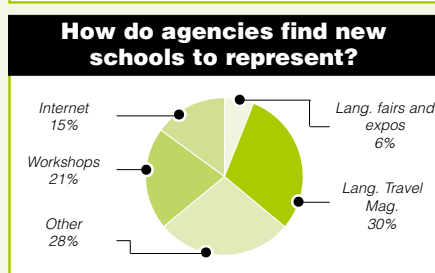
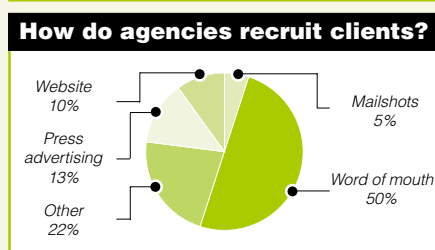
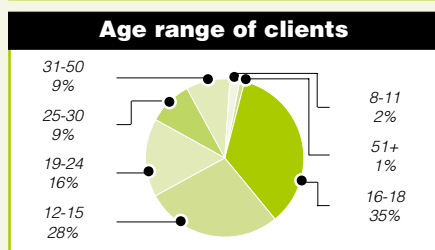
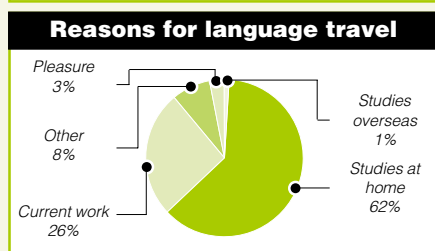
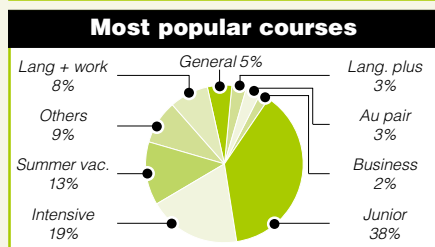
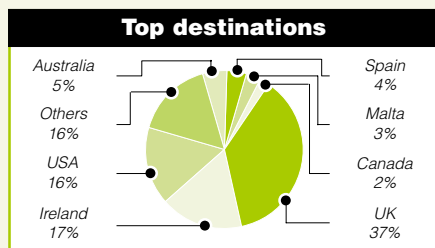


# France slows down

Growth in France's language travel market slowed down in 2001, although most agents remain positive about the market's future potential.



- ### Key points
- Total students placed in 2001 by the nine agencies that took part in our survey was 3,905
  - Individual agencies placed between 40 and 1,200 students on language courses per year
  - Average growth of combined agency business in 2001 was 8.8 per cent
  - Average length of stay for French students was 4.1 weeks
  - Commission rates ranged from 15 to 20 per cent, averaging out at 19.3 per cent
  - 45 per cent of French students studied overseas in July and a further 21 per cent in August
  - 69 per cent of French students stayed with host families
  - Six agents charged a handling fee of between €40 (US\$35) and €95 (US\$84)
  - The number of countries represented by agencies ranged from four to 32
  - French agents found around 30 per cent of new schools in *Language Travel Magazine*

### Market growth

After regaining momentum in 2000, with growth averaging about 12 per cent (see *Language Travel Magazine*, June 2001, pages 18-19), 2001 proved to be a slightly slower year for the nine French language travel agencies that took part in our survey. Although 78 per cent of respondents recorded a growth in student bookings of between 10 and 30 per cent, one agent reported a decrease in student numbers of 50 per cent, which pulled down the overall average growth rate for the year to just under nine per cent.

### Student trends

The French market is generally characterised by a young clientele. Sixty-five per cent of agency clients were under the age of 18 in this year's survey. As a result, junior courses were the most popular among French students, accounting for 38 per cent of bookings. Yet according to two of our respondents, the 19-to-24 year old age band holds the most potential for future growth, because of the need for good English skills for work.

### Language and destination trends

English language courses accounted for around 80 per cent of student bookings, while Spanish made up a further nine per cent and German seven per cent. The UK remained the number-one choice among French students, but its lead has eroded from 53 per cent in last year's survey to 37 per cent this year, with Australia coming in this year at fourth place. According to agents, the USA has been losing share of the French market since the Sep-

tember 11 attacks last year, with more students now favouring the UK and Ireland. Three agents also mentioned a trend towards Australia.

### Agent role

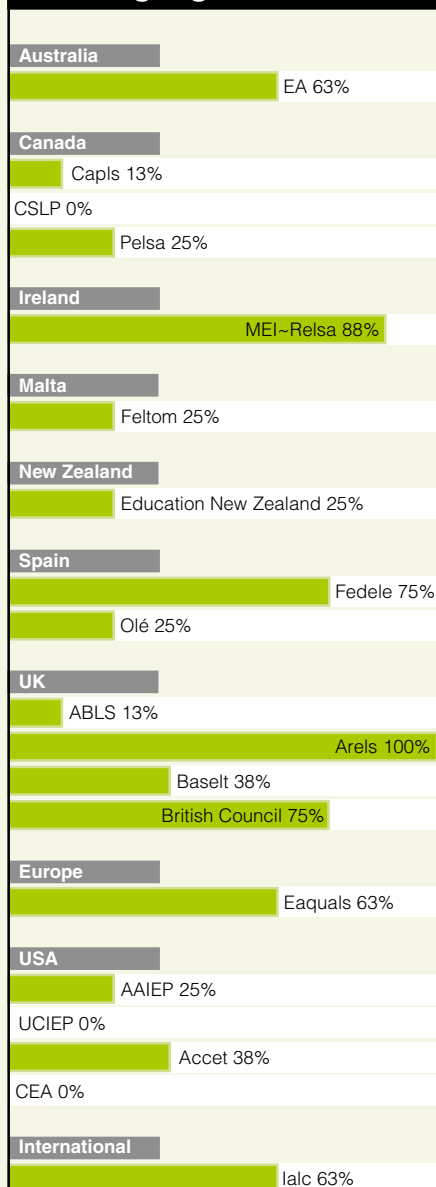
Word-of-mouth recommendation accounted for about half of all agency clients, while press advertising brought in 13 per cent, followed by agency websites, which accounted for 10 per cent. Agents estimated that an average of 79 per cent of all clients who consulted an agent had an idea of the country in which they wanted to study, 41 per cent had selected a city and eight per cent knew the name of the school. After consultation with the agent, 44 per cent changed their mind about the country, 58 per cent changed cities, and 75 per cent decided on another school.

### Forecast for 2002

After a relatively quiet year in 2001, most agents are confident that business will pick up again this year, with about half of our respondents forecasting an increase in bookings of between 10 and 20 per cent for 2002.

- ### Economic overview
- France's economy slowed in 2001 with annual average GDP growth at 2%, and the year-on-year GDP growth for 2001 settling at just 0.9 per cent.
  - In July 2001, France's unemployment rate rose to 8.9%, experiencing its third monthly increase in a row, after a two-decade low of 8.7% for most of the year.
  - Despite the economic slowdown, household consumption grew in 2001 with purchasing power rising by 4%.
  - The outlook for 2002 is positive with household consumption levels expected to rise at similar levels as 2001, underpinned by rises in income towards the end of last year. The increase in the unemployment rate is forecast to slow and inflation is forecast to be 1.3% in June 2002.
- Sources: Insee

## Percentage of agents who recognised each of the following organisations



Thank you to the following agencies for taking part in our survey: Formalangues; Accents D'Ailleurs; Action Sejours; Educ-Inter; Effective; Homestay; La Route des Langues; Languages & Travel; Planete Langues.

French agents named a range of language programmes they work with, including, in Australia: Phoenix English Language Academy, Perth; Specialty Language, Sydney; Alpha College of English, Dublin; Cork Language Centre, Cork; Emerald Cultural Institute, Dublin; Horner School of English, Dublin; in Malta: Burlington Academy, St. Julians; NSTS English Language Institute, Gzira; in Spain: Colegio Maravillas, Benalmadena; Estudio Internacional Sempere, Madrid; Escuela Montalban, Granada. In the UK: Anglo Continental, Bournemouth; Frances King School of English, London; Harrow House International College, Swarage; London School of English, London; Scanbit School, Bournemouth; Superstudy, London. In the USA: Cultural Homestay International, San Anselmo, CA; Pine Manor College, Boston, MA; Wise Foundation, Dyersburg, TN. Worldwide: St Giles Colleges, LSI.