



Attending CIGRÉ Meetings – FAQ (or “First Time CIGRÉ Attendance for Dummies”)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The CIGRE 2012 general meeting in Paris was my first time attending the meeting. Having attended numerous IEEE conferences and meetings and a few other conferences, I felt experienced at attending a conference. I thought, “how hard can it be to attend CIGRÉ?” The answer, was “rather difficult” particularly if you want to get the most out of the meeting.

The registration cost combined with the expense of traveling to Europe encourages one to try to get the most out of the conference, and as far as I could tell, there was no “how to” guide for first-time attendees. I was surprised to learn that attending several of the venues is not automatic nor open, so some advanced planning is required. In some cases, if you have not made these advanced plans, you will not be allowed to attend.

I hoped these notes would be helpful. They’ve been updated for each subsequent meeting.


2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 When and Where is CIGRÉ?


The meeting is held every other year (even number years) in Paris, France at the Palais des Congrès for a week during the month of August. The address is [2 Place de la Porte Maillot, 75017 Paris](#). The location is between the Arc de Triomphe and La Défense along Av. Charles de Gaulle and Champs-Élysées to the west of Paris. The nearest subway station is [Porte Maillot along Metro Line M1](#).

2.2 How does one get to and from the meeting and various events associated with the meeting?

[Charles de Gaulle Airport](#) (CDG) is the major airport with access to Paris located about 23km (14 miles) northeast of the city center. There is rail, bus and taxi service from the airport into the Paris city center.

There is a regional rail service in Paris (RER) . This subway / rail service generally serves outlying areas of Paris, including Charles de Gaulle Airport, or with fewer stops within Paris. The regional rail service “RER” using the “B3” or “blue” line is probably the least expensive and fastest way to reach the city center.



There is also a more traditional metro service within the city . The RER is more expensive than the Metro, so use the Metro once you are within the city if possible. Depending on your destination, other connections using RER or the Metro would be required. Paris has an extensive network of subways that provide convenient transportation from many locations within the city.



If you have never traveled by subway, the idea may be daunting. However, the subways are generally safe, and most subway cars have electronic guides that indicate the route and stops. The main subway system is the “Metro” which connects many locations within the city. Metro Line #1 (M1) has a [station \(Porte Maillot\) near Palais des Congrès](#). [Other Metro lines connect to the M1 line](#). The cost in 2024 is about €2.10 for one-way travel, **but prices**

may be raised to €4.00 during the Olympics . Within the main city, transfers between subway lines can be done without additional cost. There are automated kiosks that accept credit cards to purchase Metro tickets, and there are tellers that can provide assistance during the main hours of operation (early morning to late evening).

Taxi service is also available. It is more expensive than either the Metro or RER and also subject to surface traffic that does not affect the subways.

There are no transportation services specifically organized by the conference, so you are responsible for making your own local travel arrangements.

2.3 Where should I stay while attending CIGRÉ?

CIGRÉ organizers can assist with housing in the vicinity of the Palais des Congrès. However, you are not obligated to use this housing service. It would be advantageous to select a hotel near a subway station for commuting to the conference if you are not staying within reasonable walking distance.

Special Note for 2024: Paris will be hosting the Olympics (26-July to 11-August) and Paralympics (28-August to 8-September), with the 2024 CIGRE meeting being scheduled between the two events (25-30 August). As a result, hotel room availability may be limited. The Paralympics opening ceremony is Wednesday, 28-Aug-2024 and will impact Av. des Champs-Élysées, in particularly the section near Place de la Concorde. The following link may be helpful:



<http://www.cigre2024-booking.com/Accommodation>

2.4 Do I need to speak French to attend CIGRÉ?

The short answer is “no”. The meeting is held in France so obviously the local language is French, but the meeting is generally conducted in English, and many of the conference personnel can provide direction in English. As with traveling in any place where English is not the native language, speaking slowly, calmly and clearly can help with conversing with anyone. It sounds silly, but a few basic phrases go a long way:

- “Bonjour” = {bahn-jore} Good morning or good day. Any interaction will begin better if you start with this greeting, particularly before night fall.
- “Bonsoir” = {bahn-swah} Good evening. Like “Bon jour” but for the evenings.
- “s’il vous plaît;” = {see-voo-play} Please (if you please)
- “Merci” = {mare-see} Thanks
- “Au revoir” = {ahh ray-vwa} Good bye
- “Excusez-moi” = {ex-cuse-eh-mwah} Pardon me

As a non-French speaking person, I was concerned about starting a conversation in French when I cannot communicate further in that language. I found that the people appreciate the

minimal effort and will often detect I was English speaking and switch to English. This extends beyond the conference (dining out, visiting tourist areas, etc.).

Most exhibitors will speak their native language, English and probably other languages.

2.4 What is the dress code for CIGRÉ meetings?

Generally, CIGRÉ meetings are more formal than IEEE meetings, especially in recent years where most meetings in the U.S. are “business casual” or just “casual”. While not mandatory, many people wear business attire (shirt, jacket, maybe a tie for men, pants suit or dresses for women). Some of the evening activities, particularly the national committee receptions, are “business attire” only.

3.0 CIGRÉ SPECIFICS

3.1 What happens at CIGRÉ meetings?

There are essentially four activities occurring simultaneously during the meeting.

- First, there is an exposition of equipment and services by various suppliers, contractors and vendors. If you are familiar with the IEEE T&D Conference, the CIGRÉ exposition is very similar though generally on a smaller scale.
- Second, there are Technical Meetings that include panels, workshops and poster sessions. The panels include presentations by experts on a given topic; there is not an opportunity for questions or discussions during panels. Workshops have technical presentations that permit some discussion. Poster sessions are where papers are “presented”, although this is much different than IEEE meetings as comments must be submitted in advance. More on this below.
- Third, there are Study Committee meetings. These are “overview” sessions where the various working group activities are reported and briefly discussed.
- Fourth, there are Working Group meetings. The working group meetings are focused groups that are looking at particular tasks or technical subjects. The working groups are not specifically organized as part of the main CIGRÉ meeting but often schedule a meeting in conjunction with the general meeting. Working groups usually meet a few times per year, one of which happens to be during the general meeting.

3.2 What else happens at CIGRÉ meetings?

In addition to the technical program, there are a few other activities that happen during CIGRÉ general meetings.

- **National Committee Meetings:** There are national committee meetings for each of the respective countries that participate in CIGRÉ. The United States National Committee (USNC) is one such group. The USNC has a meeting, usually on the first Sunday afternoon of the CIGRÉ meeting week. All attendees from the U.S. are allowed to attend this meeting provided that you have registered through the USNC. *If the USNC is not aware of your registration, the location of the meeting will not be sent to you in advance, and the general CIGRÉ program does not indicate where the meeting is held.* The meeting is a general overview of the various committees within CIGRÉ and a very high level overview of what each

subcommittee and working group is doing, particularly those with U.S. member involvement.

- **US National Committee Reception:** The USNC holds a special reception, usually on Monday evenings. U.S. members in good standing that are attending the CIGRÉ general meeting are invited to attend after an affirmative RSVP to the USNC chair; **attendance is not automatic.** The USNC is known for providing one of the better receptions. The event is semi-formal and held at a venue within the city. Attendees are responsible for finding their own transportation to this event. Depending on the number of attendees, USNC members may be given the opportunity to invite non-U.S. members to attend.
- **CIGRÉ General Reception:** This is held at a venue within the city. It is open to all delegates. An invitation to attend will be sent by the U.S. National Committee after your registration is complete.
- **CIGRÉ General Session:** This is a meeting where the business of CIGRÉ is discussed, presented and voted upon. CIGRÉ members are permitted to attend. Unless you abstain or vote negative on a particular issue, your presence effectively affirms the business of the General Session. **You must be a delegate to attend. Bring your current CIGRÉ membership number to sign in.**

3.3 Can I attend anything at a CIGRÉ meeting by simply registering?

The short answer is “no”, at least not without planning ahead.

- **What’s Open?** The opening session, panel sessions, workshops, poster sessions, exhibition hall, and CIGRÉ reception are included.
- **USNC Reception:** Attendance at the USNC reception is by invitation only. Invitations come from the USNC after responding affirmatively to the USNC chair’s request for availability.
- **Subcommittee Meetings:** Technically, the subcommittee and working group meetings are closed to non-members. The subcommittee chair can generally grant an individual permission to attend the subcommittee meetings, though these guests are not permitted to participate in the discussions. These are helpful in getting a general overview on everything a subcommittee is doing and probably more helpful than attending a working group meeting. **The time and location of subcommittee meetings is not listed in the program, so the venue (meeting room, location) is only disclosed by the subcommittee chair.** Contact the chair in advance for more information.
- **Working Group Meetings:** The working group meetings are closed to non-members. Permission to attend a working group meeting is subject to approval by the respective chair (called a “convenor”) of the working group. **The time and location of working group meetings is not listed in the program, so the venue (meeting room, location) is only disclosed by the working group chair.** Contact the convenor in advance for more information. You may want to reach out to the respective subcommittee chair to find out the working group chair.

The working group meetings are usually focused discussions relevant to the particular progress of the working group. Since the working group members are

familiar with the activities, there is minimal review of past discussions or activities so someone not previously attending a working group meeting may not find these meetings of significant value.

3.4 What is a “delegate”?

If you are registered for the full conference and affiliated with a national committee, then your registration will include a “delegate” badge. This allows full privileges to attend the main CIGRÉ events, technical sessions and exhibits. Those vendors that are only exhibitors are not delegates.

3.5 How are papers “presented” and how do I comment on a paper?

Papers are not formally presented. A poster session is organized where papers of somewhat related technical topics are grouped together. The author(s) prepare posters for their paper which are displayed during an assigned time for the poster session. The subcommittee chair or designated special reporter reads all the papers for their session and prepares a “special report” that focuses a discussion on key topics and themes throughout all the papers of a particular session. Questions in this special report help focus the discussions.

Papers for publication at CIGRÉ are made available in advance of the conference to permit anyone time to read the papers before the meeting. If someone would like to comment on a paper, these comments, called a “contribution”, must be submitted in advance to the subcommittee chair. “Spontaneous contributions” are technically possible, but are left to the end of the allotted time, and there is seldom time for spontaneous contributions.

Instructions for submitting a contribution are available from the CIGRÉ web site.

3.6 How are CIGRÉ groups organized?

There are four main groups within CIGRÉ as described below:

3.6.1 Committee A

- A1: Rotating Electrical Machines
- A2: Transformers
- A3: High Voltage Equipment

3.6.2 Committee B

- B1: Insulated Cables Similar to IEEE Insulated Conductors
- B2: Overhead Lines Similar to IEEE Towers, Poles, Conductors
- B3: Substations
- B4: HVDC and Power Electronics
- B5: Protection and Automation

3.6.3 Committee C

- C1: System Development and Economics
- C2: System Operation and Control
- C3: System Environmental Performance

- C4: System Technical Performance
- C5: Electricity Markets and Regulation
- C6: Distribution Systems and Distributed Generation

3.6.4 Committee D

- D1: Materials and Emerging Test Techniques
- D2: Information Systems and Telecommunication

3.7 What if I am interested in more than one technical area?

In general, CIGRÉ meetings are organized so that there is no overlap among events focused on a specific technical area. This includes study committees, working groups, poster sessions. However, because various technical groups are assigned time slots for particular venues (e.g., large meeting rooms), several events are coincident with other technical areas. Working group meetings may be scheduled during the main CIGRÉ conference week or in the few days preceding or following the main conference.

There is no ideal strategy for attending a range of technical areas, but one approach would be to seek permission to attend the Study Committee meetings for the areas of interest where a general overview is available.

4.0 IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE TO DO IN PARIS WHILE ATTENDING CIGRÉ?

There are many attractions of historic, entertainment or dining interest in the greater Paris area. A summary of some of the major attractions is listed here, though there are many others.

- [Louvre Museum](#)
- [Arc de Triomphe](#)
- [Av. des Champs-Élysées](#) (street running between Arc de Triomphe and the Louvre)
- [Disneyland Paris \(RER A train east of Paris\)](#)
- [Eiffel Tower](#)
- [Catacombs](#)
- [Versaille \(RER C train south-west of Paris\)](#)
- [Notre Dame Church](#) (being refurbished)
- [St Chapelle Church](#)
- [Sacre Coeur Church](#)

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RER Map

