

Press Release:

World's First Robot Journey: GIGI Makes History with the Tour de Suisse Robotique

With the **Tour de Suisse Robotique**, Frank M. Rinderknecht and the humanoid robot GIGI successfully completed an extraordinary journey through Switzerland in July 2026. The founder and driving force behind the mobility think tank Rinspeed pursued the goal of taking humanoid robotics out of its usual research environment and making it tangible where people encounter it in everyday life.

The **Tour de Suisse Robotique** sends two clear messages:

Innovation needs intrinsic values: Technological progress unfolds its greatest potential only when it is aligned with human values. These include social responsibility, respect, integrity, sustainability, collaboration, and the appreciation of our traditions. Technology should serve humanity – not the other way around.

Capital is the deciding factor between invention and the global market: Switzerland must not only develop its innovations but also finance them, scale them, and turn them into global success stories. When growth capital and investments flow abroad, value creation, jobs, and entrepreneurial futures often follow - a loss that Switzerland cannot afford in the long run.

During his tour in the all-electric Hyundai Inster Vertex, GIGI visited not only renowned Swiss universities (ETH, EPFL, and SUPSI) and innovative companies such as the Zurich flagship store of Künzli SwissSchuh, the data processing company Data Migration International, the world-famous Bürgenstock Resort, the Chocolarium of Maestrani Swiss Chocolates, the traditional Emmental cheese dairy, and the QuantumBasel data center, but also landmarks like Swissminiatur in Melide and the thundering Rhine Falls. A trip on the steam-powered "Unterwalden" on Lake Lucerne was also a must - modernity met tradition, creatively captured by Vear films.

The focus was on personal encounters, spontaneous conversations, and practical demonstrations. The aim was not to showcase cutting-edge technology, but rather to foster direct exchange and explore how people react to and interact with a humanoid robot, and what expectations - including human values - they have of such technology.

This exciting project was scientifically supported by the Institute for Information Systems (IWI) at the ZHAW School of Management and Law, under the direction of Professor Theresa Schmiedel. GIGI had already been continuously developed in the SIRA Lab prior to the tour. The numerous encounters along the way provided valuable insights from real-life situations and complemented existing research findings.

"With this tour, we wanted to not only showcase innovation but also make it tangible and experiential. People's reactions gave us important insights that cannot be gained in a controlled environment," summarized Frank M. Rinderknecht. From stop to stop, GIGI gathered new impressions and learned to improve its social skills in a wide variety of settings. Whether in conversations with students, experts, or interested visitors, every encounter contributed to a

deeper understanding of human-robot interaction. At the same time, it demonstrated the potential that humanoid assistance systems could unleash in everyday life.

The tour also represented an important milestone for the ZHAW research team. The data and experience gained are directly incorporated into the further development of GIGI. Professor Alexandre de Spindler, who is responsible for the robot's development at the SIRA Lab, drew a positive conclusion: "The tour showed us how important real-world application scenarios are for the development of intelligent assistance systems. Only through direct contact with people does it become clear how a humanoid robot can behave in an understandable, helpful, and situationally appropriate way."

The **Tour de Suisse Robotique** thus impressively demonstrated that the future of humanoid robotics is not solely created in the laboratory. Only through exchange with society can the foundation be laid for developing systems that build trust, provide meaningful support, and are oriented toward human needs. The successful journey therefore does not mark the end of a project, but rather the beginning of GIGI's next stage of development.

Partners of the Tour de Suisse Robotique

[Bürgenstock Resort Lake Lucerne - Obbürgen](#)
[Data Migration Services AG - Kreuzlingen](#)
[Emmentaler Schaukäserei AG - Affoltern im Emmental](#)
[EPFL - Lausanne](#)
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[Management Swissminiatur SA - Melide](#)
[Vear Films GmbH - Dietikon](#)
[Werner Mändli AG - Neuhausen am Rheinfall](#)
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Tour de Suisse Robotique Vehicle Specifications

Hyundai Inster Vertex 49kWh 2WD (Full EV)

Exterior Color	Atlas White
Power	84.5 kW / 115 hp (DIN)
Torque	147 Nm
Maximum Range	360 km