Information provision - France

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

France is bound by EU legislation and has transposed relevant provisions through the Code of Entry and Residence of Foreigners and of the Right to Asylum | CESEDA (Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile).

National legislation

Code of Entry and Residence of Foreigners and of the Right to Asylum | CESEDA (Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile)

Competent authority and other stakeholders

Area/stage of the asylum procedure	Competent authority
Reception	French Office for immigration and integration | Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration (OFII) First reception centre for asylum seekers | Structures de premier accueil de demandeurs d'asile (SPADA)
Registration of application	Prefectures | Préfecture Prefect of Police of Paris | Préfecture de police de Paris

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Area/stage of the asylum procedure	Competent authority
Lodging of application	French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons | Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA)
Dublin procedure	Prefectures | Préfecture Prefect of Police of Paris | Préfecture de police de Paris
Assessment of application	French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons | Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA)
Communication of administrative decision	French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons | Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA)
Content of protection	French Office for immigration and integration | Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration (OFII) French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons | Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA)
Appeal procedure	National Court of Asylum | Cour nationale du droit d'asile (CNDA) Conseil d'État
Communication of second instance decision	National Court of Asylum | Cour nationale du droit d'asile (CNDA)

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Area/stage of the asylum procedure	Competent authority
Resettlement	Ministry of the Interior French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons | Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA) UNHCR IOM

Provision of information in the asylum procedure

Access to procedure

In France, foreign nationals seeking asylum are provided with relevant information throughout the asylum procedure, though no formal screening process is applied.

The Code of Entry and Residence of Foreigners and of the Right to Asylum (CESEDA) includes several relevant articles that underline the duty of the relevant public authorities to inform the persons concerned in a language they can understand about their right to apply for international protection. Article R. 521-16 of the CESEDA provides that *"Asylum seekers are given an information brochure on the asylum procedure, their rights and the obligations they must respect during the procedure, and the possible consequences of not respecting their obligations or refusing to cooperate with the authorities. This brochure also specifies the resources available to the asylum seeker to help them submit their application to the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons."* Initially, applicants receive basic information regarding the registration and lodging of their application for international protection at first reception centres for asylum seekers | Structures de premier accueil des demandeurs d'asile (SPADA). These centres handle the pre-registration phase, and during this stage, applicants are informed of the procedure and timelines both orally by staff

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from non-governmental organisations subcontracted by the State, and through written materials.

Once registration is completed at the Single Desks (GUDA), applicants receive further detailed information from competent authorities on the asylum process both orally and through detailed brochures. The brochures provided at this stage, such as *“Le guide du demandeur d’asile en France”*, help explain the next steps, applicants' rights, obligations, and available resources for assistance. The information provided includes the applicant's rights, obligations, reception conditions, and available resources for submitting their asylum application. It also specifies the role of non-governmental organisations that assist international protection applicants, including the option of having a lawyer or a representative from an advocacy group accompany them during their personal interview. Additionally, details about the potential consequences of non-compliance or refusal to cooperate during the process are presented to the applicant. This information is provided in a language that the applicant understands or can reasonably be expected to understand.

The information materials are developed by both the Ministry of the Interior and OFPRA. The brochure *“Le guide du demandeur d’asile en France”*, drafted in French, has been translated into 30 languages: Albanian, Amharic, English, Arabic, Armenian, Azeri, Bambara, Bengali, Chinese, Spanish, Haitian, Georgian, Italian, Kurdish Kurmanji, Kurdish Sorani, Lingala, Mongolian, Oromo, Urdu, Pashto, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian Cyrillic, Latin Serbian, Somali, Swahili, Tamil, Tigrinya, Turkish.

OFPRA also creates additional materials, such as videos and guides, to assist asylum seekers at various stages of their journey, including a specific guide for unaccompanied minors (UAMs).

Upon arrival at a detention centre, third-country nationals are notified of their right to apply for international protection and are made aware of the 5-day deadline to submit their asylum application. This deadline may be exceeded in the event that new elements supporting their application arise after this timeframe. This information is provided by the competent authority (police officers), typically in writing and sometimes supplemented with oral explanations. During detention, international protection applicants may benefit from legal assistance provided by associations.

Extensive information is available online as well on the website of different authorities, such as the Ministry of the Interior, OFII, OFPRA or on service-public.fr

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- Guide du demandeur d'asile en France
- Service-Public - Droit des Demandeurs d'Asile
- OFII - Asylum Procedure
- OFPRA - Je demande l'asile
- OFPRA - MNA Guide
- OFPRA - FAQ and Videos

Dublin procedure

Applicants in France receive information about the application of the Dublin III Regulation on the same day they register their application for international protection, when their fingerprints are taken to check the Eurodac database. At this stage, they are provided with the appropriate leaflets (A and B) and undergo a personal interview. Prior to registration at the Single Desk of a Prefecture, applicants are given general information on the asylum procedure by social workers at SPADAs.

Additional information regarding the Dublin procedure is provided or reiterated when a transfer decision is made and notified to the applicant. The responsibility for providing this information lies with public servants at the Single Desk of the Prefectures (GUDA). Applicants are informed about the objectives of the Dublin Regulation, including the responsibility criteria, the aim of the personal interview, available legal remedies, their suspensive effect, the legal assistance available, the consequences of applying for asylum in another Member State, the importance of complying with the process of determining the responsible Member State, and their rights to access and correct personal data. The personal interview aims to ensure that the applicant fully understands the information provided in leaflets A and B.

The information is primarily shared orally, with interpretation provided when necessary, and through the appropriate leaflets in written. These leaflets are available in several languages, including Albanian, Amharic, English, Arabic, Armenian, Azeri, Badini, Bambara, Bengali, Chinese, Sinhalese, Dari, Farsi, French, Georgian, Italian, Kurdish Kurmanji, Kurdish Sorani, Lingala, Macedonian, Mongolian, Oromo, Urdu, Pashto, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Somali, Soninke, Swahili, Tamil, Spanish, Chechen, Tigrinya, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.

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Additionally, the leaflets are complemented with contact information for national asylum authorities, the administrative authority for data protection (CNIL), international organisations such as UNHCR and IOM, and refugee support organisations and legal aid providers.

For children applying for international protection, a special leaflet is available in multiple languages, including Albanian, English, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Farsi, French, Italian, Urdu, Pashto, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Tigrinya. This leaflet includes the contact details of national authorities for child protection, as well as organisations that provide representation for unaccompanied minors.

Information regarding legal remedies, the suspensive effect of a remedy, and access to legal assistance is provided orally by the public servant when notifying the transfer decision. Interpretation is available if needed. The applicant is typically called to the Single Desk of the Prefecture (GUDA) for this notification, and the information is also provided in writing along with the transfer decision, in accordance with Article L. 572-1 of the CESEDA.

First instance determination

The applicant is individually informed about the personal interview during the registration phase by the staff responsible for registering their file. Additionally, at the beginning of the personal interview, the case officer reiterates the aim, purpose, and importance of the interview. The information provided covers the procedural specifics, rights and obligations during the interview, the role of the actors present, issues of confidentiality, and the possibility of interpretation. Information on the personal interview is available on the OFPRA website and in the brochure provided to applicants. For an overview of the personal interview, applicants can watch a video available on the OFPRA website.

The information is delivered orally, with interpretation when necessary, and through written materials like leaflets. The applicant is also provided with the appropriate information brochure and is informed that the language they choose for the interview will be binding throughout the procedure, including during any appeal before the National Court of Asylum. Applicants receive a formal summons for the personal interview from OFPRA by any means that guarantees confidentiality and personal receipt of the summons.

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Upon completing the personal interview, applicants are informed of their right to submit further evidence, if necessary, and the applicable timelines for doing so. This information is provided both orally by the case officer and through a video available on the OFPRA website. Additionally, applicants are informed of the next steps in the asylum procedure. The case officer also provides information on the next steps at the end of the personal interview, and applicants can consult a video on the OFPRA website for further details.

When an applicant is granted protection status (either refugee status or subsidiary protection), they receive information about their rights and obligations in the form of a booklet. The relevant booklet for refugees can be found here, and for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, it can be found here. Additionally, a video on the OFPRA website provides further information on the rights and obligations of persons recognised as beneficiaries of protection.

In the case of a negative decision, applicants are informed about the possibility to lodge an appeal, and information is provided about available legal assistance. This information is included in the decision notification, along with an explanatory document translated into 18 languages. Furthermore, a video on the OFPRA website explains the appeal procedure.

In the event of a negative decision, apart from information on lodging an appeal, applicants are also informed about return options, including Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR). This information is provided orally by staff from SPADAs and reception centres. Additionally, information about AVRR is available through leaflets developed by the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII).

In the case of a subsequent asylum application, applicants are informed during the registration stage that, concerning admissibility assessment, OFPRA may not conduct an interview. Applicants are also made aware of this possibility via the OFPRA website, which provides information in both French and English, with translations into additional languages planned. For other grounds of inadmissibility, such as beneficiaries of international protection within the EU or equivalent protection in another country, the admissibility interview is usually scheduled together with the interview on the merits of the asylum application. This information is provided to applicants both during the registration stage and at the beginning of the personal interview by the case officer.

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Legal assistance and representation

According to Article L. 521-6 of the CESEDA, during the registration phase applicants are also informed that they have the possibility to be accompanied during the personal interview by either a lawyer or by a representative of a human rights association, an association for the defence of the rights of third-country nationals or international protection applicants, or an association supporting the rights of women, children, or individuals persecuted based on gender identity or sexual orientation. This information is available in writing via the brochure provided at the Single Desk (GUDA), as well as orally by case officers during registration. It is further reiterated in the invitation to the personal interview sent out by the determining authority (OFPRA) a few weeks in advance of the interview.

Regarding free legal assistance and representation in the appeal procedure, applicants are informed during registration at the Single Desk (GUDA), as well as orally at the end of their interview. This information is also included in the documents accompanying the determining authority's decision. The information provided covers the right to free legal assistance and representation during the appeal process. As with the initial registration, this information is available both in writing (via the information brochure mentioned above) and orally from the determining authority and case officers.

Resettlement and humanitarian admissions

During the identification phase, information is provided by UNHCR officers. They inform refugees about the resettlement process and answer any questions they might have regarding their future host country.

In the selection phase, before the resettlement interviews conducted by the French authorities, refugees are provided with a video that describes the resettlement process, life in France, and rights and obligation in France. This video is made available with the support of IOM (International Organization for Migration), as explained below. During the selection interviews, French officers may also answer any additional questions.

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In the pre-departure phase, the French resettlement programme includes pre-departure orientation (PDO) sessions. The IOM is responsible for organising and delivering the PDO sessions with support from the French Ministry of the Interior. The orientation covers 10 topics:

1. Plane transfers
2. Reception arrangements upon arrival
3. Life in France
4. Rights and obligations in France
5. Social and administrative support provided under the programme
6. Secularism and the principles of the French Republic (*les valeurs de la République française*)
7. The education system
8. The healthcare system
9. Cultural adaptation and integration basics
10. Basic French language skills.

The aim of these sessions is to provide basic and accurate information to help beneficiaries adjust to life in France and understand their rights and obligations.

The PDO sessions occur a few days before the transfer and last for 3 days. Refugees are invited to take part in these sessions in small groups of 10 to 15 people.

The sessions are accompanied by an information brochure and a short film:

The brochure is available in 11 languages: Oromo, Tigrinya, Somali, Arabic, Amharic, Kinyarwanda, Farsi, Sango, Swahili, French, and English. It is systematically distributed to all beneficiaries of the programme.

The short film is available in 9 languages: Arabic, Sudanese Arabic, Amharic, Tigrinya, Oromo, Somali, Kinyarwanda, French, and English. The content of the short film was developed by IOM based on information gathered from trainers in the sending countries, associations and institutions in France, and the beneficiaries themselves.

There are no official information provision activities during the travel phase. However, refugees are accompanied by IOM officers.

Upon arrival in France, refugees receive social and educational support for one year, along with accommodation, with a view to a successful integration.

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Content of protection

Beneficiaries are informed of their rights and obligations as soon as they are granted international protection. This information is contained in the information brochure "*Le guide du demandeur d'asile en France*" given to the applicant during registration. The notification sent to the beneficiary of international protection includes the following information:

- The beneficiary and, if applicable, their family members are placed under the legal and administrative protection of OFPRA, which is authorised to issue civil status documents that replace those from the country of origin.
- The right to family reunification.
- Socio-economic rights: personalised support in accessing employment and housing upon the signature of a Republican Integration Contract (*contrat d'intégration républicaine* CIR).
- Obligation to request a residence permit and the possibility to request a travel document from the prefecture.
- Obligation to comply with the laws, regulations, and public order measures.
- Information is provided by OFPRA in writing and is accompanied by the information brochure mentioned above. Additionally, an information booklet for persons recognised as beneficiaries of international protection is made available on the OFRA website.

Beneficiaries are informed about integration activities when they are granted international protection. They are provided with information regarding the Republican Integration Contract (CIR – *contrat d'intégration républicaine*) during a meeting with OFII (French Office for Immigration and Integration), which is organised in the weeks following the granting of international protection. The contract includes commitments to attend language courses (if necessary) to reach A2 level in French, participate in civic training, and respect the principles of the French Republic. The contract also details support available for accessing employment and housing and the beneficiary can be referred to the relevant administrations and services (France Travail, Health Insurance Fund, Local Missions, Family Allowance Funds, etc.). Most vulnerable beneficiaries are referred to the AGIR programme (please see page on forms and content of protection).

Information about employment and the labour market covers the right to work, employment support measures available under the CIR and the steps needed to

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access the labour market.

Beneficiaries are also informed about the education system in France as part of the CIR. This information covers the French education system, including how to enrol children in school and the available support for language learning.

In addition, beneficiaries are informed about healthcare coverage. The information provided includes steps for accessing healthcare and how to apply for healthcare coverage. During the meeting with OFII for the CIR, beneficiaries are further informed about healthcare options and the integration process. Information is provided by OFPRA in writing and by OFII.

All Information provided in the context of the appointment to sign the CIR is provided by OFII orally and in writing, and the CIR itself is provided in French and in a language the beneficiary understands.

Finally, beneficiaries receive information about the residence permit process when they are granted international protection. The information includes the obligation to request a residence permit and the possibility to request a travel document, with instructions on how to submit the request via the prefecture and the dedicated website. Information is provided by OFPRA in writing, by OFII, and by relevant social workers from SPADAs or reception centres. This information is also available in the information brochure "*Le guide du demandeur d'asile en France*" given during registration.

Relevant links:

The public information service for refugees in France, "Refugies.info", is a project launched in 2019 and led by the Interministerial Delegation for the Reception and Integration of Refugees (DIAIR). The site contains more than 1000 published factsheets, translated by professionals into 7 languages: English, Arabic, Pashto, Persian/Dari, Tigrinya, Russian and Ukrainian.

Provision of information in reception

Reception conditions

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During registration at the Single Desk (GUDA), applicants receive information about reception conditions and their rights and obligations. This information is provided in the information brochure "*Le guide du demandeur d'asile en France*" and is further explained orally during the meeting with the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII), at the Single Desk (GUDA). The information is provided individually (or by household) during registration at the prefecture's offices. The information is primarily provided by the competent authority (the Prefecture and OFII). Further support and information may be provided by subcontracted actors, such as those working in SPADAs (first reception centre for asylum seekers). The information covers:

- Reception conditions such as the right to housing and allowances.
- Applicant obligations related to reception conditions (e.g., refusal of proposed housing may result in the loss of housing and allowances).
- Information on how to access legal assistance and representation.
- Basic rights and obligations of international protection applicants in France.

The information is provided in written (e.g. the information brochure "*Le guide du demandeur d'asile en France*" available in 30 languages) and orally. OFPRA also developed an informational video. There is additional support for applicants with special needs (such as unaccompanied minors or survivors of human trafficking). This includes targeted services and guidance from SPADAs, reception centres, and other specialised organisations.

Applicants are informed about access to healthcare during their registration and meeting with OFII. Information includes how to access healthcare, and the steps needed for healthcare coverage. The information brochure "*Le guide du demandeur d'asile en France*" outlines the details, and additional guidance is provided orally by OFII. Further assistance is also available from social workers.

Hyperlinks to publicly available resources:

Video on reception conditions: OFPRA Video on Asylum Process

Official information on reception conditions:

Guide du demandeur d'asile en France

OFII Asylum Procedure

Service-Public: Asylum Procedures.

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In detention

Upon arrival at the administrative detention centre, third-country nationals are informed orally by the competent authority (police officers) about their rights and obligations. They are informed about their rights regarding legal procedures: lodging an asylum application and/or challenging a return decision.

They are also informed about their rights and obligations within the detention centre. Upon arrival at the centre, the detainee will be given a document written in a language which they understand about their rights within the detention centre, the procedure to challenge the return decision, the procedures within the centre (i.e. the right to appeal the detention decision). They are also informed of their right to have those elements translated by an interpreter.

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