

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Geneva Engage Awards honour most effective actors in social media engagement

Geneva, Switzerland, 16 February 2017. The 2017 Geneva Engage Awards have honoured the most effective actors in social media engagement in 2016.

Three winners were distinguished for their effective campaigns, interactive messages, and public engagement, in three categories, during this year's Geneva Engage Awards held on 8 February:

- The [World Health Organization](#), in the International Organisations category
- The [World Economic Forum](#) in the Non-Governmental Organisations and Non-Profits category
- The [Permanent Mission of the USA to the United Nations in Geneva](#), in the Permanent Missions category.

Introducing the awards, DiploFoundation's director and head of the Geneva Internet Platform Dr Jovan Kurbalija explained that the work of many Geneva-based organisations has an impact on millions of citizens worldwide. The challenge being addressed by the initiative is how to link Geneva with communities worldwide, through effective use of the Internet, including e-participation tools, social media, and other tools. The aim of the Geneva Engage initiative is to foster effective links between International Geneva and the rest of the world.

Mr Olivier Coutau, Delegate for International Geneva, Republic and State of Geneva, said that International Geneva was not only about Geneva but about the world. With several Geneva-based organisations attracting over a million Twitter followers, social media is an important tool for engagement. The Geneva Engage Awards are also an important contribution to fostering engagement beyond Geneva. Mr Salman Bal, Chief of Political Affairs and Partnerships at the United Nations Office in Geneva, said that e-participation can increase the visibility and



Mr Thomas Pierce, representing the Permanent Mission of the USA to the UN in Geneva, receiving the Geneva Engage Award 2017 in the Permanent Missions category, from Dr Jovan Kurbalija (left), Mr Salman Bal (second from left), and Mr Olivier Coutau

inclusiveness of International Geneva. He underlined the key role that e-participation has to play in business decisions and its significant role in facilitating new partnerships.

Explaining the [analysis behind the awards](#), Ms Barbara Rosen Jacobson, coordinator of the Geneva Engage initiative, referred to a series of indicators that looked at the social media activities of organisations based in International Geneva in the three categories, in the period 1 January to 31 December 2016. Other top organisations shortlisted for the award, which deserve a special mention, include:

- *International Organisations:* [CERN \(European Organization for Nuclear Research\)](#), the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#), the [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#), and the [United Nations Office in Geneva](#).
- *Non-governmental Organisations and Non-Profits:* [Gavi](#), the [Vaccine Alliance](#), the [International AIDS Society](#), the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#), and the [World Wildlife Fund](#).
- *Permanent Missions and Delegations to the United Nations in Geneva:* [European Union](#), [France](#), [India](#), and [Israel](#).

The event included a panel discussion with representatives from out-of-the-box initiatives. These included the Perception Change Project, which aims to better communicate the work and activities of UN agencies in Geneva; Twiplomacy, an ongoing study of world leaders and international organisations' use of social media; and GovFaces, which helps enrich conversations between users and their representatives online in special contexts.

The Geneva Engage Awards are an initiative of DiploFoundation and the Geneva Internet Platform, and are supported by the Canton of Geneva and Twiplomacy. More events are planned for the 2017 Geneva Engage process. Learn more at www.diplomacy.edu/geneva-engage

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For Editors:

- Press release is also available at <https://www.diplomacy.edu/blog/geneva-engage-awards-honour-most-effective-actors-social-media-engagement>
- Programme of event available at <https://www.diplomacy.edu/calendar/geneva-engage-awards-2017>
- Photo gallery available at <https://diplо.smugmug.com/Events/2017/Geneva-Engage-Awards-Feb-2017/i-45vt288>
- Recording of event available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPnLKp2J5no&feature=youtu.be>
- Data analysis available at <https://www.diplomacy.edu/sites/default/files/Geneva%20Engage%20Awards%202017%20-%20Data%20Analysis.pdf>
- Details about the Geneva Engage initiative available at <https://www.diplomacy.edu/geneva-engage>
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