

# THE FUTURE OF NEGOTIATION

## NEGOTIATING WITH US PARTNERS

Yesterday's Panel Discussion brought together more than 100 participants, filling the lecture hall at the University of Zurich (UZH), including students, young professionals, and practitioners. The strong turnout and engagement underlined both the relevance of the topic and the growing interest, particularly among students, in developing negotiation as a core skill for their careers.

The session was opened by Aneschka Berchtold and Chiara Wooldridge from VSUZH Impulsfabrik, who set the stage by emphasizing the value of negotiation capabilities for students at UZH. This was followed by an introduction from Fabio Falkenstein to the institute and its activities, including the expansion to Geneva, reflecting the evolution of negotiation from traditional hostage situations to business and increasingly geopolitical contexts.

Dr. Marzia Marastoni from the Negotiation Council Geneva then introduced the broader perspective, including the work of the NCG, framing the discussion within a fundamental shift in the global environment. Referring to recent developments and statements such as those made by Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney at the WEF, she highlighted that the current moment represents not a gradual transition, but a rupture. From this perspective, the key shift lies in the move from value-based to interest-based negotiations. Importantly, the Schranner Concept® also challenges a common assumption, which is that negotiation is not about being right or winning arguments, but about achieving outcomes.

Building on this, Matthias Schranner provided practical insights into how negotiation approaches must adapt. He emphasized several core principles, including the importance of not committing to positions that cannot be upheld, avoiding unnecessary "why" questions, and refraining from threats. He also stressed that interest-based negotiation is not inherently better or worse than value-based approaches, but rather a reality that negotiators must learn to navigate. As he pointed out, the broader context cannot be changed, but strategies can.

During the Q&A session, several key insights emerged, reflecting both the changing environment and practical implications for negotiators:

- The world is changing and negotiators need to accept and adapt to this new reality
- Traditional “Win-Win” outcomes are becoming less common in high-pressure environments
- Decision-makers should not negotiate directly at the table, but rely on structured roles
- Walking away is not the end of a negotiation, but often a strategic move
- Negotiation skills can be developed through continuous practice and exposure
- Starting small and building experience over time is key for developing confidence
- Maintaining respect, focus, and professionalism remains essential
- The next generation brings significant value through diversity of perspectives, global thinking, and greater access to information

Overall, the event reinforced the idea that negotiation is evolving from a structured, outcome-focused process into a more dynamic and continuous capability. The shift toward interest-based approaches, combined with increasing complexity and uncertainty, requires not only new strategies, but also a broader mindset, one that future leaders are already beginning to develop.

We would like to thank our partners at the VSUZH Impulsfabrik, University of Zurich, Centre for Crisis Competence (CCC), all speakers, and the participants for their active engagement and valuable contributions.

We look forward to deepening our collaboration with the University of Zurich by organizing Bachelor’s and Master’s courses led by Prof. Uschi Backes-Gellner, and by bringing one of the oldest and most prestigious international negotiation competitions, The Negotiation Challenge, to Zürich in spring 2027.