



## Press release

### **EPHJ opens its 22nd edition with increased participation and a rich program**

**Inaugurated by Nathalie Fontanet, President of the Geneva State Council, and the Ambassador of the European Union to Switzerland, the EPHJ trade show opened its 22nd edition against a backdrop where statistics for exports of finished watchmaking products and for the micromechanics sector point to new challenges ahead. A number of highlights are on the program for this year's event, which is sold out with attendance on the rise.**

**Geneva, June 11, 2024** - EPHJ, the world's leading high-precision trade show, was inaugurated this morning at Geneva-Palexpo in the presence of Petros Mavromichalis, Ambassador of the European Union to Switzerland. An important presence in the middle of the renegotiation of the framework agreement between Switzerland and the European Union, a key issue for the Swiss high-precision industry. This issue will be discussed today by Yves Bugmann, President of the Swiss Watchmaking Federation, Philippe Fleury, General Manager of the FER, and Valérie Lemaigre, Chief Economist of BCGE.

With 760 exhibitors and over 20,000 Swiss and international trade visitors expected, participation is slightly up compared to 2023. Most of these exhibitors remain Swiss (76%), followed by representatives from 11 other countries including France, Germany, Italy, and Japan. Neuchâtel still dominates the ranking of the 22 cantons represented, according to the following Top 5: Neuchâtel (123 companies), Berne (118), Jura (86), Geneva (78) and Vaud (74). Of this Swiss representation, French-speaking Switzerland accounted for 66% of exhibitors and German-speaking Switzerland and Ticino for 34%. Another remarkable fact is that more than 100 companies are exhibiting for the first time at EPHJ this year.

Proof of the multi-sectoral development of the companies present at 2024 is that, while 92% of exhibitors were active in the watch or jewelry industry, 55% were active in micro-technologies, notably in the machinery industry, and 53% in the medical sector. A trend that clearly demonstrates the capabilities of the watchmaking and micro-technology industries to bring sought-after skills to the medical equipment environment.

#### **Double anniversary of watchmaking**

This year's event will be marked by a historic double celebration, with the bicentenary of the **Geneva School of Watchmaking** and the centenary of the **Société Suisse de Chronométrie (SSC)**. The SSC will be taking part in the **1st EPHJ Innovation Forum**, where some of the most remarkable innovations of 2024 will be presented! Another highlight of the week will be the traditional Round Table on the state

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of the watchmaking market, on June 12, at which eminent specialists and major players in the subcontracting sector will compare their points of view at a time when a slowdown is underway.

Another Round Table is scheduled for June 13 at 10:00 a.m., **gold and its traceability** will be the subject of a topical debate with Diana Cullilas, CEO, Suisse Better Gold Association, Frédéric Dawance, Manager of the Swiss Positive Gold fund, Pury Pictet Turrettini, Antoine de Montmollin, CEO Metalor and Vice-President of the ASFCMP, and Marc Ummel, Head of Commodities, SWISSAID.

The impact of artificial intelligence on healthcare and the medtech industry, as discussed by experts and decision-makers from the sector, will be the subject of a **Medtech Master Class** on June 13 at 2:00 pm, led by Benoit Dubuis, founder of Health Valley.

As for EPHJ's annual boost to the watchmaking job market, the **Job Dating Day** will be repeated on Friday June 14, with a Round Table discussion on training and the job market with industry specialists. In 2023, 200 candidates for jobs in the high-precision sector took advantage of this initiative to be interviewed and meet with companies that are recruiting.

### **Five outstanding innovations nominated for the Exhibitors' Grand Prix**

The jury of the Grand Prix des Exposants has selected the following 5 innovations, the winner of which will be announced this evening:

- ❖ **Incaptek** has developed a new cutting-edge technology for producing ultra-strong composite materials using uniformly coated elongated fibers.
- ❖ **Injector** presents a totally invisible chemical bonding solution between itr2® and metal.
- ❖ **Microqubic** has designed an innovative 3D micrometric imaging system for scientific research and precision manufacturing.
- ❖ **Phasis & Ocode** have joined forces to develop a digital punch combining a high-precision metallurgical writing process.
- ❖ **SilMach** has designed PowerMEMS micromotors, which offer a number of innovative key features.

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