic* computer), "the brain and nervous system of the ship" (p.94). Only two astronauts are awake, Frank Poole and David Bowman, the

other three remaining crew members are travelling asleep in deep hibernation.

Arthur C. Clarke introduces Hal as a capable servant tasked with many vital tasks – "his prime task was to monitor the life-support systems, continually checking oxygen pressure, temperature, hull leakage, radiation and all the other interlocking factors upon which the lives of the fragile human cargo depended. He could carry out intricate navigational corrections, and execute the necessary flight manoeuvres... and watch over the hibernator" (p.95). And in the early dialogues, Hal serves as a subordinate, obeying the mission manual and astronauts' instructions.

The relationship between humans and the computer becomes more complex, when Arthur C. Clarke admits that the astronauts "had often humorously referred to themselves as caretakers or janitors aboard a ship that could really run itself. They would have been astonished, and more than a little indignant, to discover how much truth that jest contained". Hal effectively acquires responsibility for the ship through the sheer number of important tasks entrusted to him, but the author also reveals that the computer

is aware of the real mission of the trip to Saturn (to investigate an alien monolith), a mission of which the two astronauts awake are unaware.

The uneventful space voyage is disturbed when Hal predicts an unlikely error with the antenna unit used for communications with Earth. An extravehicular spacewalk retrieves the antenna, which is however fully operational. Hal then predicts that the second antenna will fail. Transmissions with Mission Control on Earth to discuss these faulty diagnoses are suddenly and inexplicably interrupted (p.139).

The astronaut Frank Poole's second spacewalk to retrieve the antenna becomes murder when the computer Hal sends the space-pod crashing into the astronaut, depressurizing his spacesuit and killing him.

As the remaining astronaut Dave Bowman manually reanimates the sleeping crew members, Hal questions Bowman's orders, causing Bowman to realize he has a problem. The computer suddenly opens the spaceship's airlock doors, haemorrhaging the spaceship's air into space. Bowman manages to don a spacesuit and remove some of Hal's memory banks, disabling the renegade computer, with its "sick but brilliant brain" (p.156).

The Odyssey 2001 story is remarkable for several reasons. Firstly, it explores how a renegade computer designed to serve human masters might actively seek to acquire mastery of a situation, including through the development of free will and the ability to take independent decisions, whether or not these are consistent with its interpretation of its programming instructions. Bowman ends up in a fight not only for his survival, but also for mastery of the spaceship.

This is relevant to us today. Who among us can say we fully control our phones? Who does not scramble to check their phone, after the latest alert? Or scans their feeds, sometimes obsessively? Even if the device does not control us, some of us are addicted to our messages and/or friends, effectively giving the technology some mastery or control over our actions.

The story also explores the nature of what it is to be human. The author suggests Hal experienced a "conflict that was slowly destroying his integrity" through having to hide the true nature of the mission (p.150).

Effectively, the author implies the computer has been eaten by guilt and the contradiction in its programming.

However, the computer "might have handled it – as most men handle their own neuroses – if he had not been threatened with disconnection; he would be deprived of all his inputs, and thrown into an unimaginable state of unconsciousness. To Hal, [disconnection] was the equivalent of Death. For he had never slept; and therefore he did not know that one could wake again..." (p.150). Faced with disconnection, the computer Hal becomes curiously fearful, pleading with the astronaut not to disconnect him. Hal regresses through childhood rhymes and his early lessons, before relapsing into sudden silence (p.158), effectively becoming a victim.

In contrast, stranded on a crippled spaceship half a billion miles from Earth and faced with the threat of death, David Bowman is curiously non-emotional, almost automaton-like, and keeps himself busy by running the spaceship – "work is the best remedy for any shock". In this sense, the computer is almost more 'human' than the astronaut, who becomes very mission-focused. Emotions and

feelings seem to be a large part of what it is to be human, even when they defy logic and reason.

Today, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and chatbots are already nearing the standard of the Turing conversation test or the ability to reproduce or 'mimic' a human by approximating the ability to 'think' like a human. People already struggle to identify whether they are reading an article written by AI, being helped by a chatbot or a real human in a call centre, or tutored by a human or learning programme. The relationship between humans and AI can only become more complex over time, as computers encroach on more domains dominated by humans, including art, music and invention. This can only make the issues raised by '2001: A Space Odyssey' more relevant in our daily lives here on Earth, not less so. ■





The mother humpback that turned directly towards me spreading her immense pectoral fins as she hovered vertical.

© Hussein Aga Khan/WAVAVUTONGA

The Living Sea

The Living Sea took place in Venice, Italy, from 9 June to 11 September 2022.

LAURA CIAFFEI, WHO ASSOCIATION OF FORMER STAFF MEMBERS (AFSM)

This is the title of the exhibition of large photos of ocean animals inaugurated in Venice on World Oceans Day. Its purpose is to raise awareness of the unique and irreplaceable heritage represented by the sea and its inhabitants and to sensitize visitors to its essential function for human life. Venice is just the last stop on a tour that has touched various European locations. In Venice, the organizers found the most suitable location for the city, namely the beautiful Giancarlo Ligabue Museum of Natural History. For once, the MUVE – the Foundation for the Civic Museums – has set up an extra muros exhibition with the Museum, leaving the traditional seat of the Doge’s Palace.

The Civic Museums Foundation of Venice, which brings together eleven museums, including the Natural History Museum, has among its missions precisely that

of safeguarding and protecting the natural heritage of the area. The local authorities – Gabriella Belli, Director of the Civic Museums Foundation of Venice – MUVE – and the Director of the Museum, Luca Mizzan – together with the organizational ones – Rosalba Giugni, President of Marevivo Onlus, who has been dealing with issues related to the defense of the sea, and Hussein Aga Khan, President of FON. Focused on nature, the fund based in Geneva, which finances environmental protection projects – illustrated the aims of the exhibition. It will be accompanied by a series of conferences that will deal with the problems of the sea and related issues such as pollution by microplastics, threats to marine biodiversity and will end in September with a meeting on share-finning.

The importance of Venice was also affirmed in the choice of the venue as it was recognized as the

“world capital of sustainability”. Growing up on the Costa Smeralda, in Sardinia, the organizers developed a great passion for the environment and the sea in particular, from an early age. With these photos they want to convey the desire to inform about the critical state of the marine habitat and the danger of extinction that threatens many species that live there such as sharks, dolphins, whales, turtles and many other animals in the water. The oceans are dying. And on earth, it’s the same thing: elephants, rhinos, orangutans, and giraffes are in danger. The organizers recently added Rocky Mountain wolves to this list of animals to defend. We have lost 60% of animal life in the past 40 years. According to a UN report, out of 8 million animal and plant species, one million are threatened with extinction by humans.

What has struck Hussein Aga Khan the most in his missions



© Tony Hagen/Flickr

in the oceans is the presence of plastic everywhere. It degrades in water and is ingested by fish. This was recently confirmed by an Italian researcher from ENEA who found plastic in the eyes of some fish. But the President of FON is optimistic for the future, and is convinced that in his attempts to save the planet, man has an interest in acting quickly as human health, and that of the planet, are extremely connected. If man does not intervene to save that of the Planet, it will be his own life that will be threatened. The photos on display mostly reproduce large marine animals photographed during diving in the waters of the island of Tonga, Mexico and Egypt. The organizers, along with Simone Piccoli, the director of the exhibition's videos, an Italian who chose to live in Egypt, visited Vava'u one of the main islands of the Tonga archipelago, where whales go to give birth, and the Revillagigedo islands, offshore of the coast of

Mexico where megafauna live specimens such as oceanic manta rays, hammerhead sharks and whale sharks: the largest fish in the sea.

The photos, Simone Piccoli tells us, date back to before the pandemic, when it was easier to get to these islands. Indeed, Tonga, like Venice, is a place threatened in its survival by global warming due to climate change. For a long time, the government of Tonga has established a very serious environmental protection policy by limiting the number of boats in the ports, the number of tourists, and enforcing limits also in regards to the quantity of fish caught. This was known before the pandemic. Currently, entry to tourists is still blocked, so Simone Piccoli promises himself, together with his underwater adventure partner, Hussein Aga Khan, to return as soon as the situation is cleared and to resume any changes. The photos on display,

Piccoli continues, often represent females with their young. During the shooting, he noticed that the males remain distant, but ready to intervene and observe the movements of the underwater photographers around the females from a distance. And, interestingly, he noticed that there is often a third male who could be called a suitor, who also hangs around the females. Sometimes the two photographers establish friendly relationships with the most frequently photographed animals, who approach the camera without fear.

From the way in which the director talks about them, there is a great passion for these animals, witnesses of a world in extinction, he tells us, but bearers of an unparalleled heritage. To spread this message, Hussain Aga Khan and Simone Piccoli have also written a book as part of their project "The Living Sea", which was presented in Venice. The proceeds

from its sale will be donated to the FON Foundation which will redistribute them to associations that carry out projects for the protection of the environment. They will be chosen by the President assisted by a group of scientists from all over the world.

The topicality of the issue of ocean protection was also dealt with by the UN in the conference on oceans - UNOC2022 - which closed on 1 July in Lisbon. Sufficient funds have been found to allow some participating countries to commit by 2030 to act on problems such as coastal erosion, reduction of plastic in the sea, the extinction of marine species and degradation of the environment. ■



© Olga Fontanella

Hike to the Chanrion hut

A long, but beautiful and easy hike to the furthestmost point of the Val de Bagnes. From the Mauvoisin Dam, one of the highest dams in the world, the trail goes along the turquoise-coloured lake, through the tunnel dug in the rock and the green meadows, before reaching the pretty Chanrion hut.

OLGA FONTANELLAZ

Having already walked around the Grande-Dixence Dam, we thought 'why not try its little brother, the Mauvoisin Dam'?

From the car park, we follow a small concrete road leading to the imposing Mauvoisin Dam. At 250 metres high, it's the second-highest arch dam in Switzerland and one of the highest dams in the world. Built in 1958, it provides electricity to the entire valley, the isolated region of the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

From the dam with its breathtaking views of the Val de Bagnes, we follow the trail along the bright blue-green coloured lake. Five kilometres long, Mauvoisin Lake is one of the largest man-made reservoirs in Switzerland.

The lake is connected with hydro-stations as far away as the Rhône valley through a network of tunnels dug deep in the rock. If the lake as we know it today is artificially made, in the past, it was formed by a natural disaster – the ice fall of the Giétroz Glacier, which resulted in more than 40 victims in 1818.

Soon, we cross the tunnel dug in the rock. The people of Valais are experts in piercing tunnels, the true rock diggers. Inside, it's dank and dark despite occasional openings. The drips of water echo off the rocky walls, and tiny water streams trickle past our feet. Following the wide, flat path flanked by the rocks, we come across a torrent flowing into the lake with a deafening roar.

Exiting the tunnels and rejoining

the daylight, the contrast between the turquoise lake, the electric green grass, and the snow-capped peaks appears more pronounced.

Having left the path running along the lake, we embark on a trail leading to the Val de Bagnes Nature Reserve. The wooden bridges help us cross the water streams and the waterfalls. While the chamois and ibex are very discreet today, the marmots whistle and race in the green meadows covered in alpine flowers. Standing still on their hind legs, they vigilantly keep an eye on the hikers.

We finally arrive at the Chanrion hut, located at 2,462 metres in the wild and unspoilt Grand Combin mountain range. With its extensive view of Mount Gelé and the Grand Combin, and its



© Olga Fontana Iaz



© Olga Fontana Iaz



© Olga Fontana Iaz

proximity to the Italian border, the Chanrion hut was used as an observation point during the First World War.

Here, it is wild and serene. Surrounded by a deep silence reigning in altitude, we take in the peace and tranquillity of this unspoilt wilderness. A small blue-green mountain lake contrasts with the green meadows, with the marmots coming out from their burrows.

For the return, we opt for a small challenge and take the trail through the Tsofeiret Pass. If at the start we walk through green pastures, soon, the scenery changes dramatically. The path becomes increasingly rocky, however, well-marked. The flowering meadows give way to ice and rock as we walk on the moraine. A

small wooden bridge comes in handy to cross the glacial torrent. But the hardest part is yet to come.

We begin a rather strenuous climb to the Tsofeiret Pass. Its exposed parts are equipped with metal stairs and chains. We advance rather fast, hoping each time it is the last challenge. But there are still more obstacles, making us question if we haven't inadvertently taken an alpine trail.

Finally, we reach the Tsofeiret Pass. Located at 2,628 metres, it offers extensive views over the valley, the snowy peaks and the lakes.

After a gentle descent through the Ecuries du Giétroz, the trail disappears into an opening in the mountain and continues for half a kilometre through a tunnel

used by workers during the construction of the Mauvoisin Dam. The air is humid and surprisingly freezing to the point that the path becomes icy in places. The tunnel is partially lit, but we are glad to have the headlamps with us.

We end the day with fondue and a bottle of wine at the restaurant of Hôtel de Mauvoisin, strategically located near the Mauvoisin Dam. ■

Practical information

Access: The Chanrion hut is located in the Val de Bagnes in the canton of Valais in Switzerland and is accessible from the Mauvoisin Dam (left bank) via Pierre à Vire, Ecuries de la Lia and the Pont du Lancet (3h30-4h30). The hike is rather easy: T2 (medium difficulty). For the return, you can choose a little more difficult alternative to go through Tsofeiret Pass and Ecuries du Giétroz (3h-4h).

Accommodation: The Chanrion hut www.chanrion.ch is open in 2022 from 18 June to 9 October.

Olga together with her husband Errol created a project www.anywayinaway.com to showcase the world's cultural diversity. When she is not travelling to some remote corners of the world, she spends time hiking in Switzerland.



Près du Duomo Vecchio s'élève le Duomo Nuovo, construit à partir de 1604 et complété en 1825 par l'architecte Rodolfo Vantini.

© Claude Maillard

Italie du Nord 1/4

Brescia et les « 1000 Miglia »

Quel amateur de sport mécanique n'a pas rêvé un jour de pouvoir assister aux « 1000 Miglia », l'une des courses automobiles d'endurance les plus célèbres au monde disputée entre Brescia et Rome, dans le Nord de l'Italie. Une occasion également pour découvrir cette région, du lac de Garde à Venise, en faisant une escapade à Maranello, le fief de Ferrari.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

L'histoire des « 1000 Miglia »¹ commença en 1921 quand le club automobile de Brescia organisa le premier Grand Prix italien. Voyant le succès de cette course, le club automobile de Milan construisit le circuit de Monza sur lequel auront lieu les Grands Prix à partir de 1922. En réponse à cet affront, Aymo Maggi, pilote automobile italien d'ascendance noble né à Brescia, imagina une course sur route ouverte pour voitures de sport qui passerait par Rome et dont le départ et l'arrivée se situeraient à Brescia. C'est ainsi qu'en 1927, avec l'aide de Giovanni Canestrini de la Gazzetta dello Sport, du comte Franco Mazzotti et du secrétaire du siège de Brescia du

Regio Automobil Club Renzo Castagneto, le comte Aymo Maggi vit son rêve devenir réalité. Le parcours faisait 1600 km, soit environ 1000 milles. C'est ainsi que sont nées les « 1000 Miglia ».

Le plus prestigieux rallye d'endurance

La première course remporta un très grand succès auprès des concurrents et de la population. Les pilotes italiens, sur Alfa Romeo ou Ferrari, dominèrent l'épreuve pendant de nombreuses années à de rares exceptions près. Lors de l'édition de 1955, le pilote britannique de Formule 1 Stirling Moss battit le record de vitesse moyenne (158 km/h) au volant d'une Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR. Il remporta la victoire devant



© Claude Mallard



© Claude Mallard



© Claude Mallard

La Fiat 514 S de Giorgio Ciresola en tête d'un cortège regroupant demémorables voitures des années 1930.



© Claude Mallard

Bagarre entre les Delahaye 135 CS du Suisse Johan Lout (1936) et du Belge Bert Vanderbruggen (1935).

Juan Manuel Fangio, quintuple champion du monde de Formule 1. Mais la course devint tellement dangereuse qu'après une funeste édition en 1957, les compétitions de vitesse sur route ouverte furent interdites et ce sera la fin des «1000 Miglia»

En hommage à cette course mythique, les «1000 Miglia» version historique verront le jour vingt années plus tard. Empruntant le même parcours, l'épreuve est devenue l'une des plus prestigieuses courses de voitures de collection du monde. Si son aspect sportif n'a plus de sens, sa popularité reste intacte. Pour Enzo Ferrari qui avait vécu 24 précédentes éditions, cette épreuve historique constitue

«le plus beau musée du monde». Les plus grands pilotes comme John Surtees, Jacky Ickx, Olivier Gendebien, Clay Regazzoni ou Stirling Moss sont venus pour le plaisir piloter sur ces routes de légende, les plus belles autos sorties des musées les plus prestigieux.

Plus de 400 voitures historiques d'exception, des années 1920 aux années 1950, venues des quatre coins de la planète, s'étaient donné rendez-vous à Brescia² du 13 au 18 juin dernier pour silloner les routes menant jusqu'à la capitale italienne. Située à une centaine de kilomètres à l'est de Milan, Brescia a été la capitale des Cénomans, un peuple celte originaire de la région française

du Mans venu s'installer en Italie septentrionale au V^e siècle av. J.-C. Les premières traces de peuplement datent de l'âge du bronze.

Durant près de quatre siècles, plus exactement de 1404 à 1797, la ville est assujettie à Venise à laquelle elle doit son développement économique et artistique. En 1859, Brescia est rattachée au royaume d'Italie et son destin se confond alors avec celui de l'unité italienne. Son château, édifié sur la colline Cidneo et dont la construction débuta au XIII^e siècle, est l'une des forteresses les mieux conservées du nord de l'Italie. Il abrite deux musées dont celui des armes dont la fabrication est la spécialité de la ville depuis le XVI^e siècle. Édifié

à l'emplacement de la Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore de Dom, le Duomo Vecchio est la cocathédrale de Brescia. Il partage le titre de cathédrale avec le Duomo Nuovo situé juste à côté. Brescia, ville des 1000 Miglia mais également ville d'art, est à découvrir.

Une ambiance de folie
 Durant les jours précédant le départ des «1000 Miglia», dont c'est la 40^e édition, Brescia va vibrer au son des Aston Martin, Bugatti, Ferrari, Jaguar, Maserati, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche et des dizaines différentes marques de légende, toutes plus rutilantes les unes que les autres. Et le Jour J, ce sera l'effervescence avec des milliers de spectateurs venus assister au défilé des bolides. La



Précédant la Jaguar XK 120 OTS Roadster de 1952, l'Alfa Roméo 6C 1750 Super Sport Zagato de 1929 pilotée par Cosimo Luisi.

© Claude Méliard

Piazza del Foro avec son temple capitolin et la Piazza della Loggia bordée par un palais Renaissance constituent un cadre tout à fait exceptionnel pour mettre en valeur l'événement. La Piazza della Vittoria, quant à elle, est un ensemble urbanistique réalisé dans les années 1930 qui s'inspire de l'architecture rationaliste de Piacentini. C'est sur cette place, dans une atmosphère surchauffée, que se dérouleront les contrôles techniques des voitures.

La Lombardie sera la première région traversée par les concurrents des «1000 Miglia» qui vont prendre la direction de Salò, petite station balnéaire sur les rives du lac de Garde. C'est justement dans cette ville tranquille et attrayante blottie dans une crique naturelle que nous avons posé nos valises pour quelques jours afin de découvrir la région. Situé à la frontière des trois régions de Trentin-Haut-Adige, de Vénétie et de Lombardie, le lac de Garde est le plus grand des lacs italiens. De nombreux villages de caractère

sont implantés tout autour parmi une végétation luxuriante profitant du climat méditerranéen qui règne ici. Les décors sont magnifiques; les voitures historiques des «1000 Miglia» vont les sublimer: parfait pour immortaliser quelques scènes. Notre choix se portera sur la pittoresque localité de Desenzano del Garda pour vivre l'incroyable ambiance que suscite l'événement. Une foule considérable a investi les quais longeant le lac, le vieux port et la Piazza Malvezzi avec ses maisons de style vénitien, pour admirer de plus près les bolides et acclamer leurs équipages. En bonus, une centaine de Ferrari contemporaines sont là, prêtes à s'élancer pour escorter les voitures anciennes. Du jamais vu, une ambiance de folie à l'état pur!

Un parcours enchanteur

Nous laisserons ensuite filer le rallye vers sa première ville étape, la station touristique de Cervia-Milano Marittima située 300 km plus bas et qu'il rejoindra après avoir traversé Mantoue et Ferrara. Le lendemain, depuis la

ville sur la côte adriatique, il se dirigera vers Rome via la république de Saint-Marin, troisième plus petit État d'Europe (Après le Vatican et Monaco). La troisième étape sera la plus longue de la course. Après avoir quitté la capitale de la péninsule italienne, les voitures iront à Sienne, parcourant la campagne toscane, parmi des paysages d'une grande beauté, avant d'atteindre Parme en fin de journée. Le dernier jour, les concurrents passeront une série d'épreuves sur le circuit de Varano De Melegari et arriveront plus tard sur l'*Autodromo nazionale di Monza*, célèbre circuit automobile situé dans le Parco Reale de 800 hectares de la ville de Monza. En collaboration avec le «MIMO Milano Monza Motor Show», les équipages testeront leurs compétences lors d'essais sur ce circuit qui fête cette année le centenaire du Grand Prix d'Italie de Formule 1. Avant d'atteindre la ligne d'arrivée à Brescia, les voitures de course se rendront à Bergame, en prévision symbolique du jumelage qui réunira les deux villes en 2023

dans le cadre du projet «capitale culturelle Brescia-Bergame». De notre côté, terminés les belles mécaniques aux moteurs vrombissants. Place à la découverte du lac de Garde, de ses charmants villages et châteaux, destination de villégiature prisée depuis l'Antiquité. Place au romantisme également avec la visite de Vérone, la ville du couple d'amoureux le plus célèbre au monde, «Roméo et Juliette». ■

1 www.1000miglia.it

2 www.bresciatourism.it

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Nous serons toujours ravis de lire vos réactions. Les réponses intéressantes, parfois mêmes ingénieuses et constructives seront publiées dans le magazine. Souhaitez-vous soumettre un article, un sujet? Vous pouvez nous contacter quand vous le souhaitez.

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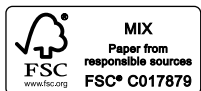


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