Quantum Diplomacy in Action Conference

May 6th 2026, Geneva

Venue

The Quantum Diplomacy in Action Conference, was organized by GESDA (Geneva Science Diplomacy Anticipator), and OQI (Open Quantum Institute CERN), with the sponsoring of UBS (Union des Banques Suisses) and took place on May 6th, 2026 at the Campus Biotech in Geneva.

Objectives

The conference had four main objectives: to **foster dialogue on quantum diplomacy** by sharing national experiences, strategies, and policy approaches to quantum computing; to **identify priority areas for international cooperation** and encourage national and collective **actions to advance anticipatory and inclusive governance** of quantum computing; and to co-create a **knowledge base and policy insights** that will inform the 2026 OQI Intelligence Report on Quantum Diplomacy in Action.

Program and Participants

The event was organized in 4 sessions with talks and roundtables: 1. Why quantum computing matters for diplomacy, 2. National approaches on quantum strategies (examples in Switzerland, Mexico, China, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and the European Union), 3. Governance of quantum computing (with topics like Intellectual property and human rights, the quantum divide, environment and energy, security and dual-use), 4. The road ahead with concrete actions proposals.
Participants included Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives (PRs), senior government and policy leaders, representatives of intergovernmental organization (IGO), domain and quantum experts, and representatives from OQI and GESDA. IUPAP was represented by Christophe Rossel, IUPAP Vice president for Physics outside Academia and myself IUPAP Past President.

Outcome,

1. Quantum sciences and technologies have a high development potential in many fields. They proceed along a variety of directions (computing, detection, measurements…) with a variety of technologies. However, there is a high uncertainty on the development time and on what should be the right approach. This attracts a lot of basic and applied scientists, entrepreneurs, and attract the attention of governmental authorities.
2. There are many identified risks associated with national security acting against open science, the risk of a quantum divide, the risk of big tech grasping all the field, the risk of a too strong connection with defense and military applications
3. The Open Quantum Initiative at CERN, together with GESDA tries to give access to a diversity for people, to develop quantum algorithms, tested on classical computers, connected to sustainable development. This initiative was established for three years 2024 to 2026. UNESCO is promoting a Global Quantum Initiative within the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development 2024 2033, which could be the natural follow-up of the CERN GESDA OQI, putting more emphasis on diminishing the quantum divide, on open and peaceful development for sustainability. This aligns perfectly well with the goals of IUPAP and IUPAP should be part of it, with a leading role.
4. The findings, reflections, and proposals from the conference will be captured and synthesised in the Intelligence Report on Quantum Diplomacy in Action 2026–2027, to be published by the organisers and launched at the GESDA Summit on October 14, 2026.
5. Our IUPAP participation had several goals: meet new people in the field of quantum, develop some networking activity, list international and national companies and startups that could become IUPAP CAMs. The specific question whether GESDA and OQI could become CAMs, addressed to GESDA's Director General and other team members, lead to a negative answer, but further collaboration and exchanges with IUPAP are very welcome.