



Resettlement Country France

Last updated: 31/12/2022

1. Resettlement Policy and Programme Description

1.1 Programme Year/Cycle:

- Start date: 04-Feb-08 End Date: 2023

1.2 Resettlement Policy and Programme

The French asylum and migration Law of September 10, 2018 has provided a legal basis to the French resettlement program to which France's commitment has increased over the past few years to respond to the growing protection needs of refugees in need of resettlement. More specifically, this law introduced a new chapter on the external dimension of asylum in the French Code on the Entry and Residence of Foreigners and the Right of Asylum, with an article mentioning that the French authorities organize the resettlement from third countries to France of people who are in a vulnerable situation and who have been granted international protection.

Prior to this law, the only existing framework for resettlement was the bilateral agreement concluded in February 2008 between France and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), under which France committed to process annually 100 cases of refugees under the UNHCR mandate. The cases are submitted by the UNHCR regional offices in Amman, Dakar, Nairobi, and Pretoria. The Geneva Bureau also submits cases to France covering all continents.

In 2014/2015, France implemented a new resettlement program dedicated to welcome 500 Syrian refugees per year. This program has been implemented partly through the annual resettlement on dossier quota and partly through an additional ad hoc humanitarian admission program (HAP) with selection missions in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Egypt.

In 2016 and 2017, within the framework of European resettlement commitments, France welcomed 3.657 refugees of various nationalities, mostly Syrians. At the end of 2017, new Presidential commitments were taken to welcome 10.000 refugees over a two year period of which 7.000 would come from the Middle-East (Syrians) and 3.000 would come from Niger and Chad (Sub-Saharanans, including evacuees from Libya). At the end of 2019, 9.965 refugees had been welcomed to France under this resettlement scheme.

More recently, France renewed its commitments to welcome nearly 10.000 resettled refugees over the years 2020-2021. As part of these new commitments, France decided to continue to resettle refugees from the Middle East and Africa, and included three additional countries of first asylum: Rwanda, Cameroon and Ethiopia. As the Covid-19 pandemic temporarily halted the implementation the program in the first half of 2020, France had to readjust its bi-annual objective and finally succeeded in organizing the transfer of more than 3.000 refugees over the two-year period. Despite the Covid-19, missions took place in these new three countries.



In December 2021, France committed to resettle 5.000 refugees in 2022 within the framework of its resettlement program. In April 2022, this pledge was adjusted to 3.000 refugees to resettle by the end of the year, as France had to take into account the impact of the war in Ukraine as France welcomed more than 100 000 Ukrainians, alongside other commitments on other humanitarian admission schemes. As part of this annual program, France met its objective by resettling 3.047 refugees in 2022.

In 2023, France will pursue its action in favor of the resettlement of 3.000 refugees in need of protection, who will be resettled in France from 9 countries in Africa and the Middle East regions within the framework of its resettlement program. France will also carry out its annual commitment to review 100 cases through its bilateral agreement signed with the UNHCR in February 2008 in favor of refugees living on all continents.

1.3 Ministries and Departments

The Directorate-General for Foreign Nationals (Directorate of Asylum) of the French Ministry of the Interior is in charge of coordinating the resettlement program (both at the policy and at operational level) and implementing the bilateral agreement with the UNHCR. Since 2020, the French departments and regions have been given the exclusive role of monitoring and organizing the reception and care of beneficiaries of the resettlement missions program, which was previously monitored at the national level by the Ministry of the Interior.

Under the bilateral agreement concluded in 2008, the program coordination and implementation is ensured by the Ministry of the Interior, which relies on the work of local operators that are responsible for monitoring and caring for refugees arriving to France under this specific scheme.

1.4 Process for Determining the Resettlement Admission Targets

The President of the French republic commits annually or every two years to the UNHCR, to resettle a number of refugees for the upcoming years as part of the resettlement missions program. The level of commitments is decided by taking into account, on the one hand, the needs and priorities expressed by the UNHCR and the European Commission and, on the other hand, the reception capacities of the territories and operators responsible for providing support to resettled refugees welcomed in France.

Regarding the bilateral framework agreement concluded with the UNHCR, the target set in 2008 to examine about one hundred refugee cases identified by the UNHCR is renewed each year.

2. Eligibility for Refugee Status and other forms of International Protection

2.1 National Legislation defining refugee status eligibility

The code of the Entry and Residence of Foreigners and Asylum Law provides two types of protection. Refugee status is accorded to any person persecuted as a result of his/her actions in favor of freedom and to any person falling under UNHCR's mandate under Articles 6 and 7 of its statute as adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 14th, 1950, or who meets the definition under Article 1 of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of July 28th 1951.



Meanwhile, the benefit of subsidiary protection is granted to any person who does not fulfil the conditions for refugee status, but who establishes that he/she faces a serious threat in his/her country of origin (death penalty, torture, inhumane or degrading treatment, generalized violence resulting from an internal or international armed conflict).

2.2 Additional Information

3. Resettlement Decision-Making

3.1 Resettlement Admissibility and Public Interest Criteria

The French resettlement program and its bilateral agreement scheme both target vulnerable refugees. In addition, the absence of threats to security and public order is carefully reviewed. Specialized security services are systematically consulted during the review of cases.

3.2 Requests for Reconsideration

There is no appeal procedure.

3.3. Dependency

N/A

4. Legal Status on Arrival and Citizenship

4.1 Legal Status on Arrival

The legal status upon arrival depends on whether the case has been accepted on a dossier basis or selection mission, though both arrive through a long-term visa granted to allow their arrival to France.

4.1.1 Dossier quota

For the dossier cases, resettled refugees have to complete administrative procedures at the prefecture of their place of residence to obtain a first temporary residence permit for a period of a month, the time to submit their application to OFPRA to obtain the transfer of their refugee status. While waiting for their refugee status to be formally transferred, which is usually done in a short period of time after arrival, their temporary permit is renewed as long as necessary to obtain asylum protection and to ensure that they have access to social benefits. Nevertheless, they are not authorized to work before granted protection. Once the status has been officially obtained, they are entitled to a ten years residency card.

In addition to the residency card, if the individual wants to travel, they may request a biometric refugee travel document with a validity period of five years, allowing them to travel to any country, with the exception of their country of origin where fears of persecution have been expressed by the beneficiary and recognized as well-founded. To obtain this document, they need to apply to a dedicated online platform. Their request is then processed by the prefecture of their place of residence.



Children, whether born before or after their parents arrived in France, do not need to have a stay permit before their age of majority. However, a refugee travel document may be issued to them in the same way as to their parents.

4.1.2 HAP resettlement program

For cases selected during a selection mission, refugee or subsidiary protection status is granted as soon as the person arrives to France. Upon arrival, they have to immediately apply to the prefecture of their place of residence to either obtain:

- a residency card valid for ten years (for those granted refugee status); or
- a residency card valid for a maximum of four year (for those granted subsidiary protection).

In addition to the residency card, if the individual wants to travel, they may request a biometric refugee travel document with a validity period of five years, allowing them to travel to any country, with the exception of their country of origin where fears of persecution have been expressed by the beneficiary and recognized as well-founded. To obtain this document, they need to apply to a dedicated online platform managed. Their request is then processed by the prefecture of their place of residence.

Children, whether born before or after their parents arrived in France, do not need to have a stay permit before their age of majority. However, a refugee travel document may be issued to them in the same way as to their parents.

4.2 Eligibility for Citizenship

Resettled refugees may apply for French nationality as soon as they have been granted with the refugee status in France. Though, it requires that certain conditions are met: the individual must have not been convicted in court, must demonstrate a good knowledge of the French language, history, culture and society, and must adhere to the fundamental principles and values of the French Republic.

Children born in France obtain citizenship by right when they are 18 years of age if they have five years of residence in France since the age of 11. They can get it in advance from the age of 13 if they have lived at least five years in France since the age of 8 as provided under French law.

5. Processing Priorities

5.1 Processing Priorities

Aside from the current population of Syrian nationals from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, France has set out new other priorities since 2017 on Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Rwanda and evacuees from Libya, in accordance with the priorities put forward by the UNHCR and the European Commission.



Cases submitted under the dossier basis program are submitted by UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, and since 2013, are also shared by other UNHCR Hub offices currently located in Amman, Dakar, Nairobi and Pretoria. As much as possible, the cases submitted should be aligned with the EU resettlement priorities.

6. Special Considerations

6.1 Unaccompanied and Separated Children

6.1.1 Unaccompanied Children

France does not consider cases of unaccompanied minors under the resettlement program. A specific procedure is required for unaccompanied minors in France, which cannot be implemented in the framework of resettlement.

6.1.2 Separated Children

France considers cases involving children who have been separated from their parents but are accompanied by at least one adult. The links with the adult must be proven by a BID or BIA provided by UNHCR and by legal custody documents confirming the guardianship of the children.

6.2 Minor Marriage

French law does not allow the marriage of minors and therefore does not consider cases of married minors under the program.

6.3 Refugees with psychosocial, intellectual, sensory or physical disabilities or a serious medical condition

In accordance with UNHCR guidelines, medical cases where resettlement would not, due to the seriousness of the cases, improve the medical situation of the persons concerned, will not be considered under the program.

Furthermore, while France does not set specific eligibility conditions related to the health status of the beneficiaries, the cases submitted will be assessed according to the capacity of the French health care system to ensure that a solution can be provided for the beneficiaries.

6.4 Large families and single adults

Given the constraints of the French housing stock, France cannot consider for resettlement cases of 8+ PAX and can only consider a limited number of single adult cases.

6.5 Polygamous Marriage

French law prohibits polygamous marriage. As a result, France does not take into consideration cases of polygamous marriage.



6.6 Other

N/A

7. Dossier Selection Processing

Cases submitted on a dossier basis do not involve resettlement country selection interviews. Acceptance decisions are based on the documentation submitted by UNHCR. If the programme does not include dossier selection processing indicate "N/A."

7.1 Dossier Selection Policies

UNHCR submits one hundred cases to France each year. Each case may include several family members in addition to the principal applicant, (usually spouse and children, but some cases may include the principal applicant's parents or grandchildren, nieces / nephews, etc.) in the application form submitted for resettlement.

The Resettlement Registration Form (RRF) is usually sent with relevant supporting documents such as: medical record, full copies of children's birth certificates, copies of divorce decrees, etc., Best Interest Determination (BID) reports related to the situation of the children included in the application, and consent of the parent (not included in the application) to the resettlement of the child with the principal applicant.

Applications are processed in chronological order, unless an emergency is reported. As part of the review process, each dossier is summarized in French.

After consulting with the security services to ensure that the persons do not represent a threat to the national public order, the dossier is submitted to the geographical divisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an opinion (some cases also require the opinion of the French determining agency OFPRA). Once the opinions are collected, the case is then reviewed collectively by officers-in-charge of the Department of asylum and protection (in the Asylum Directorate), who decide whether or not to grant resettlement to the applicant.

In the event of a refusal, UNHCR is immediately notified by mail.

In the event of an agreement, the Asylum Directorate immediately informs UNHCR of its decision in principle. However, the travel procedure for applicants occurs later on, depending on the availability of accommodation provided to this end. To launch the arrival procedure, instruction to issue a visa is sent by the Asylum Directorate to the relevant French Consulate. Instruction is also given to International Organization for Migration (IOM) to proceed with the adequate travel arrangements.

7.2 Additional Information

N/A

8. Interview Selection Processing



Resettlement country interview selection processing means that the resettlement country conducts an interview as part of the selection process. If the programme does not include a resettlement country interview indicate "N/A."

8.1 Interview Selection Policies

All cases submitted by the UNHCR as part of the selections missions program, have to be shared prior to the selection missions. The cases submitted refer to people who have been registered with UNHCR and identified by UNHCR as in need of resettlement based on vulnerability criteria.

Under the coordination of the Asylum Directorate of the French Ministry of Interior, IOM organizes, in relationship with UNHCR, the logistics of the selection mission. The French Office for the protection of refugees and stateless people (OFPRA), the determining agency, as well as the Ministry of Interior are in charge of the selection mission.

The delegation for a selection mission consists, as a rule, of a mission chief, officers who are specialized in the region from OFPRA, as well as officers from the Ministry of Interior who are in charge of conducting security screenings and interviews.

After the selection mission, OFPRA sends the list of accepted refugees to the Asylum Directorate, which then launches the process to seek suitable accommodation to France and organize the transfer to France, in cooperation with IOM.

8.2 Additional Information

9. Processing Timeframes

9.1 Policies for receiving emergency and/or urgent submissions

France does not have a quota for emergency cases. Urgent cases are given priority, regardless of the chronological order of receipt, and follow exactly the procedure as described above.

9.2 Average Processing Times for Emergency Cases

N/A

9.3 Average Processing Times for Urgent Cases

N/A

9.4 Average Processing Times for Normal Cases

N/A

9.5 Additional Information

N/A

10. Pre-departure Arrangements



10.1 Pre-departure Medical Screening

A medical screening “Fit to fly” is systematically carried out before departure to ensure that individuals whose resettlement has been accepted can travel safely. This examination is conducted by IOM. For all the cases reviewed by the French delegation during selection missions, a full medical examination is organized by IOM, at the request of the Asylum Directorate.

10.2 Required Pre-departure Treatment

If a treatment is needed, IOM will provide and cover the costs. The costs are covered through European Funding (AMIF) and redistributed by the Asylum Directorate to the stakeholders.

10.3 Pre-departure Orientation

Regarding the refugees resettled under the French resettlement program, cultural information sessions are systematically carried out by IOM a few days before the departure date. Refugees are invited to participate to these sessions in a small group of 10 to 15 individuals. These sessions last for 3 days and cover 10 key topics aiming to provide basic and accurate information about the logistic of their travel and arrival in France, as well as life in France in general, and to address the information needs of the beneficiaries of the program. These sessions are supported by an information booklet and a short-movie: the booklet is available in 11 languages (Oromo, Tigrinya, Somali, Arabic, Amharic, Kinyarwanda, Farsi, Sango, Swahili, French and English), while the short-video is available in 9 languages (Arabic, Sudanese Arabic, Amharic, Tigrinya, Oromo, Somali, Kinyarwanda, French and English). The content of the short-movie was developed by IOM based on information gathered from trainers in the countries of departure, associations and institutions in France, and the beneficiaries themselves. As for the booklet, it is systematically distributed to all beneficiaries of the program. Participative activities are also carried out.

As for the refugees resettled to France under the framework-agreement between France and the UNHCR, pre-departure information will be distributed by IOM in the form of a booklet translated into 9 languages, beginning in 2023. The refugees resettled from a third-country included in the French resettlement program, can also join the pre-departure orientation sessions.

10.4 Travel Arrangements and Documents

The formalities to book plane tickets and issue travel documents are fulfilled by IOM. The formalities to issue travel documents (consular laissez-passer and long-stay visas) are done by the French consular section of the country of first asylum with the assistance of IOM and UNHCR when necessary. The French consular authorities are informed of the priority nature of these claims.



11. Reception and Integration

11.1 Overview

The monitoring of the reception and follow-up of resettled refugees is delegated by the French Ministry of the Interior to non-governmental organisations, under the supervision of regional state services. The NGOs are in charge of the accommodation and the global social support of the resettled refugees, financed by the Government and EU funding for 12 months.

11.2 Placement

A public agency, upon the Ministry of Interior supervision, is responsible for pairing resettled refugees with the NGOs in 11 regions in France.

11.3 Reception

Upon arrival in France, resettled refugees are greeted at an airport by an IOM officer who escorts them either to a domestic flight or to the meeting point with the NGO in charge of their accommodation. In case of a domestic flight, resettled refugees are then greeted by the NGO upon arrival.

11.4 Orientation

N/A

11.5 Support Services

The resettled refugees are fully supported in their administrative steps by the NGO in charge, and receive social assistance for health, special needs and education, as well as financial assistance for food.

11.6 Housing

After they arrive, the resettled refugees are directed to their own fully furnished rental home, which has been identified prior to their arrival by the public agency mandated by the Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with regional state services. The lease will be signed by them once they receive the social benefits. If no permanent accommodation has been identified on time, the NGO in charge provides temporary reception conditions.

11.7 Health

All their medical and hospital expenses are fully covered by the French social welfare system under the same conditions as French citizens.



11.8 Language

Upon the transfer of refugee status, a Republican Integration contract (CIR) is signed by the resettled refugee. This contract plans civic trainings on French institutions and values of the Republic and on life and employment in France as well as language training sanctioned by a diploma.

11.9 Education

Under common law, education is free and compulsory for children from 6 to 16 years of age.

11.10 Employment

An agent of the public employment service, “Pôle Emploi”, supports the resettled refugee throughout the process.

11.11 Financial Assistance

In line with common law, the resettled refugee receives a minimum income during his/her job search.

11.12 Supporting Specific Needs

No unaccompanied minors are currently resettled in France. See 11.5 and 11.7 for specific needs.

11.13 Family reunification

Family reunification may be requested for the refugee’s spouse and children. In accordance with common law, the stay is granted by right to the following members of the family of the resettled refugee:

- The spouse when the marriage took place prior to the agreement to resettlement or, failing this, when it took place at least one year previously, subject to actual cohabitation by the spouses;
- Children under the age of 19.

12. References & Resources on resettlement

The code of the Entry and Stay of Foreigners and Asylum Law, Art. L. 520-1

Addendum on complementary pathways

- Describe the additional safe and legal admission avenues (complementary pathways) available to persons in need of international protection and/or broader humanitarian needs, including:
 - Humanitarian pathways (e.g. humanitarian corridors)



- Sponsorship pathways
- Skills-based pathways (e.g. labour or education)
- *Include links to any relevant references and resources on complementary pathways*

France is working at developing complementary pathways; those pathways are available to persons in need of international protection.

Visas for asylum purposes:

The issuance of visas for asylum purposes is a French specificity. This procedure allows persons in need of protection to regularly travel to France in order to apply for asylum.

Applicants for a visa on the grounds of asylum must apply to one of France's diplomatic representations abroad, in their country of origin or in a third country. A decision is taken on the basis of a list of criteria jointly set out by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs.

If the application meets the criteria, long-stay visas are issued. Once the beneficiaries arrived on French territory, they are invited to contact the competent authorities to file an asylum application in accordance with national legislation.

Humanitarian corridors:

Since 2017, France receives asylum-seeking families under a humanitarian corridor protocol signed with some faith-based associations. The families are identified by the association in Lebanon, and only join France once the Ministry of Interior has validated their visa application for asylum on the basis of precise criteria set jointly by the Ministry of interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their need for protection is assessed before authorizing their arrival in France. Once in France, these families file an asylum application which is processed within a short timeframe. All expenses related to their transfer are covered by the associations. Their volunteer workers support the families in their asylum and integration process in France. This is a private sponsorship system.

University corridors:

In December 2021, on the follow-up to the commitments made at the World Refugee Forum in December 2019, France committed to receiving 20 students at the start of the September 2022 academic year and 30 at the start of the following academic year under the UNIV'R project.

The UNIV'R project, supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), aims to set up university corridors allowing French-speaking students who are currently refugees in a first country of asylum to enrol in a master's degree in France.