Reception - France

Reception system

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

France is bound by the recast Reception Conditions Directive and has transposed its provisions through the Law No 2015-925 of 29 July 2015 on the reform of asylum law | LOI n° 2015-925 du 29 juillet 2015 relative à la réforme du droit d'asile

National legislation

29/07/2015: France transposed the recast Reception Conditions Directive by Law No 2015-925 of 29 July 2015 on the reform of asylum law | LOI n° 2015-925 du 29 juillet 2015 relative à la réforme du droit d'asile amending the Code of Entry and Residence of Foreigners and of the Right to Asylum | Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile - CESEDA

Competent authority and stakeholders

Authority responsible for reception	French Office for Immigration and Integration (*Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration,* OFII), under the supervision of the General Directorate for Foreign Nationals in France (*Direction générale des étrangers en France,* DGEF) of the Ministry of the Interior. Its main competence areas are: labour migration, family reunification, induction and integration of foreigners, reception of applicants for international protection, return and reintegration support.

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Other actors involved	Prefectures: Financial management of reception facilities in a specific region *(département)*. The daily management of the facilities is sub-contracted to a semi-public company, Adoma, or NGOs that have been selected through a public call for tenders, such as France Terre d'Asile, Coallia, Forum Réfugiés, Habitat et Humanisme, and La Croix Rouge Française (French Red Cross).

Organisational aspects

The law establishes a national reception scheme (Article L.551-3 of CESEDA) which is managed by the Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) and currently comprises OFII local departments. OFII falls under the supervision of the General Directorate for Foreign Nationals, which operates under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior.

OFII oversees the allocation of accommodation places to applicants in various centres. It collaborates with external operators within the framework of a public contract. OFII is present at the single desk for asylum seekers. It assesses vulnerabilities, manages the reception network and pays an allowance according to the applicant’s profile.

OFII is also responsible for labour migration, family reunification, induction and integration of foreigners, reception of applicants for international protection and return and reintegration support.

Allocation of applicants to geographical areas within the territory

OFII allocates applicants to the region (department) in which they registered. If accommodation cannot be found according to their needs in this region or maximum capacity is reached in a region, OFII's central desk places the applicant to another region. Applicants are entitled to material reception conditions only in the newly designated region. They have to present themselves to the accommodation place proposed by OFII within 5 days. If not, the offer is considered refused and they are excluded from material reception conditions.

Staff and training

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Reception phases

OFII provides material reception conditions to applicants, following registration at the single desk for asylum seekers (*guichet unique pour demandeurs d'asile,* GUDA) (Article L 551-9 CESEDA).

Pre-registration: Applicants make an application at a first reception centre for asylum seekers (SPADA). SPADA pre-registers them and schedule their appointment for the registration of their application at the single desk.

Registration at the single desk (GUDA): Once the applicant has registered the application at the single desk, they obtain an asylum application certificate which is necessary to receive material reception conditions. Following the registration, OFII allocates accommodation to the applicant in the region where they registered. If accommodation cannot be found according to their needs or maximum capacity is reached, OFII's central desk allocates them to another region. If accommodation is not immediately available, applicants are on a waiting list and get alternative accommodation temporarily (e.g. hotels).

The right to material reception conditions ends at the end of the month in which the right to remain on the territory ends (Article L. 551-11 and L. 551-13 CESEDA).

The right to remain ends on the date of OFPRA’s decision in the absence of an appeal and, if an appeal has been lodged, on the date of the CNDA’s decision when the appeal has a suspensive effect. When the appeal does not have a suspensive effect, the applicant loses the right to remain on the date of OFPRA’s decision.

In certain cases (Article L. 551-14 CESEDA), the right to material reception conditions ends at the end of the month during which the enforcement of the return decision can no longer be suspended to allow for an appeal before the CNDA.

Beneficiaries of international protection may stay in the accommodation centre for 3 months after recognition, renewable one time for 3 months.

Contingency planning

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In accordance with Article 32(2) of Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection, France drafted a contingency plan that was notified to the EUAA.

Facilities

Overview of different types of reception facilities according to national classification

First level:

- **Reception and assessment centres (*centres d'accueil et d'examen des situations*, CAES)** are an entry point to the reception system The expected stay in CAES is 1 month.

Second level:

- **Emergency accommodation**: It includes different types of facilities:

  - Reception and accommodation programme for asylum seekers (*programme d'accueil et d'hébergement des demandeurs d'asile*, PRAHDA): mainly accommodates applicants in the Dublin procedure.

  - Emergency accommodation for asylum seekers (*hébergement d'urgence des demandeurs d'asile*, HUDA): this includes different types of facilities but has been restructured since 2018. It prioritises the reception of international protection applicants under the fast track and the Dublin procedure.

  - Reception centres for asylum seekers (*centres d'accueil de demandeurs d'asile*, CADA): collective or individual facilities foreseen for the standard reception of applicants, except for applicants in the Dublin procedure.

Third level:

- **Priority accommodation centres (*centres prioritaires d'hébergement,* CPH):** For vulnerable beneficiaries of international protection (not applicants) who are in transition from reception to finding their own housing solution.

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Premises at the border

Name of the reception facility	Applicants in the border procedure may be kept in waiting zones, but these are not considered to be part of the reception system.
Access description	Applicants remain in the waiting zone until a decision on their application for an authorisation to enter the territory on asylum grounds
Management	Border Police
Type of applicants accommodated	Applicants in the border procedure
Number of centres	n/a
Capacity	n/a
Location of the centres within the country	Waiting zones are located at various airports and ports, amongst others: • Paris Airports (Roissy CDG, Orly, Beauvais) • Marseille Airport • Marseille maritime port • Lyon – Saint Exupéry Airport • Toulouse Blagnac Airport • Bâle-Mulhouse Airport • Bordeaux Airport • Nantes Airport • Nice Airport • Strasbourg Airport • La Réunion Airport

Initial reception centres

Name of the reception facility	n/a
Regime	n/a
Management	n/a

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Type of applicants accommodated	n/a
Number of centres	n/a
Capacity	n/a
Location of the centres within the country	n/a

Collective accommodation centres

Name of the reception facility	• CAES • HUDA • PRAHDA • CADA • CPH
Regime	Open
Management	The daily management of the facilities is sub-contracted to a semi-public company, Adoma, or NGOs that have been selected through a public call for tender. The financial management of facilities is the responsibility of the prefectures in a specific region (*département*). The overall responsibility lies with the Ministry of the Interior, General Directorate for Foreign Nationals in France.

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Type of applicants accommodated	• CAES: Initial reception centre where the administrative situation is determined (pre-asylum, international protection applicant, rejected international protection applicant, beneficiaries of international protection, Dublin applicant) • CADA: Standard reception for all applicants, except for those in the Dublin procedure. • PRAHDA: Accommodation typically for applicants in the Dublin procedure. • HUDA: For all applicants, but prioritises the reception of international protection applicants under the fast track and the Dublin procedure. • CPH: Priority accommodation centres. For vulnerable beneficiaries of international protection (not applicants) who are in transition from reception to finding their own housing solution.
Number of centres	• CAES: 74 • CADA: 410 • PRAHDA: 58 • HUDA: 406 • CPH: 164
Capacity	
Location of the centres within the country	Various, spread over the country

Individual accommodation centres (such as private houses, flats, hotels)

Name of the reception facility	n/a
Regime	n/a
Management	n/a

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Type of applicants accommodated	n/a
Number of centres	n/a
Capacity	n/a
Location of the centres within the country	n/a

Temporary solutions when housing capacities is temporarily exhausted

Name of the reception facility	n/a
Regime	n/a
Management	n/a
Type of applicants accommodated	n/a
Number of centres	n/a
Capacity	n/a
Location of the centres within the country	n/a

Reception facilities for applicants with special needs

Applicants with special needs or vulnerabilities can be prioritised for places in reception centres for asylum seekers.

Victims of human trafficking, torture or other forms of violence: In 2025, there were 300 specialised reception places in 4 regions (Ile de France, Nouvelle Aquitaine, Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur, Auvergne Rhône Alpes) which are adapted to women who are victims of human trafficking or victims of other forms of violence

Unaccompanied minors: The Law on Child Protection No 2022-140 of 7 February 2022 no longer allows hotel accommodation for children as of 2024

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(when children could only be placed in a hotel for a maximum period of 2 months with stricter security measures). Unaccompanied minors are usually first placed in a departmental children's shelter or foster family.

Material reception conditions provided in kind and cash

Definition of material reception conditions

Article L. 551-8 of CESEDA refers to the recast Reception Conditions Directive and defines material reception conditions, including housing and services (Chapter II, Article L. 551-1 to L. 552-15), and the obtention and payment of allowances (Chapter III, Article L. 553-1 to L. 553-3).

Material reception conditions provided in kind

Type and purpose	CESEDA only mentions explicitly accommodation among material reception conditions provided in kind. The relevant decrees underline that the service provider is obliged to provide catering services when the facility does not have a kitchen – otherwise costs for food are included in the financial allowance.

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Duration and recurrence	The right to material reception conditions ends at the end of the month in which the right to remain on the territory ends (Article L. 551-11 and L. 551-13 CESEDA). The right to remain ends on the date of OFPRA's decision in the absence of an appeal and, if an appeal has been lodged, on the date of the CNDA's decision when the appeal has an automatic suspensive effect. When the appeal does not have a suspensive effect, the applicant loses the right to remain on the date of OFPRA's decision. In certain cases (Article L. 551-14 CESEDA), the right to material reception conditions ends at the end of the month during which the enforcement of the return decision can no longer be suspended to allow for an appeal before the CNDA. Beneficiaries of international protection may stay in the accommodation centre for 3 months after recognition, renewable one time for 3months.

Financial allowances and vouchers

Type and purpose	The asylum seeker's allowance (*allocations pour demandeur d'asile*, ADA) is managed by the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII). The payment of allowances starts after the asylum application has been lodged with the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA).

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Duration and recurrence	The entitlement starts when the applicant has: • accepted the OFII care package; • an asylum application certificate; • the monthly family resources are lower than the active solidarity income (*revenu de solidarité active*, RSA) provides people without resources with a minimum level of income which varies according to the composition of the household); • lodged their asylum application with OFPRA within 21 days of their registration at the prefecture. In practice, monthly payments start when the application is lodged with OFPRA. Payment of the asylum seeker's allowance ends at the end of the month in which the applicant's right to remain on French territory ends. For persons recognised as refugees or granted subsidiary protection, the benefit of the allowance ends at the end of the month following the notification of the decision.
Calculation and amount	The amount of the allowances depends on the applicant's family composition, situation and whether they are accommodated within the reception system. The daily amount of the allowances is listed in Annex 8 of CESEDA. When applicants cannot be accommodated, they receive an additional EUR 7.40 per day (Articles D. 553-8 and D. 553-9 CESEDA). The daily amount of allowances differs in Guyana and Saint Martin. Applicants who cannot be accommodated in Guyana and St Martin receive an additional EUR 4.70 per day.
Applicants granted allowance	The allowance is paid to all applicants over 18 years.

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Modalities of provision	The allowance is transferred monthly to a payment card.

Material reception conditions for vulnerable persons

In June 2021, the Ministry of the Interior communicated its action plan which contains 10 concrete actions to improve the early detection of vulnerabilities and special needs and provide adequate care and assistance in reception.

Rights and obligations during reception

Provision of information and counselling

Modalities of information provision on benefits and obligations related to reception conditions	Applicants typically receive a booklet about their reception rights and obligations upon admission to the reception facility.
Provision of legal assistance on the reception conditions available	Civil society organisations
House rules	Depends on each centre’s operator.

Freedom of movement within the territory

Assignment of a particular area of residence to applicants	The French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) allocates accommodation to applicants in the region in which they registered. Applicants are only entitled to material reception conditions in the designated region.

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Reporting obligations	n/a

Employment and vocational training

Time limit to access the labour market	6 months from the lodging of the application. Applicants can apply for a work permit if OFPRA has not decided yet on the application within 6 months from the lodging and the applicant is not responsible for the delay.
Criteria to access the labour market	Applicants need to apply for a work permit, as any other third-country national. Applicants can apply for a work permit if they meet the following conditions: • they have the asylum application certificate; • OFPRA has not decided on their application within 6 months from the lodging and the applicant is not responsible for the delay. In this case, when applicants request the renewal of their expired certificate, they may also request a work permit. An employment contract or employment offer must be joined to the application. The work permit is renewable until OFPRA's decision, and applicants retain the right to work in the event of an appeal before the National Court of Asylum (CNDA). If an applicant has not obtained the right to work during the administrative procedure before OFPRA, they are no longer able to work for the duration of the examination of the appeal before the CNDA. Unaccompanied minors have the right to obtain a work permit if they are in the care of the child welfare services and have an apprenticeship or internship contract.

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Employment support for applicants	n/a
Adults' access to vocational training	Applicants' access to vocational training is linked to their right to work: they can access vocational training when OFPRA has not decided on their application within 6 months from the lodging and the applicant is not responsible for the delay and they obtained a work permit.
Access to tertiary education	While recognised beneficiaries of international protection do not have to pay registration fees and can ask the recognition of their diploma for free, applicants do not in principle benefit from these exemptions. A university may decide to grant these exemptions or grant scholarships to them on their own initiative. Applicants must fulfil the same conditions and pay the same fees as nationals if they would like to attend tertiary education: they must have a French baccalaureate or a recognised equivalent and have passed the necessary tests for selective studies and Master's degree. Applicants need to submit a prior admission request if they do not have the French baccalaureate. They are also required to certify with an official French language diploma (DELF, DALF, TCF) that they have a language knowledge level of at least B2.

Healthcare

Medical screening	Applicants can undergo a medical screening upon their admission to the reception facility. The screening typically focuses on the detection of contagious diseases.

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Level of healthcare	Applicants in the asylum procedure have access to healthcare through the universal health cover (*Protection universelle maladie*, PUMA) system after 3 months. During the first 3 months, applicants can access clinics for healthcare (PASS).
Access to healthcare	Requests to receive PUMA are made through the social security services (CPAM) of the place of residence. Applicants must submit documentary evidence of the regularity of their stay in France, marital status and the level of resources. Those who do not have the right to remain in France, including rejected applicants, can receive PUMA for 6 months after the end of validity of the asylum application certificate. After this period, state medical aid (AME) enables them to receive free treatments in hospitals and doctors' offices.

Education for minors

Children of compulsory school age (3-16 years) must be enrolled within 3 months from lodging their application. In practice they are typically enrolled within a few days.

Education for children is provided in regular schools, but it could be provided directly in reception centres (e.g. in larger emergency reception facilities).

Minor applicants undergo an evaluation procedure as any other newly arrived third-country national. Their language skills and educational level are tested. The tests are organised by the regional Academic Centre for the Education of Newcomers and Traveller Children (*Centre académique pour la scolarisation des élèves allophones nouvellement arrivés et des enfants issus de familles itinérantes et de voyageurs*, CASNAV). Pupils with sufficient French knowledge are included directly in mainstream classes. Other children are expected to join regular classes and attend in addition special classes, Pedagogical Units for Newcomer Non-Francophone Children (*Unité pédagogique pour élèves allophones arrivants*, UPE2A) to receive language support for a maximum period of 2 years. The transition to regular classes is more gradual in practice: pupils typically attend 1 year of immersion classes and they are usually included in arts, music and sports classes at first, before joining all mainstream classes.

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Socio-cultural orientation and language learning

Access to socio-cultural orientation	Socio-cultural orientation is not organised in a systematic way for applicants. NGOs provide these classes from time to time in some reception facilities, depending on the resources available.
Language classes	Language classes are not organised in a systematic way for applicants. NGOs provide these classes from time to time in some reception facilities, depending on the resources available.

Sufficient means

Arrangement of private accommodation

Applicants who are not provided with an accommodation receive an additional allowance to cover housing needs. They can access services like a registered address and social workers at SPADAs.

Applicants who refuse the accommodation proposed to them do not receive material reception conditions.

Contribution to reception and healthcare costs

Applicants whose monthly income is above the amount of the active solidarity benefit (*revenu de solidarité active*, RSA) are required to contribute to reception costs. For exact calculations, please see https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000048594940

Sufficient means test

Article D. 553-3 of CESEDA underlines that applicants must justify that their monthly income is under the amount of the active solidarity benefit (revenu de solidarité active, RSA). This level depends on the family situation of the applicant. For exact calculations, please see https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000048594940

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Sanction regimes, reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions

Circumstances for reducing or withdrawing material reception conditions

The French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) decides on the suspension, withdrawal or refusal of material reception conditions.

Material reception conditions can be refused for the following reasons (Article L. 551-15 CESEDA):

- The applicant refuses the accommodation that has been offered or the assigned region.
- The applicant made subsequent applications or, without legitimate reason, has not made an application within 90 days since arrival in France.

They can be withdrawn for the following reasons or for the following reasons (Article L. 551-16 CESEDA):

- The applicant leaves the accommodation that has been offered or the assigned region.
- The applicant does not fulfil their obligations towards the authorities, namely to attend the personal interview(s) and provide authorities with useful information for the asylum application.
- The applicant provided false statements about identity, personal situation or financial situation.
- The applicant made several asylum applications under different identities.

A new decree (Decree No 2024-809) of 5 July 2024 aims to reinforce the system for the rejection or cessation of material reception conditions for international protection applicants and removes the mandatory prior administrative appeal against decisions to refuse material reception conditions. It is specified that the circumstances of the person, i.e. special needs and vulnerabilities, must be taken into account.

Possible sanctions and procedure

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The decision of the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) to reject or withdraw material reception conditions must be motivated and in writing. It needs to take into account the vulnerabilities of the applicant.

Review of the sanction decision

Applicants can present their observations to the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII) within 15 days of the notification of the decision. According to Article L. 555-1 of CESEDA, they can appeal the decision before the administrative court under the procedural rules of Article L. 921-1 of CESEDA: the appeal must be lodged within 7 days of the notification of the decision and the court (single-judge formation) rules within 15 days of the appeal being lodged.

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