

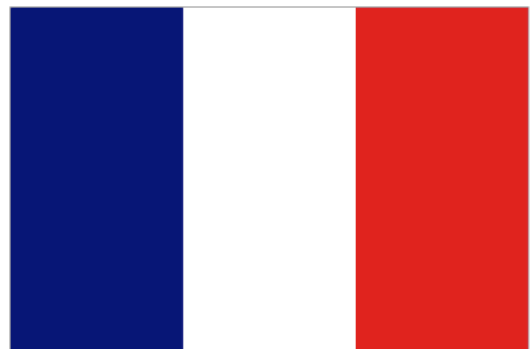
**COUNTRY  
CHAPTER**

**FRA**

**FRANCE**

**BY THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE**

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**France Overview:**

|  |                                  |                                    |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Resettlement programme since:<br><b>2008</b> | Selection Missions:<br><b>No</b> | Dossier Submissions:<br><b>Yes</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|

**Resettlement Admission Targets for 2014**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Admission targets for <b>UNHCR submissions:</b> | 100 dossiers, unspecified number of persons |
| Total Resettlement Admission Target:            | 100 dossiers                                |

**Regional allocations for 2014 (not applicable):**

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| Africa   | n/a |
| Asia     | n/a |
| MENA     | n/a |
| Europe   | n/a |
| Americas | n/a |

**Sub-quota features:**

| <b>Designated sub-quota/acceptance for:</b> | <b>2014 Description, additional comments:</b> |
|---|---|
| Emergency resettlement procedures           | No specific sub-quota                         |
| Medical cases                               | No specific sub-quota                         |
| Women-at-risk cases                         | No specific sub-quota                         |
| Unaccompanied children                      | No specific sub-quota                         |
| Family Reunion (within programme)           | Outside of resettlement programme.            |

**1. Resettlement Policy****1.1 Description of the country's resettlement policy**

Following the framework agreement signed between UNHCR and France in 2008, France committed itself to consider 100 cases of refugees each year under the mandate of the UNHCR. France's priority is to accept and facilitate the resettlement of the principal claimant and family members who can not return to their country of origin and who are not able to integrate in their first country of asylum.

Outside of the framework agreement, France also committed itself in 2008 to resettle people belonging to religious minorities in Iraq, and between 2008 and 2012, 1,200 of these individuals were welcomed. In addition, France received 150 Iraqi nationals in October 2010 victims of the terrorist attack against the cathedral of Bagdad.

In addition, still outside the framework agreement, about 190 individuals who were already granted refugee status or subsidiary protection in Malta were relocated in France in 2009 and 2010.

In 2013, France made a commitment to welcome 500 vulnerable Syrian refugees in need of resettlement. The first Syrians resettled arrived in the first months of 2014.

Finally, France has a longstanding tradition of welcoming individuals who face danger in their own country due to a political or humanitarian crisis.

## **1.2 Ministries and Departments responsible for resettlement policy**

The Asylum Service is in charge of resettlement (selection as well as integration aspects), and is accountable to the Directorate-General for Foreign Nationals in France of the Ministry of Interior.

## **1.3 Process for deciding the annual resettlement quota and its composition**

As noted above, France committed itself to review a hundred cases per year. Applications are examined and decisions to grant or refuse refugee status are taken within a year. Applications submitted by UNHCR under the current year's programme are received until December 31<sup>st</sup>. The completion of case reviews and the final decisions generally occur before June of the following year.

## **2. Criteria for Recognition of Refugee Status Eligibility and Asylum**

### **2.1 National legislation defining refugee status eligibility**

The Code of the Entry and Stay of Foreigners and Asylum Law provides two types of protection.

Refugee status is accorded to any person persecuted because of his/her action in favour 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 14<sup>th</sup>, 1950 or who meets the definition of Article 1 of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of July 28<sup>th</sup> 1951.

The benefit of subsidiary protection is meanwhile granted to any person who does not fulfill 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. Distinction, if any, between refugee status criteria for asylum-seekers, and that for resettled refugees**

As refugees recognized under the 1951 Geneva Convention, resettled people automatically and quickly obtain the transfer of their status by the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA).

## **3. Criteria for Resettlement**

### **3.1 Resettlement Eligibility Criteria**

All refugees who meet the definition of Article 1 of the 1951 Geneva Convention are eligible for resettlement.

### **3.2 Admissibility criteria**

The absence of threats to security and public order is carefully reviewed. Specialized security services are systematically consulted during the review of the case.

### **3.2 Other humanitarian immigration programmes**

As mentioned above, France has undertaken other resettlement/humanitarian programs in recent years including the resettlement program for persons belonging to religious minorities under threat in Iraq and the intra-European Union programs of relocation of individuals granted international protection in Malta. These specific programs are now completed.

In 2013, a program, has been set up in close collaboration with UNHCR, to welcome 500 vulnerable Syrian refugees. This program will be implemented partly through the current

resettlement quota and partly through an ad hoc humanitarian admission program. In 2013, 25 dossiers (120 individuals) were submitted by UNHCR as part of the annual resettlement quota. The remaining cases will continue to be submitted in 2014. The first Syrian refugees arrived in France early in 2014. However they are selected, every Syrian accepted under this program will be granted international protection.

## 4. Resettlement Allocations/Processing Priorities

### 4.1 Resettlement allocations including sub-quotas

Except for the current case of Syrian nationals, France did not set priorities for UNHCR for specific categories of persons nor specific geographical locations.

However, France establishes national forecasts each year for specific categories (vulnerable women, unaccompanied minors, medical cases, victims of violence and persecution, urgent need for legal or physical protection) for which EU funding can be obtained.

### 4.2 Processing priorities

The only quantitative limit in the French resettlement program is determined by the terms of the framework agreement, that is to say the number of cases submitted each year by UNHCR. Apart from this limit of one hundred cases per year, which may involve one or more individuals each, France doesn't impose other limits. Decisions of agreement or rejection are taken in accordance with the criteria defined above.

Most of the cases are submitted by UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, although, since 2013, cases may also be submitted directly submitted by two UNHCR Hub offices (Nairobi and Beirut).

## 5. Submissions and Processing via Dossier Selection

### 5.1. Dossier (RRF) submission policies, case documentation, decision-making and processing times

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 submitted for resettlement.

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

UNHCR starts sending files for the annual program from May of the current year and all applications are usually received by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Applications are processed in chronological order by date of receipt, unless an emergency is reported. The general information of each file is stored in statistical tables in order to track accurately the stages of the file processing. The Asylum Service strives to review ten to fifteen cases per month.

Each case consists of about fifteen pages. It is translated from English to French and is summarized in three pages, respecting the schema used by UNHCR : the individuals' civil status, marital status, history that led the refugee to leave his country, analysis of the situation in the country of origin preventing refugees to return, and analysis of the situation and difficulties integrating in the host country.

After consultation with the security services to ensure that candidates for resettlement are not known in the context of terrorism and not subject to a national arrest warrant, the case and the summary are submitted to the geographical divisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an opinion ("sensitive" cases also require the opinion of OFPRA the French Office of the Protection of Refugees and Stateless People). 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 Service), who decide whether or not to grant resettlement to the applicant.

Applications with medical cases are also submitted for an opinion to the Department of refugees and reception of asylum seekers (in the Asylum Service), which seeks the advice of the medical officer from the state agency in charge of the reception and integration of foreigners, the French Office of Immigration and Integration (OFII), and then sends its conclusions to the Department of asylum and protection.

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

In the event of an agreement, the Asylum Service immediately informs UNHCR of its decision in principle. However, the start up 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 Service to the relevant French Consulate. Instruction is also given to IOM to proceed with the adequate travel arrangements.

Due to saturation of the national accommodation scheme, there have been some involuntary delays in launching the start up procedure. Efforts are made to try to improve the situation.

## **5.2. Recourses, appeals**

There is no appeal procedure.

## **6. Submissions and Processing via In Country Selection**

France does not carry out selection missions.

## **7. Emergency Cases/Urgent Cases**

Emergency cases are given priority, regardless of the chronological order of receipt, and follow exactly the procedure described above. The refusal decision or the agreement is sent to the UNHCR in Geneva as soon as possible. In the event of an agreement, the Asylum Service strives to find quickly suitable accommodation, in collaboration with the OFII.

## **8. Special Categories/ Specific Needs**

### **8.1 Sub-quotas dedicated to specific needs cases**

France does not set quotas for cases involving people with specific needs, however, particular attention is given to applications related to such individuals

## **9. Medical Requirements**

### **9.1 Screening procedures, including costs**

Applications submitted by UNHCR as medical cases or cases not submitted as such but related to individuals with health problems are consistently forwarded for advice to the OFII's doctor in order to assess care needs.

### **9.2 Health criteria and exclusion factors**

France does not set preconditions of eligibility related to the candidates' state of health.

### **9.3 Pre-departure examination procedures**

A medical examination is carried out before departure to ensure that individuals whose resettlement has been accepted can travel safely. This examination is conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

## **10. Pre-departure orientation**

Pre-departure information is distributed by IOM in the form of a brochure. Cultural information sessions are organized by IOM for trips involving at least 10 individuals.

## **11. Travel**

The formalities to book plane tickets and issue travel documents are fulfilled by IOM. Costs are fully born by OFII. 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.

## **12. Status on Arrival and Pathways to Citizenship**

### **12.1 Immigration status on arrival**

The long-stay visa issued by the French consular authorities allows to stay on French territory for a period of three months. During this period, 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 six months and a form to complete and submit to OFPRA to obtain the transfer of their refugee status. While waiting for their refugee status to be transferred, which is usually done in a short period of time after arrival, they have access to social benefits and are authorized to work.

### **12.2 Documentation issued, including travel documents**

Once placed under the protection of OFPRA, a ten-year residence permit is issued by the prefecture. It is renewed by right. If they want to travel, they may request from the prefecture a refugee travel document with a validity period of two years, allowing them to travel in all countries with the exception of their country of origin.

### **12.3 Documents issued to children born after arrival but before naturalization of their parents**

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

### **12.4 Process for regularization of status and citizenship, including requirements and timeframes**

French nationality may be acquired by resettled refugees as soon as they have recognized refugee status in France. Though, it requires to meet certain conditions: not to have been convicted by courts, to demonstrate a good knowledge of French language, history, culture and society, to adhere to the fundamental principles and values of the French Republic.

Children born in France obtain citizenship by right when they are 18, 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.

## 13. Domestic Settlement and Community Services

### 13.1 Overview of services and providers

Upon arrival in France, resettled refugees are greeted by an IOM officer who escorts them to the meeting point with an OFII officer. Then they are directed to specific reception and accommodation schemes dedicated to resettled refugees, mainly managed by non-governmental organizations financed by the State.

They are supported in their administrative steps for the prefecture and OFPRA and receive social assistance, in health and education, as well as financial assistance for food. All their medical and hospital expenses are covered from their temporary stay admission. Education is free and compulsory for children from 6 to 16 years.

Upon the transfer of refugee status, a reception and integration contract (CAI) is concluded by OFII with the resettled refugee. This contract plans a civic training on French institutions and values of the Republic as well as language training sanctioned by a diploma. A skills assessment is also made to prepare the resettled refugee to his job search.

Access to employment is a key step of the integration process of the resettled refugee. He is accompanied throughout the process by an agent of the public employment service, "Pôle Emploi". During his job search, the resettled refugee receives a minimum income.

## 14. Family Reunification of Refugees

Family reunification may be requested for the refugee's spouse and children. 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;
- his children under the age of 19.

## 15. References, Resources