



Visit CERN: Mission Impossible?

François Briard

Visitors and Local Engagement, IR-ECO group



Visit CERN

- 2 permanent exhibitions:
 - Microcosm
 - Universe of Particles
- Passport to the Big Bang bicycle trail
- Public events:
 - Globe Conferences
 - Workshops: Girls in ICT, Devox4Kids, ...
 - Researchers Night
 - Open Days
- Guided Tours



Hey wait...
What about this?



Free,
Freely accessible,
Rarely full,
Multilingual !



Conclusion:
NOT impossible!

Guided tours offer

	Individual	Pupils or students	Other groups	Private
For	Individuals and small groups	School and University groups	Non school or University groups	CERN Members of Personnel and their visitors
Group size	Maximum 11 persons	12 to 48 persons incl. teachers and accompanying persons	12 to 48 persons incl. accompanying persons	Depending on visit programme
Duration	2 hours	3 hours	3 hours	Depending on visit programme
When	Monday to Saturday Depending on calendar	Monday to Saturday Morning and afternoon	Monday to Saturday Morning and afternoon	Depending on availability
Booking	15 to 3 days in advance	9 months in advance	3 months in advance	Depending on visit programme

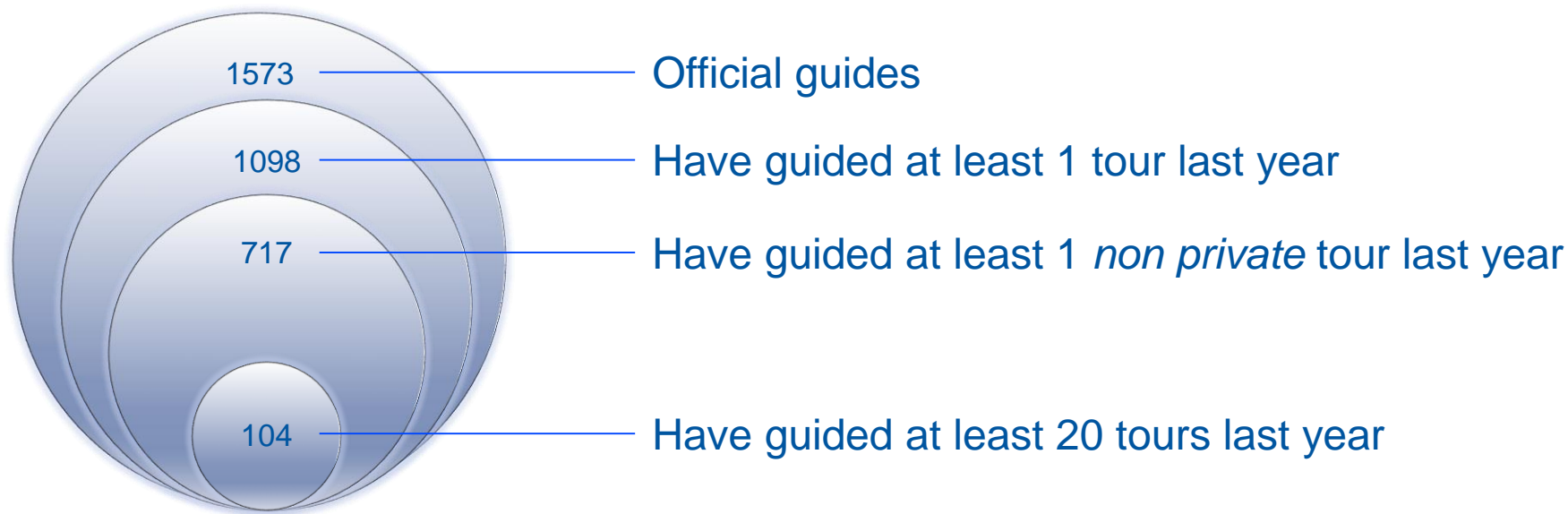
Visit sites

20 itineraries



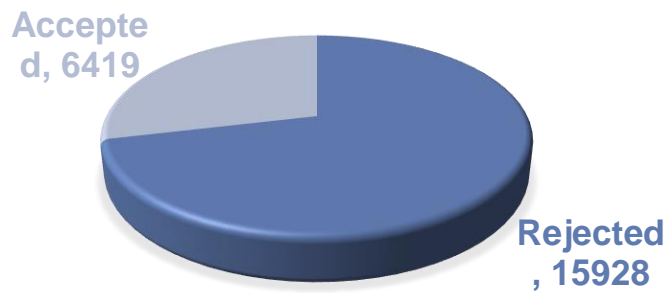
CERN official guides

We have trained 192 new guides in 2018



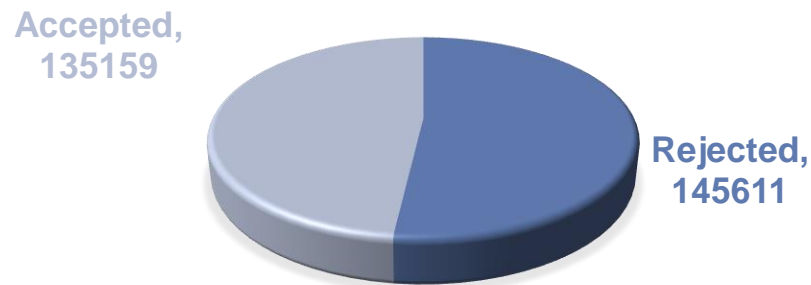
Group tours requests in 2018

REQUESTS



Total: 22 347

VISITORS



Total: 280 770

The *main* constraints

- Visit sites capacity
- Visit sites availability
- Visit sites accessibility
- Requested language
- Guides trainings
- Guides languages
- Guides availability (*budget!*)
- Transport (*budget!*)
- Programme diversity
- Specific requests
- Competing visits services
- Last minute requests



Which criteria are used to accept groups?

- Capacity available
- Country (quota - fairness)
- Language (quota - based on our experience of guides availability)
- Availability of guides
- Background checking (tour operators, paid tours etc)
- Has the group a transport ?
- Group size

Individual tours requests in 2018

- No precise stats as booking form only accessible if there is space available
- 48 tickets / day are gone in seconds every morning at 08:30 a.m.
- We receive hundred of mails complaining about our *buggy* system
- Let's check what YouTube tells us about our booking system...



TripAdvisor



CERN

4.5 (1416 reviews)

#1 of 40 Museums in Geneva

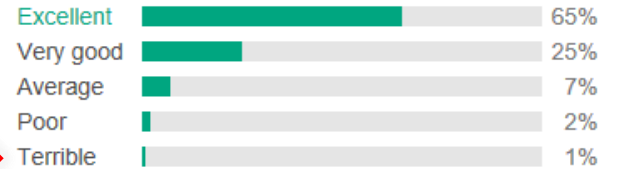
"We would definitely recommend the guided tour if you have time to pre-book, but stop in and visit the **museums** anyway regardless."

"Unlike most **science museums** which usually appeal more to children, this one would seek younger and older adults as its target audience."

[Learn More](#)

Traveler Overview

4.5 (1416 reviews)



Let's have a look at 3 of these 11 reviews →

TripAdvisor



Too difficult to book a tour

Review of CERN



Reviewed April 8, 2016

Melbourne, Australia



Travelling from Australia on relatively short notice, I was hoping to stop in for a tour of CERN, as quantum physics fascinates me. Tried to book online from Australia, but you can only book dates up to two weeks ahead, and all the dates were blanked out, signifying they were booked full. I emailed CERN and they advised I would have to fill a form on the website 3 days before the visit from 8h30 Geneva time, that 12 places will become available. Well, I did that, once I was in Europe, and still, nothing available.

It will be a long time before I get to Europe again, and I am terribly disappointed I missed on visiting CERN. Bookings should be allowed for further in advance than 2 weeks, or perhaps schedule more tours so more people can visit. [More](#)

Date of experience: March 2016



TripAdvisor



Impossible to book

Review of CERN

●○○○○○ Reviewed June 14, 2017

Moscow, Russia

📄 10 👍 45

It is impossible to book this tour! It says that registration starts at 8:30 15 or 3 days in advance...so guess, at 8:31 there are already NO spots available! How is it possible?? There were spots when i started the booking but while i was filling in the registration form they finished! How fast should you be to fill in this form? Really, guys, it seems that only robots can make a booking! My spot has dissapeared while I was filling the form, how come?

Very, very dissapointing! Worst booking experience ever!

Date of experience: June 2017

TripAdvisor



Impossible to me to get an appointment to visitar it

Review of CERN

●○○○○○ Reviewed July 1, 2017

📄23 👍5

Probable they believe very importante people. It was imposible to get an sppoitment to visitar It. The Play "the 15 days before Game". I was very interested to ser It as engineer

Date of experience: June 2017

Bonus: private visits (2500/year)

Principles: use what's available, short term

"Yes, I have seen the form. But I think it would be easier if I explain you what I need as it seems complicated to fill in."

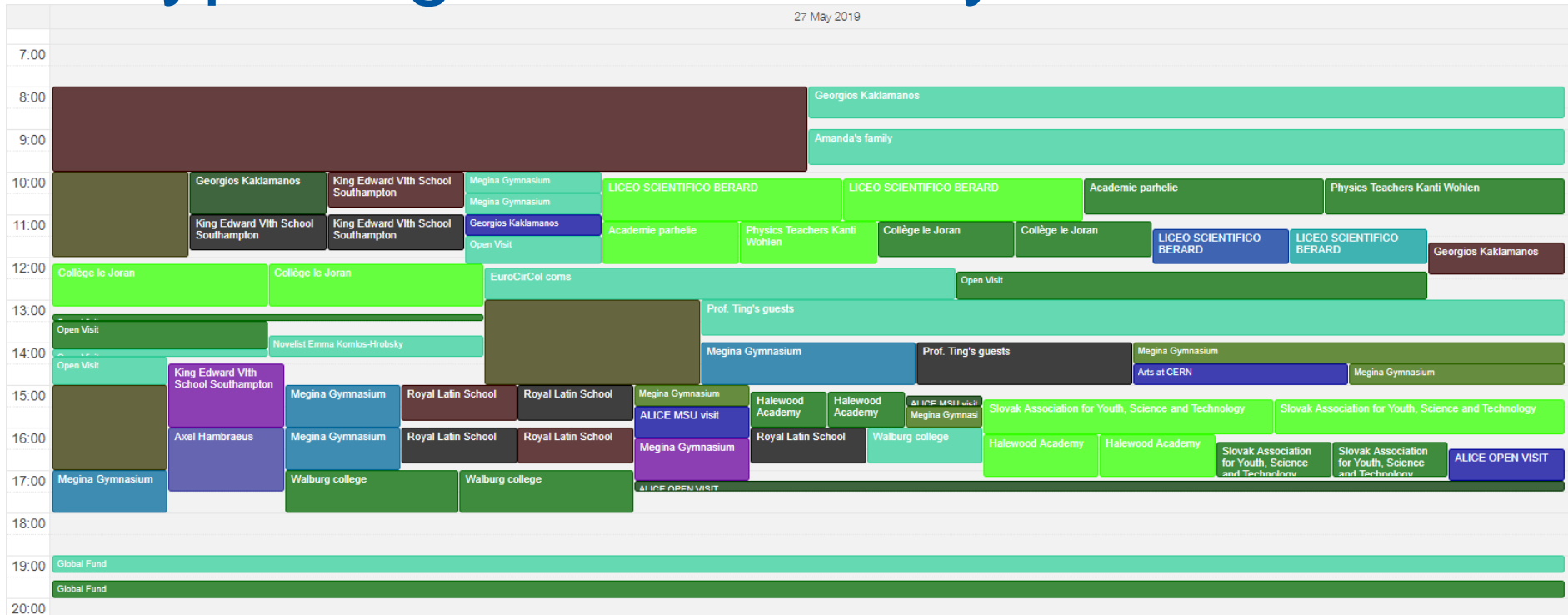
"We have a very important visitor coming to CERN. Can you arrange some tour for us? Underground of course."

"We organize a conference at CIGC and we have announced the CERN tour. The 2'500 attendees are thrilled since they learnt it. How do we proceed from now?"

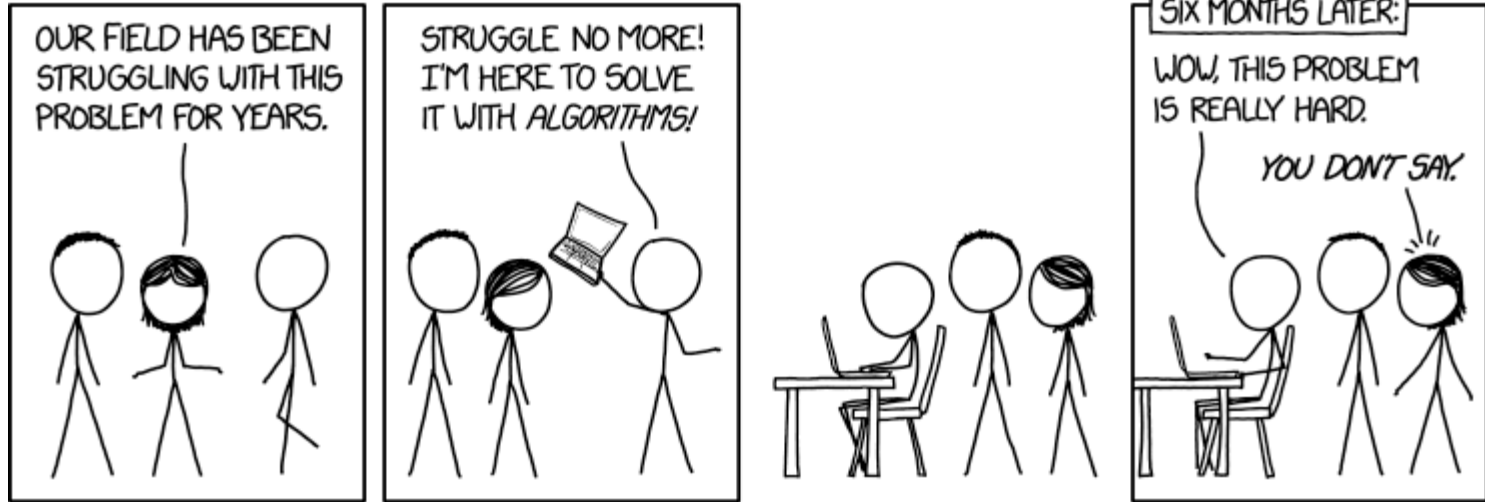
" I have already arranged an ATLAS underground visit, then a Data Centre visit. Can you please add a visit to SC between 14:30 and 14:45? Oh and I have no guide."

A typical guided tour day at CERN

27 May 2019



Solutions?



1. Extend existing sites availability

Pros

- Extend what exists, do not reinvent the wheel

Cons

- Visit sites have operational constraints
- Workers on visit sites do not always want to see more visitors in their work environment
- Some collaborations / Departments want to keep control of their outreach sites
- Adding more tours per days has impact on budgets

2. Develop new visit sites

Pros

- Legacy sites are very interesting for our visitors (SC, LINAC2)
- New projects are interesting too (HL-LHC, CLIC, LINAC4)

Cons

- Developing a new visit site needs resources and they are limited
- Bringing visitors to a working site brings extra safety requirements
- Adding a visit point to future venues is not yet part of our culture

3. Train more (MPe) guides

Pros

- Bigger reserve of guides
- Less problems to find suitable and available guides

Cons

- Training guides needs time and resources
- Having more guides means less tours per guide > less experience
- Heavy programme of work in Departments. Are they ready to share resources?

4. Create predefined visit programmes

E.g.

- Tour A: SC + AVC
- Tour B: Data Centre + AD

Pros

- Simpler administration
- Guarantee of visit programme for visitors

Cons

- Does not cope well with
 - Unexpected operational issues (one site not accessible)
 - Flexibility and last minute or specific requests

5. Improve booking system

Currently

- Students groups can book 9 months in advance
- Other groups can book 3 months in advance
- Group bookings share the same *quota*: used by schools mostly
- Individual tours very limited, opened for booking 15 and 3 days in advance

Proposal

- Differentiated quota for students and other groups
- Same delay for all visits (e.g. 9 months)

Status: awaiting development by FAP-BC

6. Get systematic feedback on visits

Pros

- Might help tailoring the offer
- Identify what expectations and experience are on various offers
- Help to make a better use of your visit points

Cons

- Needs to be developed and followed: planned end of 2019

7. Integrate permanent exhibitions

Pros

- Use what exists
- Positive feedback on our exhibitions from Geneva Tourism
- No transport to be organised

Cons

- Visitors expect to see the *real* CERN
- Exhibitions have limited capacity too

8. Visit virtually

Pros

- No visitors come to CERN...
- 24 / 7 offer
- LHC collaborations have already developed this offer

Cons

- Visitors want to see the *real* CERN
- LHC collaborations have already developed this offer... difficult to integrate

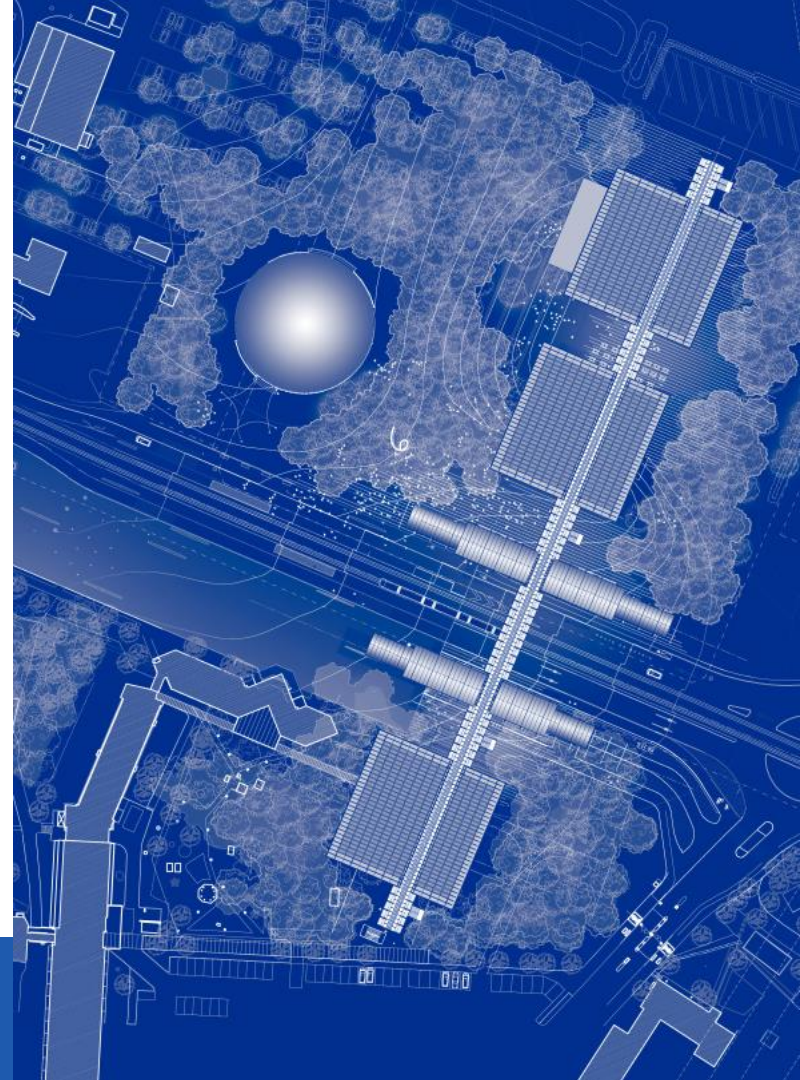
9. Science Gateway

Pros

- Expand the exhibition / labs / show offer

Cons

- Does not extend guided tour offer
- Will be there in 2022 at best



Conclusion

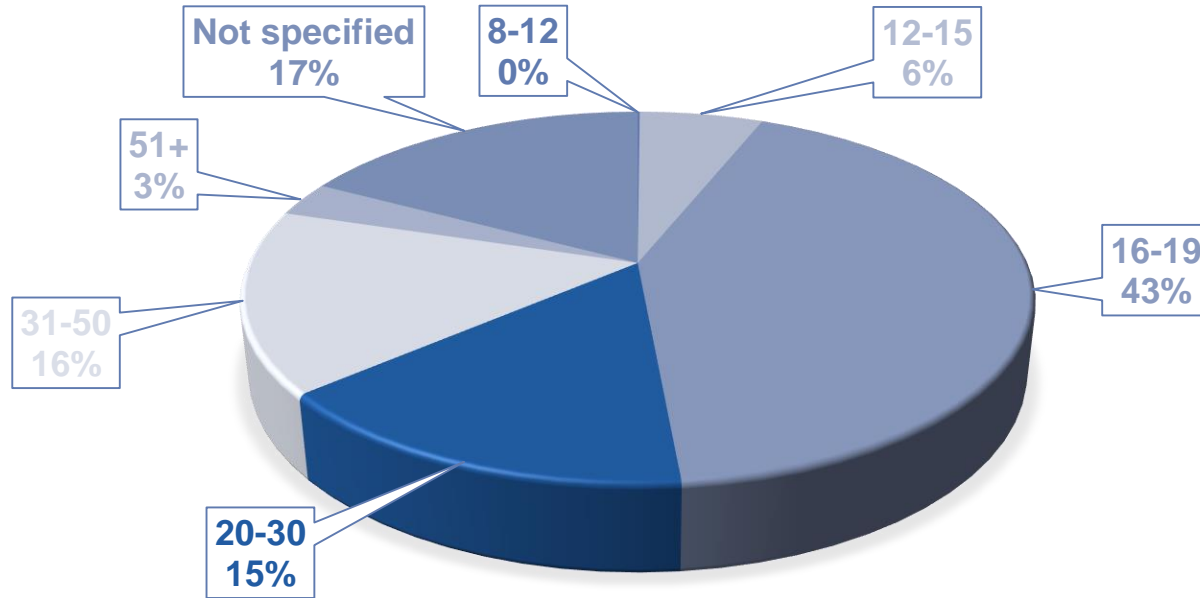
It is not impossible to visit CERN! It is very difficult to get a guided tour...

- Consider our permanent exhibitions offer
- Visit virtually
- Increase your chances to get a guided tour:
 - Make a group of 12
 - Organize your own transport
 - Be flexible for your visit programme
 - Find your guides
- Wait for Science Gateway

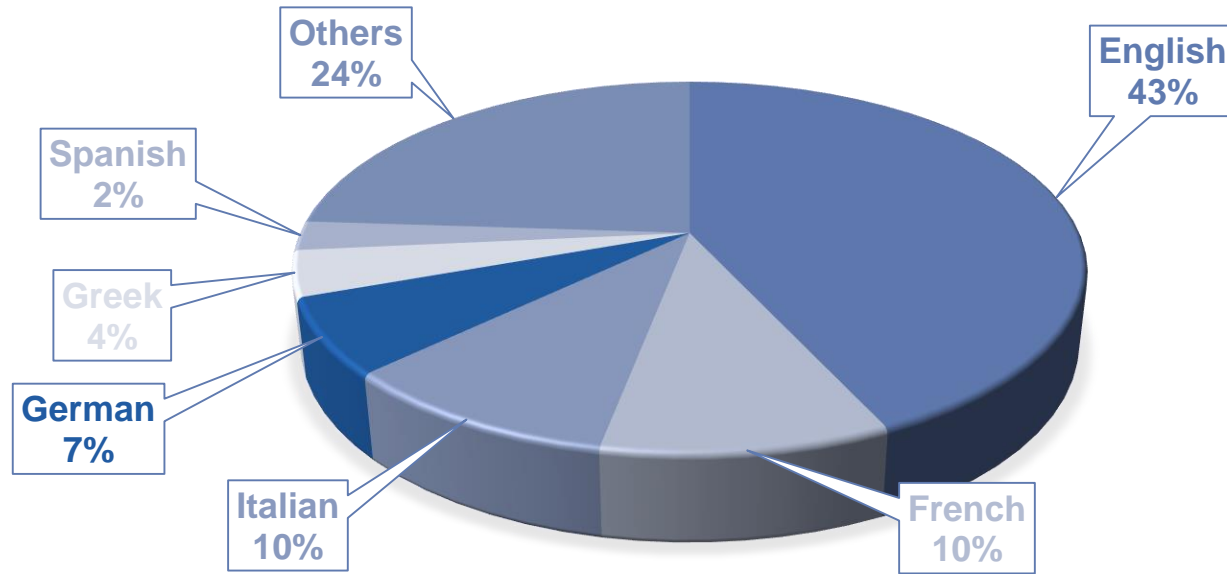
- Become a CERN guide!

Additional slides

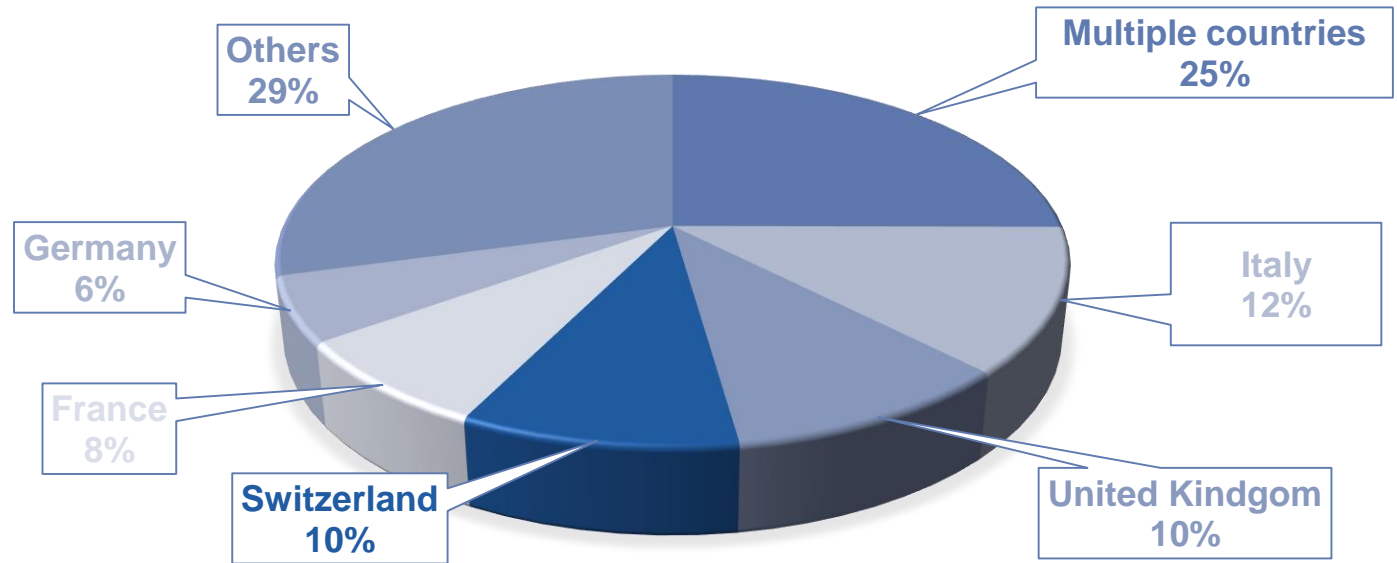
2018 tours by average age



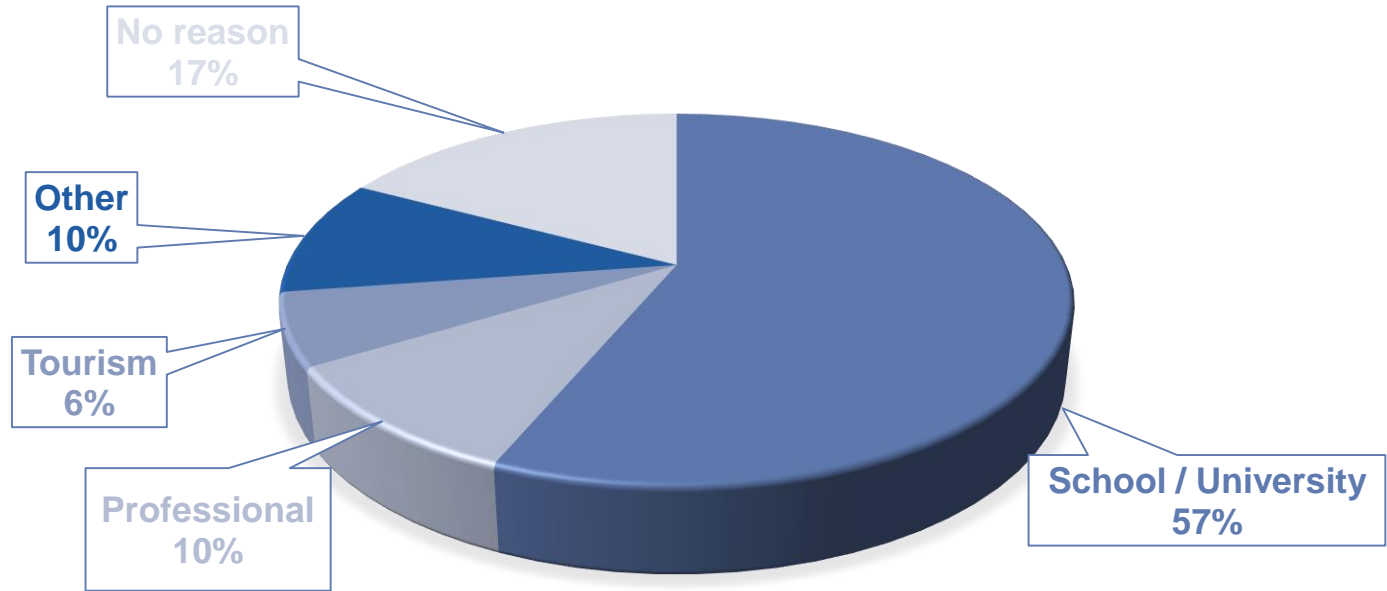
2018 tours by language



2018 tours by country



2018 tours by reason





www.cern.ch