

Press release of 28 November 2022

Gender medicine and women's health in the workplace: an under-exploited potential

Lausanne, 28 November 2022. The second edition of Tech4Eva, a unique innovation platform and FemTech acceleration programme in Switzerland, was a great success. The result of a partnership between Groupe Mutuel and the EPFL Innovation Park, Tech4Eva is focusing today's event on gender medicine and women's health in the workplace.

28 start-ups from all over the world, including six from Switzerland, took part in the second edition of Tech4Eva. After a resounding success in 2021, the 2022 edition ends today in Lausanne with the presentation of 14 start-ups ([Brochure to download](#)). A total of 28 start-ups benefited from state-of-the-art coaching, access to the network partner markets and the Swiss market as well as exclusive contacts with investors.

Among the Swiss start-ups, we would like to highlight the presence of b-rayZ, founded by Cristina Rossi. This young Zurich-based company is active in diagnostics to improve the early detection of breast cancer through medical imaging. This promising initiative has already raised significant funds with over CHF 4 million in 2022. *"It is very important for Swiss start-ups to be able to benefit from support programs, as access to markets and investors is often difficult"*, said Cristina Rossi.

The importance of gender medicine

The example of this start-up demonstrates the importance of gender medicine, i.e. medicine specifically dedicated to men or women according to their physiological and gender-specific needs. At this year's closing event in Lausanne, Professor Carole Clair, co-head of the research and innovation department at Unisanté in Lausanne and a graduate in gender medicine, highlighted the enormous potential of gender-specific medicine. Taking sex and gender into account not only improves the quality of research, it is also a source of innovation. *"We can contribute to improving the health and reducing the morbidity of women and men by integrating sex and gender dimensions into health research and the training of health professionals,"* said Professor Clair. There is no shortage of challenges in responding specifically to women's issues. And to meet them, it is essential that companies and especially start-ups come up with new solutions. Bettina Ernst, Chairwoman of the Swiss Innovation Agency, is convinced that investors need to be made aware of this field. *"FemTech is an important industry sector that addresses unmet medical needs and deserves our full attention"*, said Bettina Ernst.

Women's health in the workplace: there is still a lot to be done

Another topic that caught the public's attention was women's health in the workplace. During the dedicated panel discussion, several personalities from the world of work discussed programs to improve the health of women in the workplace. Several initiatives can be noted, for example at The Capital Group, one of the largest investment fund managers in the world. Jean-Michel Baudequin, Vice President and Head of International Benefits emphasised that *"our long-standing goal of bringing and developing women at all levels of the organisation cannot be achieved without providing the best possible environment. The ability to understand and meet the specific needs of women is central to our approach."* But in general, there is still a lot to be done. Economist Ellen Kocher, a certified consultant in the field of corporate health, is certain that improvements in occupational health prevention would benefit the economy as a whole. This

is an area in which Switzerland is lagging behind, particularly in relation to women. "Women's health in the workplace, on specific topics such as the menopause or menstruation, is often taboo in Switzerland," said the occupational health specialist.

For more information on Tech4Eva: www.tech4eva.ch



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About Groupe Mutuel

With over 2,900 employees throughout Switzerland, Groupe Mutuel is at the service of 1.3 million private customers and 27,000 companies. As the only comprehensive insurer in Switzerland, Groupe Mutuel is the reference partner in the field of health and retirement benefits for private and corporate customers. Its turnover exceeds CHF 5.3 billion. Thanks to tailored solutions, whether in basic insurance (LAMal/KVG) or supplemental insurance (LCA/VVG), it is the third largest health insurer in Switzerland. Groupe Mutuel also offers an extensive range of products in individual retirement benefits and patrimony insurance. Based in Martigny, the insurer provides companies of all sizes solutions with loss of earnings in the event of illness, accident insurance (LAA/UVG) and occupational pension plans (LPP/BVG). In the field of corporate health insurance, Groupe Mutuel ranks fifth nationwide.

About the EPFL Innovation Park

The EPFL Innovation Park is positioned as the main innovation and entrepreneurship centre in Western Switzerland. It supports disruptive innovation and technology transfer from EPFL and other regional academic partners. It is a dynamic workplace that hosts 200 high-tech start-ups, SMEs and R&D centres of large companies and their 2500 employees. Over the years, the EPFL Innovation Park has developed a series of unique start-up training, incubation and acceleration programmes in collaboration with a dynamic community of industry experts, investors, venture capitalists and government agencies. It also offers training and networking workshops for start-up managers and founders to develop new innovation initiatives.