



## Press release

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Swiss watch exports in 2023

### Record value and a sharp rise in volumes

Swiss watchmaking continued to grow sharply in 2023, following strong performance the previous year. Watch exports achieved record value, while the corresponding number of watches also increased significantly.

Swiss watch exports for the year as a whole exceeded their 2022 result by 7.6%, increasing to a total value of 26.7 billion francs. Growth in the first half of the year was 11.8% before slowing, as expected, to 3.6% in the second six months.

Operating mainly in the upmarket sector, Swiss watchmaking benefited from steady demand in the luxury goods market. It also achieved excellent performance in the entry-level segment, illustrating the still significant interest in Swiss-made products.

This remarkable momentum was supported by an increase in the number of employees in the sector, which grew by 7.7% to over 65,000 people in Switzerland last year, as announced by the Employers' Federation of the Swiss watchmaking industry.

2024 looks calmer for both exports and the number of people employed in the sector, with results expected to remain high or only increase slightly. Nonetheless, the disparities between different players will remain and performances will therefore vary. Subcontractors and suppliers, particularly, are expecting a less positive outlook this year. Although the sluggish economic situation has only appeared to have a partial impact on the luxury goods market so far, it is nonetheless affecting consumer confidence at all levels and several brands have already indicated that they intend to be cautious in their forecasts. In addition, the particularly high level of the franc will affect results, particularly in the entry-level and mid-range segments.

### Products

The number of wristwatches exported grew by 7.2% compared with 2022, to 16.9 million items. This means that an additional 1.1 million watches were shipped abroad in 2023, confirming the recovery already observed a year before. As a result, the export value of watches increased by 7.7%, to 25.5 billion francs.

Mechanical watches (+7.0% by value) generated almost 80% of the growth in export turnover. At the same time, quartz watches (+12.6%) accounted for three quarters of the increase in volumes, which rose by 8.8%.

The same polarisation can also be seen in the main price ranges. With an increase of 940,000 units (+11.2%), watches with an export price of 200 francs represented 83% of the increase in the total number of items. At the other end of the price scale, watches priced at over 3,000 francs (+9.4% by value) generated 92% of the growth. Between the two, the 200-3,000 francs segment varied only slightly compared with 2022, with an increase of +0.9% by value and +1.9% number of items.



Steel watches, representing more than one item in two, stagnated in 2023, by both volume (+0.4%) and value (+1.4%). Export turnover was mainly driven by watches made from precious metals (+9.2%) and bimetallic watches (+11.2%).

### Markets

North and South America (+6.7%), driven mainly by the United States, absorbed 19% of Swiss watch exports in 2023. Europe (+6.8%) followed the same trend, representing a 30% share. Asia (+8.2%) accounted for almost half (49%) of Swiss watch exports.

#### Swiss watch exports per market in 2023

Markets	Mil of CHF	Variation	Part
1. USA	4,161.8	+7.0%	15.6%
2. China	2,762.5	+7.6%	10.3%
3. Hong Kong	2,356.3	+23.4%	8.8%
4. Japan	1,822.9	+7.7%	6.8%
5. United Kingdom	1,743.8	+7.6%	6.5%
6. Singapore	1,655.2	+2.5%	6.2%
7. Germany	1,357.7	+5.1%	5.1%
8. France	1,279.9	+8.1%	4.8%
9. UAE	1,263.9	+12.2%	4.7%
10. Italy	1,066.9	+9.3%	4.0%
11. South Korea	711.6	-7.3%	2.7%
12. Spain	455.0	+5.7%	1.7%
13. Australia	411.5	+14.4%	1.5%
14. Taiwan	395.9	+7.5%	1.5%
15. Saudi Arabia	354.2	+2.6%	1.3%
<b>World</b>	<b>26,741.5</b>	<b>+7.6%</b>	

Having grown by 27.1% on average in 2021 and 2022, watch exports to the United States (+7.0%) remained very dynamic last year.

In Asia, China (+7.6%) posted growth identical to the global average after the market disruptions in 2022, but has still not returned to its pre-crisis level (-6.9% compared with 2021). Hong Kong (+23.4%) achieved a strong recovery following the lifting of health restrictions, which lasted three years and caused the market to fall to a historically low level. Japan (+7.7%) performed in line with the average, while Singapore (+2.5%) remained below it because of an unfavourable base effect. In the Middle East (+6.0%), the United Arab Emirates (+12.2%) outperformed, while Saudi Arabia (+2.6%) saw more moderate growth. The only shadow on the horizon, South Korea (-7.3%) suffered the full effect of competition from the duty-free market on the Chinese island of Hainan.

Performance in the main European markets was more uniform, at +7.6% for the United Kingdom, +5.1% for Germany, +8.1% for France, +9.3% for Italy and +5.7% for Spain.

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