

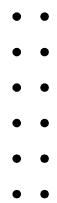
# Careers and attractiveness / retention of talent at CERN



CSAIO26@CERN  
4 – 5 September 2025  
S. Evrard





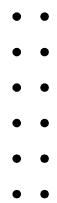


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# CERN objectives



- S II 1.03  
Competence, integrity and fitness
- S II 1.04  
Fair distribution



- The Director-General shall take steps to ensure that the members of the personnel appointed are of the **highest competence and integrity** and fit to perform the functions entrusted to them.
- At the time of appointment of members of the personnel and subject to the provisions of Article S II 1.03 and to the relevant conditions relating to Associate Membership, the Director-General shall strive to ensure as **fair a distribution** as possible of **nationals of the Member and Associate Member States** and of **genders**

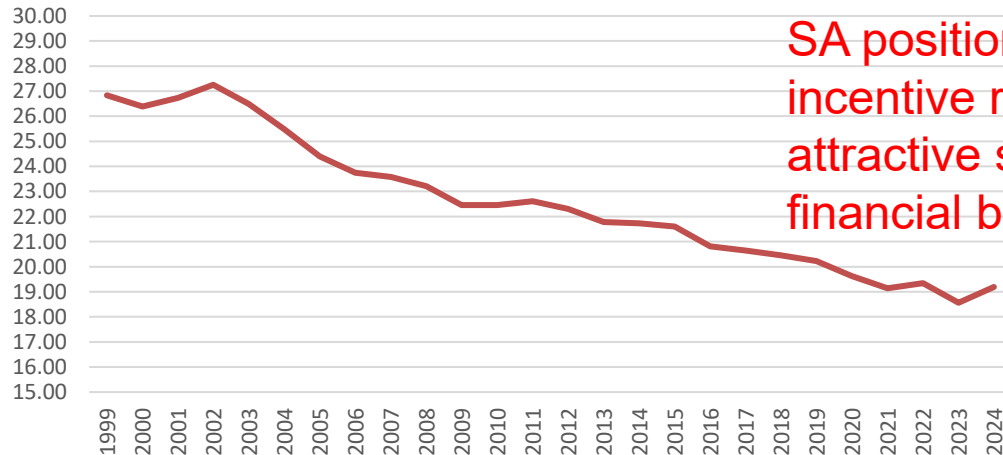


# Member & Associated Member state fair distribution

Country	2020 Return	2021 Return	2022 Return	2023 Return	2024 Return
AT	0.99	0.97	0.98	1.03	0.99
BE	1.44	1.38	1.39	1.39	1.32
BG	1.78	1.66	1.60	1.42	1.43
BR					0.00
CH	2.02	2.11	2.00	2.02	2.08
CY	0.91	0.90	0.88	0.86	1.26
CZ	0.35	0.37	0.41	0.33	0.45
DE	0.33	0.31	0.31	0.30	0.30
DK	0.40	0.36	0.34	0.34	0.33
EE		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.27
ES	0.93	0.88	0.93	0.99	1.04
FI	0.82	0.89	0.84	0.77	0.76
FR	2.71	2.70	2.66	2.71	2.72
GB	0.50	0.51	0.53	0.47	0.49
GR	1.92	2.09	2.36	2.56	2.61
HR	0.00	0.45	0.91	0.92	0.94
HU	0.97	0.95	0.85	0.78	0.67
IL	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.03
IN	0.09	0.14	0.19	0.30	0.32
IT	1.19	1.18	1.20	1.25	1.28
LT	0.91	0.90	0.91	1.38	1.40
LV		0.00	0.00	1.77	1.32
NL	0.53	0.51	0.50	0.48	0.48
NO	0.30	0.30	0.22	0.25	0.30
PK	0.48	0.47	0.98	1.13	1.16
PL	1.13	1.16	1.19	1.18	1.19
PT	1.93	2.08	2.00	2.11	2.25
RO	0.67	0.76	0.75	0.72	0.69
RS	0.83	0.94	0.91	0.72	0.82
SE	0.31	0.37	0.36	0.39	0.36
SI	0.43	0.32	0.31	0.21	0.20
SK	0.96	1.04	1.03	1.01	1.21
TR	0.16	0.17	0.46	0.68	0.49
UA	0.91	1.34	1.36	0.92	1.79
Total UR	12	13	11	11	13

- HCPBMS (High Contributing Poorly Balanced Member States)
  - DE – 20% budget vs 6% staff (30% return)
  - GB – 15% budget vs 7% staff
  - NL – 5% budget vs 2% staff
  - NO+SE+DK – 6% budget vs 2% staff
- These 6 countries pay almost half CERN budget and are all very low on personnel returns.
- SA @ TREF 2020: this imbalance has continued to grow over the past 20 years.

Evolution of Panel CZ,DE,DK,GB,NL,NO,SE,SK (% of CERN staff)



SA position: The best incentive remains attractive salaries and financial benefits.



# Member & Associated Member state fair distribution

Several of the poorly balanced Member States have openly declared in the Finance Committee and the Council that their support for the FCC and CERN's future more generally might be contingent upon ***an improvement in their personnel returns*** – CERN DG

- New HR hiring strategy: Conscious Hiring

- The hiring strategy is:

- A “Conscious Hiring” approach
    - Ensuring opportunities for candidates in all our Member States (MS)
    - ensure Poorly Balanced MS amongst finalists
    - max 50% candidates invited from Overrepresented MS
    - Creating opportunities & increasing possibilities for diversity

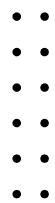
- The hiring strategy is not:

- Quotas
    - Positive/negative discrimination
    - Hiring restrictions/bans

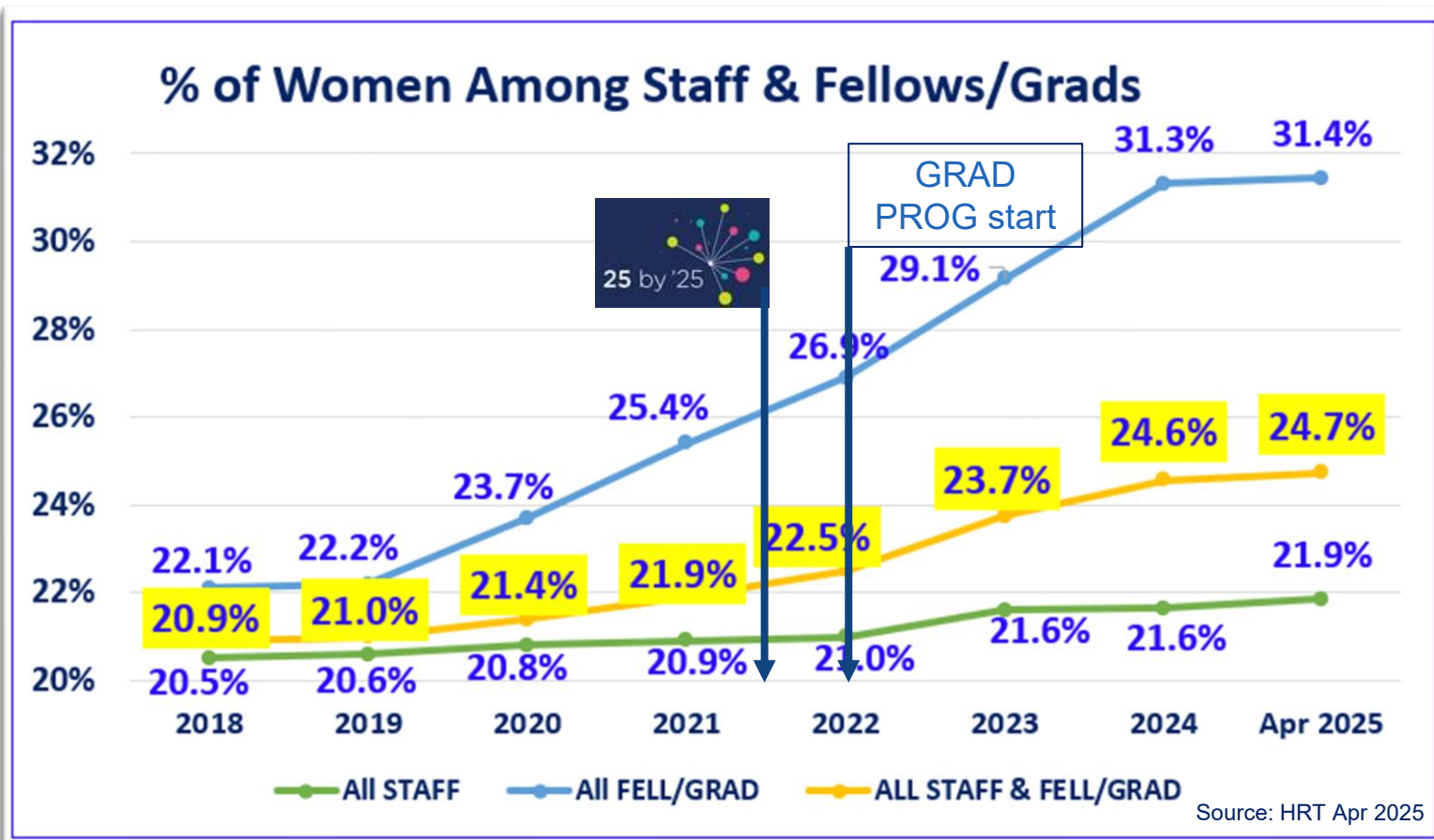
## SA position:

- No quota – no bashing of any MS
- Excellence must remain the key criteria





# Gender fair distribution





# Survey Results - Underrepresented Countries – Attractiveness of CERN



## Top 3 Factors why nationals from underrepresented countries consider applying for a job abroad

### Germany

1. Duration of employment contract
2. Career growth and continuing training opportunities
3. Salary and other financial benefits

### UK

1. Salary and other financial benefits
2. Work-Life balance
3. Career growth and continuing training opportunities

### Norway

1. Career growth and continuing training opportunities
2. Culture and values/reputation of the organization
3. Work-Life balance

### Denmark

1. Salary and other financial benefits
2. Work-Life balance
3. Career growth and continuing training opportunities

### Sweden

1. Salary and other financial benefits
2. Work-Life balance
3. Career growth and continuing training opportunities

### The Netherlands

1. Salary and other financial benefits
2. Career growth and continuing training opportunities
3. Culture and values/reputation of the organization

### Romania

1. Salary and other financial benefits
2. Career growth and continuing training opportunities
3. Culture and values/reputation of the organization

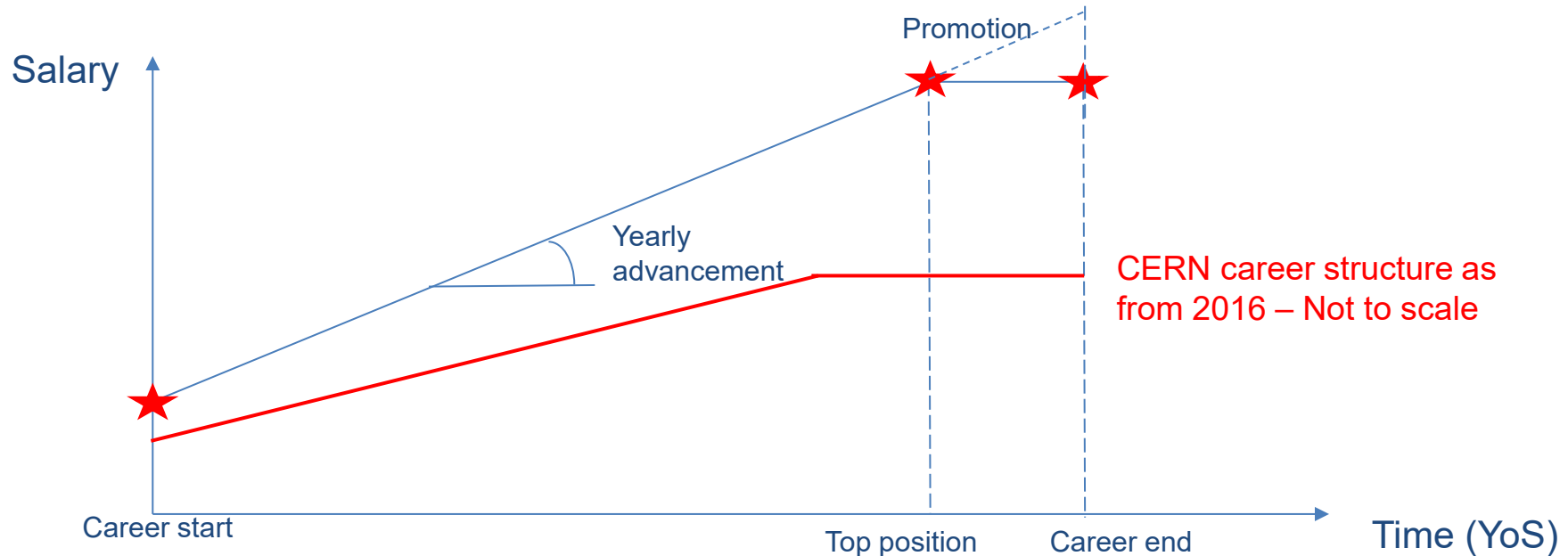
### Czech Republic

1. Salary and other financial benefits
2. Career growth and continuing training opportunities
3. Culture and values/reputation of the organization



# Careers at CERN

- **Career = entry point + advancement + promotions**









# Advancement and MERIT recognition

## Yearly Performance Reward



- **Steps are replaced with**

- a salary increase, expressed as a percentage of the midpoint, AND
- a Performance Payment, in case of strong and outstanding performance.

Performance Qualification		Insufficient	Fair	Strong	Outstanding
Suggested distribution range		0-1%	6-12%	57-63%	27-33%
BOTH	Salary increase (% of midpoint salary)	-	0.35 %	1.35 %	2.35%
	Performance Payment (% of midpoint salary)	-	-	1.15 %	2.15%



Quickly replaced  
by Budget ceiling

← Salary  
increase

← Annual  
lump-sum  
Payment  
(non-  
recurrent)





# Attractiveness/Retention of talents

- Unique Organization
- Organization culture and mission
- Very good reputation as international research organization
- Best place to be in the field of particle physics
- Salary and other financial benefits
- Working atmosphere/conditions
- Interesting projects, very interdisciplinary
- Attractive Location
- International Working environment
- Diversity – culturally and also career paths and experience
- High standard of living/quality of life
- Great potential for development – both on professional level and personally
- Inspiring workplace
- Good hands-on experience, especially for students and graduates
- Supporting fundamental science research is thrilling and rewarding

Survey of nationals from underrepresented countries

- Opportunity to establish valuable networks
- CERN infrastructure
- Scientific independence/freedom of work design
- Interesting scientific atmosphere & strong visitor program
- Fun at work
- Great coworkers and team spirit
- SA clubs/activities outside of work (Life at CERN)
- SA Kindergarten
- CERN tech. to be applied in other areas, e.g. in cancer therapy or in space
- Feeling of belonging to a big community
- Knowledge, skills and opportunities accelerator

## Retention

- not problematic at CERN, less than 2% of resignation per year (Family/social/job connected, mutual agreements)
- However upward trend in recent years



## Financial and social conditions

- Review of financial conditions incl. salary in order to stay competitive - Competition is huge.
- Better advertisement of existing benefits such as installation indemnity, family allowance, Schoolfees, pension and health insurance package.
- Aspects like family support, parental leave etc. are very important and should be improved.

## Career

- Career evolution and training opportunities
- Motivation and engagement at an age >55
- Internal/external (detachment) mobility

## Life at CERN

- More support in onboarding/relocation and local integration (housing).
- Better support when it comes to removal/end of contract.
- Improve mental health support

## Working conditions

- Increase percentage of teleworking & flexibility in working hours.
- Too High-performance pressure.
- Too stiff structures/too much bureaucracy and hierarchies - Modernization of culture is needed
- Workload unevenly distributed and often too heavy.

## Contract Policy

- Increase job security (Indefinite contract awarded more quickly).
- At an age >35, the question arises as to whether you should still apply for a temporary staff position
- High turnover → Social environment changes very often. Establishing a social network can be challenging.
- Too specialised jobs - difficult to reposition oneself in the industry afterwards.
- No longer cutting edge technology for engineers and technicians.

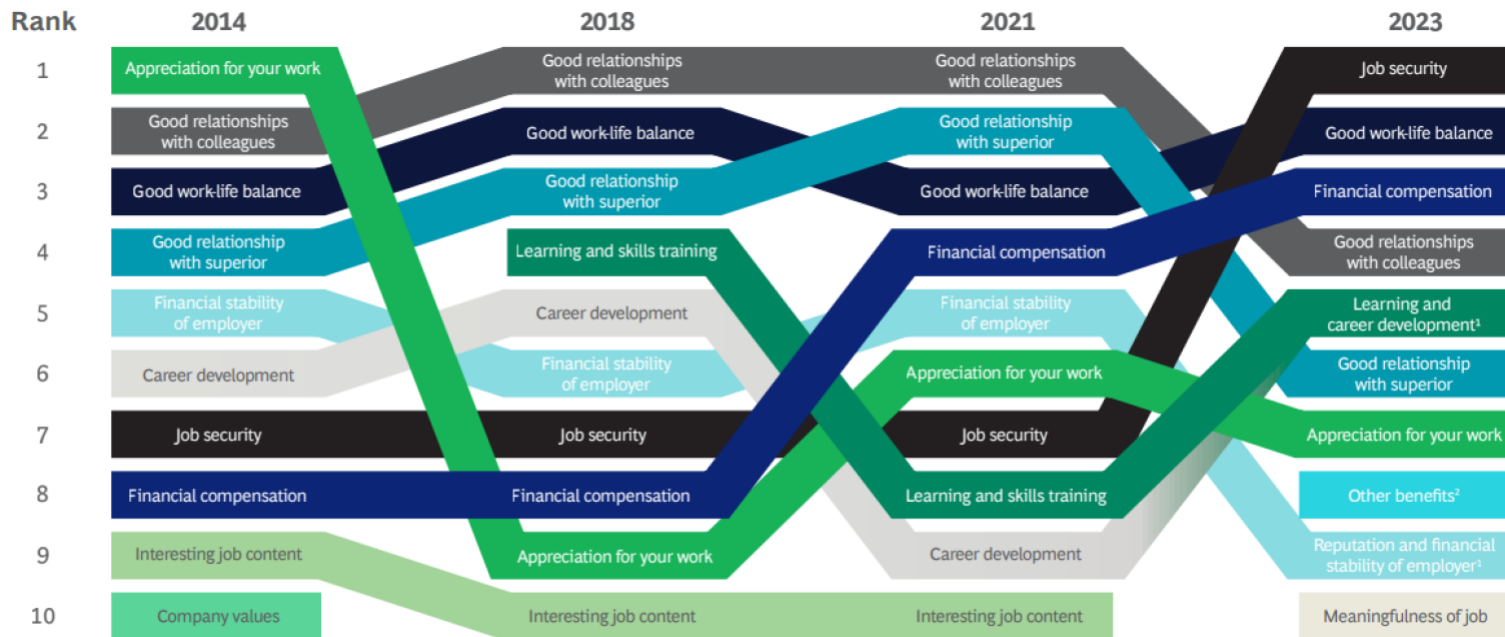


Room for improvement



# Attractiveness/Retention of talents

Job seeker preferences are evolving



Source: BCG/The Network/The Stepstone Group proprietary web survey (conducted Q4 2023) and analysis.



# CERN Staff Association Proposals at TREF (Tripartite Forum)



## MS & AMS Personnel Liaison Officers

- Increase CERN's visibility across all its activities and profiles
- Facilitate the contact between CERN & the recruitment channels in each MS & AMS
- Identify the right hiring channels depending on the technical field and profile (administrative, technical, physicist or engineer)



## Hiring process

- Develop the network of members of personnel acting as ambassadors, going back to their home country schools, universities and job fairs
- 'Hiring pipeline' (Graduates becoming staff) competes with core mission of the program (training)
- Improving direct staff hiring, using the lesson learned with Graduates (and beyond)
- Monitor more closely the average age of recruitment



## Staff programme

- Reintroduce hiring of Staff with less than 5 years of working experience (as in 1995-2000)
- New people coming directly from industry
- Tasks and responsibilities given to a staff are different than ones given to a Graduate
- Motivation is different as staff can be interested to build its future at CERN.
- Demographics change: many retirements to come
- Increase the number of staff
- Earlier recruitments to allow an efficient succession planning which is now vital through early hiring allowing effective recovery and knowledge transfer



## CERN attractiveness

**5YR to come**

- Financial conditions
- Social conditions
- Dual career
- Integration in the local area:
- French courses for all LDs starting at CERN and spouses/partners
- Concierge service to assist with personal administrative procedures

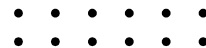
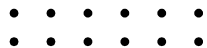


# Outcome

- CERN faces enormous challenges in meeting its objectives in terms of the balanced distribution of its personnel (nationalities/gender).
  - CERN Staff Association already raised the red flag in 2020 @ TREF.
  - Two management initiatives awaiting conclusive results
- Attractiveness and retention best incentives (SA opinion):
  - Competitive salaries and financial benefits
  - Career growth and continuing training opportunities (<> drastic reform of 2016)
  - Contract policy
  - Work-Life balance
- Satisfactory Attractiveness/Retention results from a multifaceted competitive package that also includes:
  - Working conditions
  - Life at CERN

**5 Yearly Review 2027**  
The 2027 five-yearly review, which will begin in October 2025, will be a unique opportunity to address these issues and improve the situation.





THANKS!  
Do you have any questions?

