



UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE

PRESS RELEASE

Geneva | 3 December 2024

Gilles Marchand joins the Geneva Centre for Philanthropy at UNIGE

Former SSR Director General
Gilles Marchand will lead
the Media and Philanthropy
Initiative (IMP), an initiative
serving the media and their
contribution to democracy.



With a career in the media spanning more than 25 years, Gilles Marchand steered the fusion that led to the creation of RTS in 2010.

High resolution pictures

The Centre for Philanthropy at the University of Geneva (GCP) will launch the Media and Philanthropy Initiative (IMP) in March 2025. Led by Gilles Marchand, former Director General of SSR, this project aims to explore and promote philanthropic engagement in the media sector, addressing the industry's profound challenges.

In light of the significant structural crisis impacting business models and trust in the media, philanthropy plays a vital role in sustaining a pluralistic public debate, which is critical to democracy's proper functioning. The Centre for Philanthropy's (GCP) IMP project aims to examine this type of engagement in the media and develop concrete tools and processes, particularly regarding governance and sustainable financing adapted to current realities. This collaborative project benefits from a partnership with the Media Center at HEC Montréal.

Gilles Marchand, a well-known figure in Swiss media will head the IMP initiative from March 2025. According to Gilles Marchand, "The proper functioning of a democratic society largely depends on the quality and diversity of its media. The current economic and trust crisis is deeply concerning. Encouraging philanthropic engagement in this sector is crucial and requires developing professional and effective tools. I am thrilled to contribute to this initiative starting next March, combining professional and academic expertise".

Sociologist by training, Gilles Marchand has worked in media for over 25 years. He took over Ringier Romandie in 1998 and TSR in 2001, overseeing the merger that created RTS in 2010. He directed RTS until 2016. In 2017, he succeeded Roger de Weck as Director General of SSR. After completing his term in November 2024, he is now joining UNIGE to reflect on the future of media and its funding models.

Audrey Leuba, Rector of UNIGE and Chair of the GCP Strategic Committee, applauds the launch of this project, which aligns perfectly with the University's objectives. She emphasizes that "Providing solutions to societal challenges is part of the mission of the University of Geneva. With its multidisciplinary and inclusive approach, capacity to act as a hub for innovation, and essential role as an interface between practice and research, the GCP is ideally positioned to contribute to this effort".

contact

Nicolas Duvoux

Appointed Head
Geneva Centre for Philanthropy
UNIGE
+ 41 22 379 76 18
gcphilanthropy@unige.ch

Gilles Marchand

Director IMP
Geneva Centre for Philanthropy
UNIGE
+41 79 232 40 31
gilles.s.marchand@outlook.com

Philanthropy and Media: A Common Goal

According to Professor Henry Peter, Head of the GCP, “It is undeniable that the media and philanthropy pursue the same goal: the promotion of public value, of what is shared among members of society. The media play a crucial role in the functioning of democracy precisely because they contribute, through their independence and commitment to fact-checking, to constructing an open and high-quality public debate. However, their traditional funding is under threat. It is, therefore, increasingly necessary that they receive philanthropic support. I am delighted that this project can be realized under the leadership of Gilles Marchand and the academic responsibility of Professor Nicolas Duvoux, both of whom are great experts in this field.”

Professor and sociologist Nicolas Duvoux will succeed Henry Peter as Head of the GCP in January 2025. Currently affiliated with the University of Paris 8 and already a member of the GCP governance team, he is enthusiastic about this initiative. “This initiative is fully aligned with the Centre’s mission,” he said. “It will enhance the Centre’s outreach and support the development of a critical reflection on the democratic legitimacy of philanthropic foundations, providing top-tier professional and academic expertise in the key media sector.”

About the Centre for Philanthropy at the University of Geneva (GCP)

Established in 2017 in partnership with major philanthropic foundations with an international reach, the GCP operates autonomously under the Rectorate’s oversight. Its activities are supervised by a Strategic Committee comprising representatives from the University and partner foundations. The Centre has a scientific committee, whose role is essentially academic.

The Centre’s priority topics include philanthropy and social entrepreneurship, foundation governance, the role of emotions in philanthropic behaviour, impact investing, and interactions between philanthropy and democracy. The Media and Philanthropy Initiative falls under this last theme and fully aligns with the Centre’s mission.

UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE **Communication Department**

24 rue du Général-Dufour
CH-1211 Geneva 4

Tel. +41 22 379 77 17
media@unige.ch
www.unige.ch