

Geneva and science: CERN and research

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International Geneva also has a scientific dimension, of which CERN is the most visible expression. Founded in 1954 by twelve European states, the European Organization for Nuclear Research established its laboratory at Meyrin, straddling the Franco-Swiss border.¹ It has become the largest particle physics laboratory in the world, employing thousands of people and hosting thousands of visiting scientists. The *World Wide Web* was conceived there at the end of the 1980s.²

The presence of CERN has considerable economic and technological effects for the region: purchases from businesses, skilled jobs, spin-off companies and attractiveness for researchers and students. It also carries symbolic weight: Geneva houses an institution where scientists from every country cooperate, including countries in conflict with one another, which strengthens the city's image as a place of cooperation.

For the financial centre, the scientific dimension of International Geneva is a pool of expertise and a source of innovation, particularly in information and data technologies. It also contributes to the quality of Geneva's higher education, whose University and universities of applied sciences train the senior staff of the financial centre.

1 Notes

1. CERN, "Les dates clés – 1954": official foundation on 29 September 1954 after ratification of the Convention (drawn up in July 1953) by the twelve founding states; Meyrin site chosen in October 1952 and confirmed by cantonal referendum in June 1953. ↩

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2. Tim Berners-Lee, Information Management: A Proposal, CERN, March 1989 (w3.org): “This proposal concerns the management of general information about accelerators and experiments at CERN”; “The only name I had for it at this time was ‘Mesh’ — I decided on ‘World Wide Web’ when writing the code in 1990”. ↩

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