

France at a glance

- **Population:** 65 327 724
- **GDP (per capita):** 108 PPS (available for 2011 only)
PPS=Purchasing Power Standard, based on the EU 27 average of 100
- **Asylum applications total:** 60 560
- **First instance positive decisions (refugee status and subsidiary protection):** 8 655

2012 data, published by Eurostat in May 2013

The French resettlement programme at a glance

Resettlement quota and actors

Start of annual quota: 2008

Current quota: 100 dossier cases²⁶ per year²⁷

Main national actors: Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII), French Office for Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA), Forum Réfugiés-Cosi (FRC), France Terre d'Asile (FTDA), Adoma, Entraide Pierre Valdo, ISARD-COS, selected regional and local authorities.

Resettlement Numbers

YEAR	DOSSIERS SUBMITTED	ACCEPTED (NR. OF PERSONS)	ARRIVALS - ANNUAL RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME (AT 06/01/13)	TOTAL ARRIVALS PER YEAR (ALL ANNUAL PROGRAMMES INCLUDED)	NATIONALITY ↻ COUNTRY OF ASYLUM OF LARGEST GROUPS
2013 <i>antici-pated</i>	100	Processing ongoing	No arrivals at the time of writing	50	Varied caseload
2012	115	Processing ongoing	689	90	Varied caseload

²⁶ The quota refers to 100 'cases' rather than persons - a 'case' can refer to one person or a family unit of two or more persons.

²⁷ The French national resettlement programme is unique in Europe in that the quota refers to a commitment to consider 100 dossier cases for resettlement, rather than the number of cases France plans to resettle.

YEAR	DOSSIERS SUBMITTED	ACCEPTED (NR. OF PERSONS)	ARRIVALS - ANNUAL RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME (AT 06/01/13)	TOTAL ARRIVALS PER YEAR (ALL ANNUAL PROGRAMMES INCLUDED)	NATIONALITY ↻ COUNTRY OF ASYLUM OF LARGEST GROUPS
2011	105	142	460	55	Afghans, Palestinians, Congolese (DRC)
2010	100	149	571	203	Ethiopians, Afghans, Congolese (DRC)
2009	101	151	627	159	Palestinians in Iraq

UNHCR Submission categories considered for resettlement

- Legal and physical protection needs
- Survivors of violence and torture
- Medical needs
- Women and girls at risk
- Family reunification
- Children and adolescents at risk
- Lack of foreseeable alternative solutions

UNHCR Priority levels accepted (with sub-quota where applicable)

- Emergency** *max. 7 days between submission and resettlement*
- Urgent** *within 6 weeks between submission and resettlement*
- Normal** *within 12 months between submission and resettlement*

Since 2010, the number of arrivals has declined. Although the Ministry of Interior has not slowed down the examination of dossiers, arrivals of accepted persons have been delayed. Resettlement arrivals amounted to 55 in 2011 (3 persons from the 2008 caseload, 51 from the 2010 caseload and 1 from the 2011 caseload) and 90 persons in 2012 (37 from the 2010 caseload and 53 from the 2011 caseload).

France's Resettlement Programme

Legal Basis & Background

France has been involved in ad-hoc resettlement since 1957, resettling refugees from Hungary (12,700), 'boat people' from Vietnam (100,000) and refugees from Kosovo (6,300).

Although the Code on the Entry and Stay of Aliens and Asylum (2004) contains some provisions relevant to refugee resettlement, there is no specific reference to resettlement in the national asylum law and no explicit legal basis for resettlement in France. The framework for the French resettlement is provided by a **Framework Agreement** between UNHCR and the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, signed in 2008. This agreement sets out the structure for the national resettlement programme and stipulates that UNHCR will submit 100 dossier cases for consideration by the French government each year. The Framework Agreement with UNHCR automatically renews each year.

In addition to cases resettled under the agreement with UNHCR, France has also received resettled refugees under a separate 2008 ad-hoc agreement with UNHCR known as the 'Irak 500' programme. In 2008-9, France resettled 1,200 Iraqis under

the agreement in response to a call by the EU Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council. In 2011, France informed UNHCR of its willingness to consider refugees ex-Libya from Shousha camp in Tunisia as a response to the UNHCR and EU call.²⁸ At the time of writing, out of the three cases submitted by UNHCR, one refugee has been accepted and the remaining two cases are still being considered.

In addition to resettlement, during 2009-2011 France relocated 190 persons from Malta under the 2009 pilot project on relocation and the 2010-11 EUREMA I programme.²⁹ France does not participate in EUREMA II.

Resettlement Criteria

Basic Criteria

A refugee must have been recognised as such by UNHCR under Articles 6 and 7 of its mandate but not on a prima facie basis.

Criteria related to integration

None

²⁸ In contrast to the 2008 joint EU Action for refugees from Iraq, resettlement places for refugees ex-Libya were made available by Member States only within pre-agreed resettlement quotas - no new resettlement places were created. See Chapter V for more information on the 2012 EU response for refugees ex-Libya.

²⁹ 'EASO fact finding report on intra-EU relocation activities from Malta', July 2012. See Chapter V for more information on EUREMA.



Identification and Selection

France only selects refugees for resettlement on a **dossier basis**, and does not carry out resettlement selection missions. UNHCR forwards dossier submissions to the Asylum Service of the Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for considering cases and making final decisions in consultation with other ministerial services (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, OFPRA and security services). Decisions are normally taken within **6 months**, and the Asylum Service pays special attention to the absence of local integration and protection prospects in the first country of asylum, vulnerable cases, victims of violence and those with medical needs.

Refugee Status, Permanent Residency & Citizenship

On arrival into France, resettled refugees are granted **temporary leave to remain** for six months, giving them the right to work and receive other related social benefits. Resettled refugees are required to formally lodge an asylum claim with the National Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA). To do so, resettled refugees complete an asylum application form with the assistance of a social worker. The asylum claims of resettled refugees are examined via an accelerated procedure. Refugee status is generally granted within 2-6 months of application, and

the initial temporary residence permit is renewable if the asylum procedure is not completed within 6 months. French NGOs have consistently advocated for an acceleration of this procedure so as to speed up refugee access to integration programmes and social benefits, which a lack of permanent legal status can complicate. Upon the transfer of refugee status, resettled refugees receive a **long-term residence** permit automatically renewed every 10 years.

Resettled refugees can apply for French **citizenship** as soon as refugee status is granted. Applicants must demonstrate their ‘assimilation’³⁰ into French society through an interview with an officer from the *préfecture*³¹, during which they must prove their integration into French society, notably by showing support for principles and values of the French Republic. After the interview, applicants must sign the ‘Charter of the Rights and Duties of the French Citizen’.

Applicants for citizenship must also demonstrate basic knowledge of French history, culture and society, and provide proof of a command of French equivalent to at least B1 level³² oral French.

³⁰ Civil Code, Article 21-4

³¹ The *préfecture* is an administration of the Ministry of the Interior, in charge of identity cards, passports, work and residence permits for foreigners and other areas. There are 101 *préfectures* in France, one for each department.

³² Common European Framework level B1 (‘independent user’). Applicants are tested by certified centres and must present their certificate to immigration authorities. Persons over 65 are exempted from the language requirement.

Family reunification

Besides married partners, children up to 19 and parents of children under 19, other eligible family members include unmarried partners, if they have the same nationality as the applicant and if the partnership was mentioned to OFPRA during the asylum procedure.³³

There is no requirement for refugees to prove financial resources or access to accommodation sufficient to meet the needs of incoming family members.

Resettlement in Practice

Linking Phases

How is information transferred between selection and reception of refugees in order to prepare for their arrival?

- Forwarding pertinent information from Refugee Referral Form (RRF) to integration
- Other: When a case is accepted for resettlement, information related to the family composition, medical and other specific needs of the resettled refugees is transferred by the Asylum service of the Ministry of Interior to OFII. When suitable housing is located, OFII then informs the

Asylum Service which authorises the refugee's departure. NGOs in charge of reception and integration services for resettled refugees, however, receive very basic information about those who are due to be resettled, and do not receive copies of RRFs or associated documents submitted as part of the dossier.

How is information transferred for specific needs (medical or other)?

If a specific need is identified, including a medical need, the Ministry of Interior and OFII contact NGOs in charge of the reception process to inform them of the type of accommodation required to meet these needs, for example ground floor accommodation, access to an elevator, proximity to a hospital and so on. NGOs are responsible for locating suitable accommodation, in partnership with regional and local authorities.

Pre-departure

There is no pre-departure CO programme. In 2009, IOM and FRC developed an information booklet about the resettlement programme and life in France. The booklet is given to some refugees resettled under the national programme prior to their departure, although in practice many refugees do not receive the booklet.

- Medical Exam: IOM
- Travel arrangements: IOM

³³ Married partners are not eligible if the marriage took place after the grant of refugee status or less than a year before the grant.



Integration in Practice

Reception

OFII distributes refugees to one of the five regional/local resettlement programmes operating in France (see table below) on their arrival into the country. In some cases, refugees not due to stay in Paris in the long term may spend a few days in the Créteil transit centre while waiting to be transferred to programmes in other areas.

All programmes share some common approaches to reception, notably including the use of **temporary or medium-term accommodation** for a short period after arrival.

Those resettled to Paris, for example, spend a few days in the **transit centre** in Créteil while more permanent

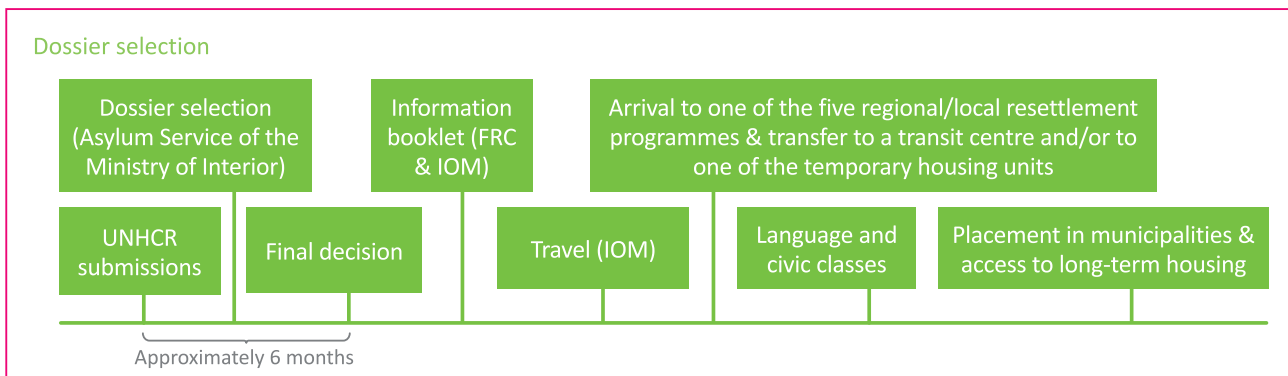
accommodation is located by France Terre d'Asile. In Lyon, the NGO Forum Réfugiés-Cosi (FRC) aims to provide resettled refugees with long-term independent housing directly on arrival. Although increasingly successful in achieving this aim, FRC still accommodates some families, mostly urgent cases that arrive with minimal notice and for whom long-term accommodation is not immediately available, in a temporary accommodation centre (CPH)³⁴ also used to accommodate other refugees.

In Pau, ISARD COS runs a CPH that offers 20 places for resettled refugees, with capacity for 16 families (in apartments) and four single people (in studios). Refugees can spend renewable 6-month periods in the CPH until a long-term housing solution is found for them. In Besançon,³⁵ Adoma supplies 20 places in apartments to resettled

CITY/REGION	LEAD NGO	RECEPTION
Paris	France Terre d'Asile (FTDA)	FTDA meet refugees at Paris airport and accompany them to the FTDA-managed Créteil transit centre.
Lyon & Rhône-Alpes	Forum Réfugiés-Cosi (FRC)	Forum Réfugiés-Cosi meet refugees upon their arrival in Lyon.
Pau	ISARD-COS	ISARD-COS meet refugees upon their arrival in Pau.
Besançon	Adoma	Adoma meet refugees upon their arrival in Besançon.

³⁴ Centre Provisoire d'Hébergement

³⁵ In September 2013, Adoma will increase its reception capacity by 20 additional places in the Territoire de Belfort.



refugees for a temporary period of 7 to 8 months.

Placement policies

In France, the availability of permanent housing for recognised refugees is scarce, and finding places for resettled refugees is subsequently very challenging. The placement of refugees is overseen by OFII, in cooperation with the Asylum Service of the Ministry of the Interior, which consults on available places with reception facility operators as soon as refugees have been accepted for resettlement, and places resettled refugees in one of the five resettlement programmes according to availability.

Each programme provides resettled refugees with medium-term, temporary housing and assistance to find a permanent housing solution. In Lyon, the **Accelair** programme implemented by a partnership led by FRC provides refugees with individual housing tied to a programme of integration support. Since 2003, housing agencies of the

Rhône department have committed to supplying housing for 250 refugees in the Accelair programme each year. Forum Réfugiés signs the lease for the first few months of the tenancy, which is later transferred to the refugee(s).

In Paris, the **Network for the Integration of Resettled Refugees** ('Réseau pour l'intégration des réinstallés') project implemented by FTDA assists resettled refugees to find individual housing as soon as possible after their arrival. In contrast to Accelair, the Réseau project has a stock of temporary individual housing units, both private and social, where refugees can stay for renewable six-month periods while waiting for a long-term housing solution (See 'Highlight', below).

Integration Programme

Length: Variable.

On arrival into France, all resettled refugees attend an interview with OFII, during which their oral and written French ability is tested. If the refugee's



level of French is deemed insufficient, he/she is obliged to attend a maximum of 400 hours of free **French classes**. All refugees must attend ‘Living in France’, a single **civic orientation class** (6-7 hours) focusing on the values of the French Republic (secularism, gender equality, fundamental freedoms, and education system) and the organisation and functioning of the French State and institutions. At the end of the interview, refugees must sign a **reception and integration** contract with the French state confirming that they will attend specified language classes and the civic class.

While there is **no separate integration programme** for refugees resettled to France, within each of the city/regional resettlement programmes, resettled refugees benefit from individualised NGO assistance in navigating administrative processes, and finding employment (together with support to find housing). NGO assistance is partly funded by the Ministry of Interior and by the ERF.

As other French citizens, resettled refugees are eligible to access the monthly Active Solidarity Income financial payment and receive global medical coverage.

Municipalities do not play a formal role in the integration process, and no specific financial support is provided to

municipalities additional to the funding provided for the reception and housing programmes run by NGOs. Regions and/or departments have specific tasks with regard to providing social housing, for refugees as for the general French population.

Refugees living in the Rhône department or in a CPH in Rhône-Alpes are eligible for support from the Accelair programme for the first 12 months after refugee status is granted.³⁶ The programme is delivered by a partnership led by FRC with OFII, local and regional authorities and civil society organisations providing services for refugees, and has assigned a specific caseworker for resettled refugees within the broader framework of support for all refugees.

Use of the European Refugee Fund (ERF)

Persons resettled using 2012 ERF funding

- Persons resettled under a Regional Protection Programme
- Unaccompanied minors – *3 refugees*
- Women and children at risk; particularly from psychological physical or sexual violence or exploitation - *19 refugees*

³⁶ <http://www.forumrefugies.org/missions/missions-aupres-des-refugies/programme-d-integration-des-refugies-accelair/principes-et-fonctionnement>

- Persons with serious medical needs that can only be addressed through resettlement – 7 refugees

Pledges made to resettle under ERF specific categories for 2013

- Persons resettled from a country or region designated for the implementation of a Regional Protection Programme
- Women and children at risk
- Unaccompanied minors
- Survivors of torture and violence
- Persons with serious medical needs that can only be addressed through resettlement
- Persons in need of emergency resettlement or urgent resettlement for legal or physical protection needs

Pledges made to resettle under ERF resettlement common EU priorities for 2013

France did not pledge to resettle under the 2013 common EU priorities.

HIGHLIGHT: Réseau pour l'Intégration des Réinstallés – Network for the Integration of Resettled Refugees – France Terre d'Asile (FTDA)

Partners/actors: Led by FTDA, with OFII, PACT de Saint Denis (a non-profit housing network), Inter assurances (an insurance company that offers to finance one year of

rental insurance to owners who are renting to a refugee). Integration partnerships depending on location: with Alliance Française (French language tuition), Secours Catholique and Emmaus (charities working for improved housing conditions)

Funding: 50% ERF, 50% French government.

Since 2010, the project of a Network for the Integration of Resettled Refugees (Réseau pour l'intégration des réinstallés) has provided individualised integration support for resettled refugees, including finding long-term housing as soon as possible after their arrival. The network has now a housing capacity of 77 persons in 16 apartments located in three departments (Paris, Val-de-Marne and Deux-Sèvres).

Accommodation is provided in public or private sector housing for an initial period of six months, renewable for a further six months. Landlords rent the apartments directly to FTDA, which is responsible for paying the rent, utilities and insurance and for dealing with all administrative procedures. FTDA signs a one-year rental contract with the refugee household. Landlords can in theory agree to rent the apartment directly to refugees, although very few have done



so to date. 15% of the household's income (excluding social welfare) must be used to contribute to accommodation costs.

During the tenancy period, refugees are provided with guidance both individually and through working groups, covering areas such as access to social rights, health care, long-term housing, professional training and employment, and access to intensive French courses. Each refugee is assisted by a social worker with whom they agree an individual integration plan setting out their goals and targets for the support period.

By 31 December 2012, the project had supported 172 persons in 41 families. 92% of the resettled refugees supported have found long-term housing solution, around a quarter of whom are in private housing.

Evaluations

The Framework Agreement on resettlement between the French government and UNHCR stipulated that the two parties would together complete a joint assessment of the French resettlement programme during the third year of its operation. The

assessment was thus due in mid-2012 but, at the time of writing, has not yet been completed. The French government and UNHCR hold an annual working group on resettlement each year to discuss and review the French programme.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths:

- The French resettlement programme allows UNHCR to submit varied cases on a **dossier basis**, from a wide range of countries of asylum around the world. France does not impose any stringent criteria with respect to integration potential, further strengthening the resettlement programme's accessibility for particularly vulnerable refugees.
- The French programme provides resettled refugees with speedy and effective access to **state welfare and health insurance**.
- The French government made **several commitments** to improving the programme during the last Resettlement Working Group in early 2013, including improving the information booklet provided to refugees before their departure and further expediting the asylum determination procedure for resettled refugees.

Challenges:

- A **lack of available accommodation** for recognised refugees in France has led to delays in the arrival of resettled refugees into France.
- The **lack of pre-departure CO** information provided to refugees has in some cases led to unrealistic expectations and confusion amongst refugees selected for resettlement, in particular about difficulties in finding housing. Resettled refugees can also find the repeated relaying of the basis for their asylum claim - to UNHCR at the registration and identification stage, and again post-arrival to NGO workers preparing asylum claim forms - distressing and unnecessarily intrusive. The need for an asylum determination procedure in France can also delay access to integration support, in particular to language classes in some cities/regions.
- NGOs operating reception facilities and programmes often do not receive adequate information on **special needs of refugees** they are due to receive, in particular medical needs affecting housing.

New Developments

According to the Ministry of the Interior, priorities for the resettlement programme during 2013 are to clear the 2010-2011 arrival backlog of approximately 50 persons and to work with reception actors to improve communication and cooperation.