

Expatriate Insider 2021 Survey: The Future of Working Abroad

French expats talk about their career abroad and how they envision their future working life.

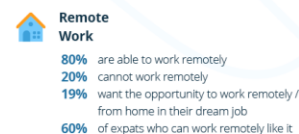
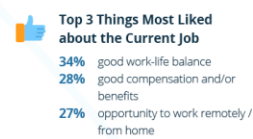
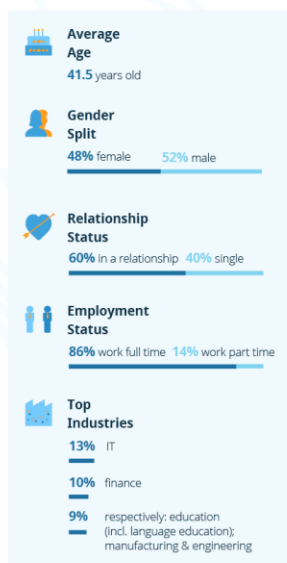
- More than three-quarters of French expats working abroad (76%) hold a postgraduate / master's degree or a PhD, compared to 55% globally.
- French expats are very satisfied with their career opportunities and the state of the local economy in their host countries.
- While a good compensation tops the list of aspects most important in their dream job, French expats also want a good work-life balance and creative/interesting tasks.

Munich, 14 September 2021 — Why do French nationals move abroad? According to the *Expatriate Insider 2021* survey by InterNations, 56% of French expats working abroad name their career as the most important reason for relocating to another country, nine percentage points more than the global average (47%). Most of these French expats found a job on their own (20%), followed by 16% who were sent by their employer, and 15% being recruited internationally. Another 5% moved abroad to start their own business, which is more than double the global average (2%).

The key focus of this year's *Expatriate Insider* survey, conducted by [InterNations](https://www.internations.org), the world's largest expat community with more than 4 million members, is the future of working abroad. Expats all around the world shared what it is really like to work abroad and described their working conditions. They also provided insights into how new working arrangements (e.g., remote work) are changing their working life and what they would like to see in the future.

French Expats

The Future of Working Abroad



* 20% found a job on their own, 16% were sent by their employer, 15% were recruited internationally, 5% to start their own business
** Note: This includes working expats and expats looking for a job.

The Typical French Expat Working Abroad

French nationals working abroad share some basic demographic data with working expats globally. Genders are split fairly evenly between female (48%) and male (52%), which is similar to the global average (46% female and 53% male). Most of them (60%) are in a committed relationship (vs. 61% globally), and 86% work full time (vs. 82% globally). However, French expats working abroad are slightly younger than the global average (41.5 years old vs. 43.1 years globally).

As far as their education is concerned, they differ quite significantly from working expats globally. Nearly two in three (65%) hold a postgraduate or master's degree, which is 18 percentage points more than the global average (47%). Another 11% hold a PhD, compared to 8% globally.

High Incomes despite Average Positions

Perhaps due in part to their excellent level of education, French nationals working abroad also earn more than the typical working expat. Close to two in four (38%) have a gross yearly income of 50,000 to 100,000 USD per year, a share which is five percentage points higher than the global average (33%). Another 28% earn more than 100,000 USD per year (vs. 23% globally). On the other hand, just 35% earn 50,000 USD or less per year (vs. 44% globally).

The most common field of work among French expats is IT (13%), followed by finance (10%), manufacturing & engineering, and (language) education (9% each for the latter two). Interestingly, despite their above-average level of education and incomes, French expats are not so different when it comes to their employment situation: close to one-third work in a senior / specialist position (32%), which is just two percentage points above the global average (30%). Another 13% are top managers / executives (vs. 13% globally), and 18% work in lower / middle management (vs. 17% globally).

A Great Economy and Local Career Opportunities Abroad

Exactly four in five French expats (80%) are satisfied with their job in general (vs. 73% globally). They are particularly satisfied with the local career opportunities (57% vs. 49% globally) and the state of the local economy (69% vs. 65% globally) in their current country of residence. These high levels of satisfaction are probably related to the most common destinations French expats move to: Switzerland, Germany, the United States, and the Netherlands. Among expats, these countries rank among the top 10 worldwide for local career opportunities (USA), the state of the local economy (Switzerland, the Netherlands), or even both (Germany).

Expats Enjoy the Good Compensation, Work-Life Balance, and Remote Work

When asked what they like best about their current jobs, French expats most frequently mention a good work-life balance (34%). In fact, 72% rate their work-life balance positively, compared to 68% globally. Interestingly, none of the four countries of residence that are most common among French respondents ranks particularly well for this factor. Expats living in the USA even vote the country 54th out of 59 countries for their (dis)satisfaction with their work-life balance.

Other than their work-life balance, French expats also appreciate the good compensation and/or good benefits (28%) and the opportunity to work remotely (27%) about their current job. Exactly four in five (80%) are able to work remotely, and 60% of them actually like doing so. The latter is, however, five percentage points below the global average (65%).

COVID-19 has led to changes regarding the remote-work policies for 57% of French expats: more than three in ten (32%) are now able to work remotely more often than before (vs. 28% globally), and 25% say that remote work was newly introduced and is here to stay (vs. 20% globally). When asked what would be most important to them in an ideal work environment, French expats do not mention the opportunity to work remotely / from home among the top 5 aspects, though: just 19% find this important, compared to 22% globally.

A Good Compensation Is Great — But It Is Not Everything

When French expats imagine their dream job, 47% cite a good compensation and/or good benefits as particularly important. While this is the most frequently mentioned aspect, it is still less important to them than to the global average, where 54% name this factor. Also, the second-most mentioned aspect, a good work-life balance, is not as relevant to French expats (45%) as to expats worldwide (49%).

Next on the list of priorities are creative/interesting tasks, which 34% of French expats see as an important aspect of their dream job — globally, just 29% of expats find this important. What is more, an above-average share of French expats consider general career development (22% vs. 20% globally), the corporate culture/values (18% vs. 13% globally), and an employer’s mission/vision (13% vs. 10% globally) to be important.

“While a good compensation definitely matters to French expats, it is not everything they look for in a job,” says Malte Zeeck, InterNations Founder and Co-CEO. “Looking at the other aspects French expats consider important in a dream job, many of them are related to the concept of New Work. This describes a new way of working in the global and digital age, where factors like autonomy, freedom, creativity, personal development, and self-fulfillment play an important role.”

Country Ranking: The Importance of New Work in the Local Business Culture

1 USA	20 Greece	39 Brazil
2 UAE	21 Czechia	40 Philippines
3 Finland	22 Poland	41 Indonesia
4 Estonia	23 Switzerland	42 Chile
5 Netherlands	24 Luxembourg	43 Romania
6 Bahrain	25 Malta	44 Thailand
7 Australia	26 Kenya	45 Cyprus
8 Canada	27 Taiwan	46 China
9 New Zealand	28 Portugal	47 France
10 Sweden	29 Hungary	48 Spain
11 Ireland	30 Colombia	49 Italy
12 Norway	31 Russia	50 Kuwait
13 Denmark	32 South Africa	51 India
14 Singapore	33 Mexico	52 Turkey
15 United Kingdom	34 Austria	53 South Korea
16 Malaysia	35 Germany	54 Egypt
17 Oman	36 Vietnam	55 Japan
18 Qatar	37 Hong Kong	
19 Saudi Arabia	38 Belgium	

French Expats Live in Countries with a Modern Approach to Work

The four most common destinations for French nationals working abroad all rank ahead of France when it comes to expats comparing the importance of New Work in the local business culture. The USA (1st) and the Netherlands (5th) even rank in the top 10 countries worldwide, followed by Switzerland in 23rd place out of 55 countries. Germany just lands in 35th place, but it is still ahead of France (47th), which can be found among the bottom 10 destinations worldwide. For comparison: While 74% of expats in the USA say that New Work plays an important role in the local business culture, just 45% of expats in France agree.

About the Future of Working Abroad Report

This report is based on data from the *Expat Insider 2021* survey by InterNations. In total, 12,420 expats participated; the general *Expat Insider* report and an overall country ranking were published in May 2021. However, the report “The Future of Working Abroad” uses mainly data sets from expats currently doing any kind of paid work: 8,313 survey respondents — living in 175 destinations and representing 166 nationalities — match this definition of working expats.

In the *Expat Insider 2021* questionnaire, all respondents, regardless of employment status, were asked to provide information about themselves and to rate various aspects of life abroad on a scale of one to seven. The rating process emphasized their personal satisfaction with these factors; the average ratings of six such factors were bundled into three subcategories, and their mean values were used to draw up a topical index for working abroad. The Working Abroad Index is not only part of the overall country ranking, but it also gets referenced in this report. In 2021, the top 5 destinations for working abroad — out of 59 countries in this index — are Taiwan, New Zealand, Czechia, China, and Denmark.

Moreover, working expats answered some additional questions to describe their working life. Some of these questions explore how COVID-19 has been transforming the workplace and how expats envision their ideal work environment. Lastly, the survey included two more rating questions for working expats. They cover the topic of New Work, the new way of working in the global and digital age. Participants were asked to rate how important this concept is in the business culture of their host country and how the latter compares to their home country. The country averages from the first question were used to compare the importance of New Work in various expat destinations.

For a country to be featured in the New Work ranking, a sample size of at least 50 respondents was necessary. This requirement was met by 55 destinations. New Work is extremely important in the business culture of the USA, the UAE, Finland, Estonia, and the Netherlands.

About InterNations

With around 4.2 million members in 420 cities around the world, [InterNations](https://www.internations.org) is the largest global community and a source of information for people who live and work abroad. InterNations offers global and local networking and socializing, both online and face to face. At around 6,000 events and activities per month, expatriates have the opportunity to meet other global minds. Online services include discussion forums and helpful articles with personal expat experiences, tips, and information about life abroad. Membership is by approval only to ensure we remain a community of trust. InterNations is part of the NEW WORK SE, a group of brands that offer products and services for a better working life.

Find more information about InterNations on our [press page](#), in our [company blog](#), or in our [magazine](#).

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