

# REVIEW 2019

Reception - Resettlement - Voluntary return



**fedasil**  
FEDERAL AGENCY FOR THE  
RECEPTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

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On the cover: Reception centre of Mouscron © Fedasil/Layla Aerts

## **CONTENTS**

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|  |    |
|--|----|
| FOREWORD   | 5  |
| RECEPTION OF APPLICANTS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION | 6  |
| RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES                             | 15 |
| VOLUNTARY RETURN                                     | 17 |



# FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL



I am delighted to share with you the 2019 review of the Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers in Belgium.

This review is marked by the increase of the number of people received by Fedasil and its partners.

Our reception network has gradually reached saturation point, due to the (relative) increase in asylum applications, as well as the longer time taken by the asylum authorities to process applications and the closure of many places imposed after the 2015-2016 crisis. As a result, Fedasil has been forced to open new reception centres on an emergency and temporary basis - more than 5,000 places were created in 2019.

However, as you read this report, this context of crisis is of course being overshadowed by another crisis, this time in the health sector, which has received much more media coverage and forced us to significantly adapt our way of working.

Fedasil has taken on its responsibilities during the COVID-19 outbreak and invested heavily in prevention and awareness throughout the lockdown period. Strict precautionary measures apply in the same way to asylum seekers as they do to the Belgian population.

Accordingly, we are following the recommendations of the public health authorities and constantly adapting our measures to the new decisions. We are also in permanent and transparent communication with the governors and mayors of the communes concerned.

Together, our entire sector has, I believe, managed this unprecedented period intelligently. Compliance with the preventive measures, constant medical monitoring, and the strength and courage of our staff on the front line have allowed us to keep the situation under control in all the reception centres.

Today, we have entered a new phase, which is just as complex, as it involves gradually returning to our normal operations. There is no doubt that once again we will be able to find - internally and with our partners - the resources needed to meet this new challenge.

The time has also come to anticipate the resumption of asylum applications. For this reason, Fedasil must continue to search for places in order to ensure that all those entitled to them are accommodated. This remains the very purpose of our work.

I hope you enjoy reading it.

Jean-Pierre Luxen,  
30 June 2020

# RECEPTION OF APPLICANTS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

On the one hand, 2019 was characterised by an increase in asylum applications (+18% compared to 2018), and on the other hand by an extension of the length of stay in reception centres. As a result, the number of people received by Fedasil and its partners increased steadily throughout the year. This has actually been the trend since the summer of 2018.

## **Increase in occupancy**

In 2019, 23,158 people joined the Fedasil reception network (+19% compared with 2018). The main countries of origin were Syria, Palestine, El Salvador and Eritrea.

Over the same period, 15,875 people left the reception network (-15% compared to 2018). This resulted in a positive IN/OUT balance of 7,283 people for 2019 (i.e. an average of 600 additional people received each month).

This led to the reception network gradually reaching saturation point. At the end of 2019, the overall occupancy rate was 97%, an increase of almost 10% compared to the beginning of the year. A large number of centres exceeded 100% occupancy.

## **Creation of places**

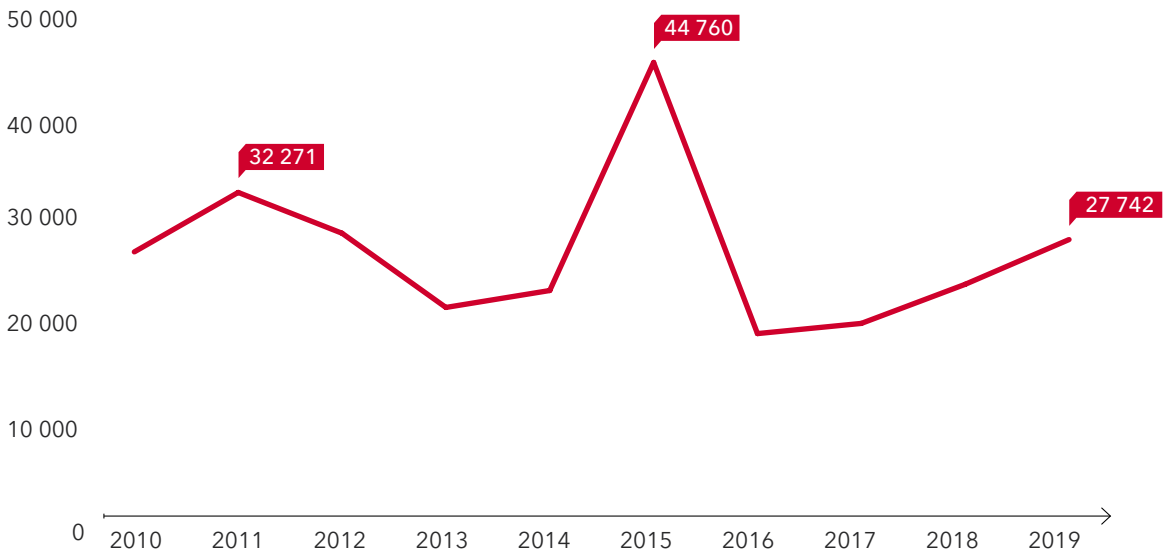
To guarantee sufficient available beds, Fedasil has constantly increased its accommodation capacity, in consultation with the political authority and in collaboration with its reception partners. Many temporary centres have opened, while additional beds have been added to existing centres (sometimes through the installation of tents and containers). In total, more than 5,000 places were created in 2019.

At the end of 2019, Belgium had 26,754 reception places, spread over 69 collective centres and individual housing.

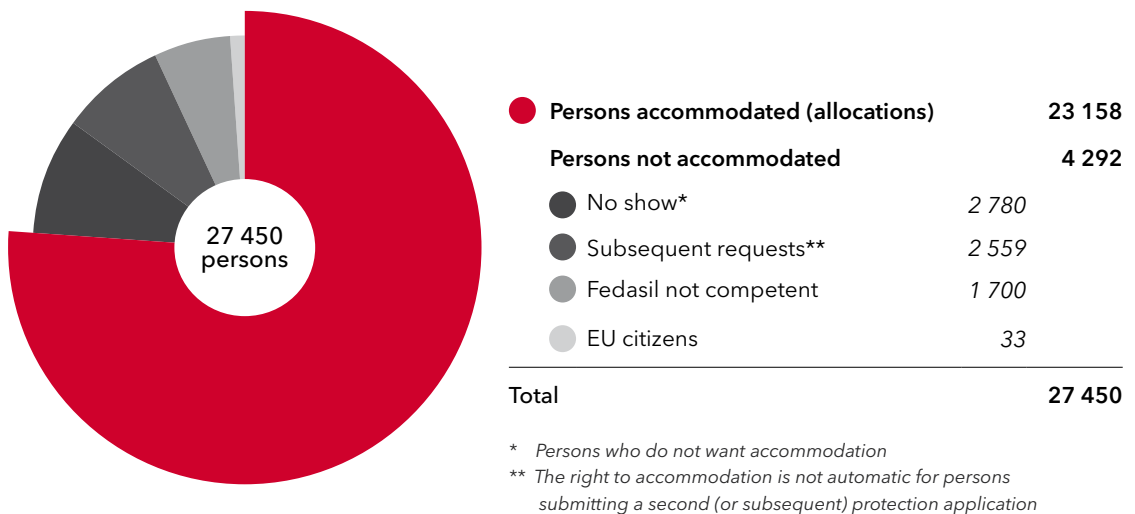
More information is available at [www.fedasil.be](http://www.fedasil.be)

## Number of persons who applied for international protection (asylum) in Belgium

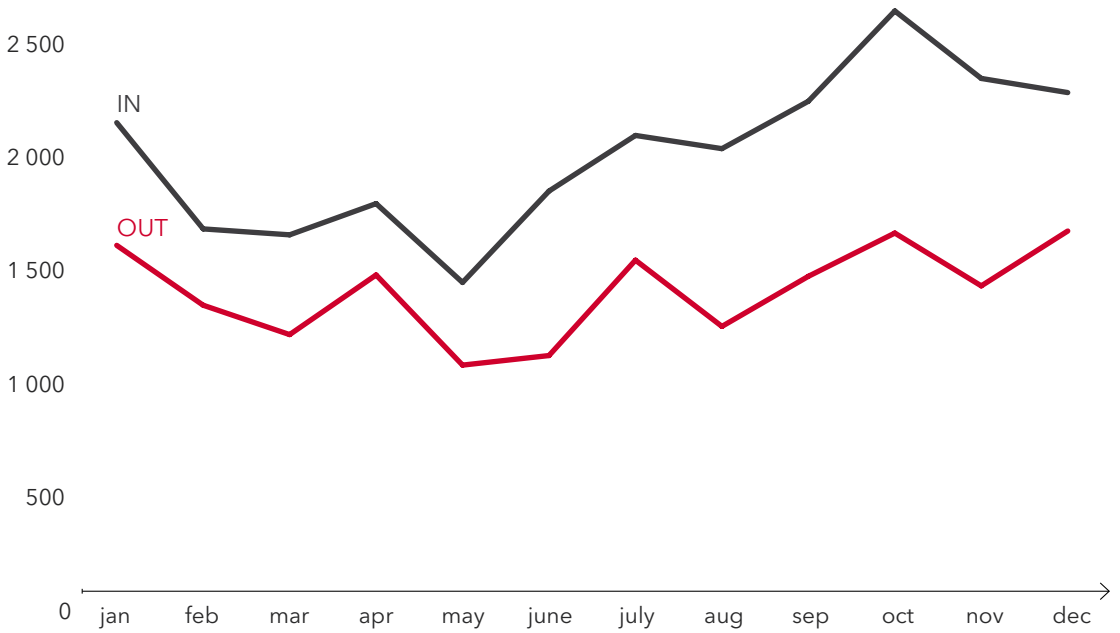
(Source CGRS)



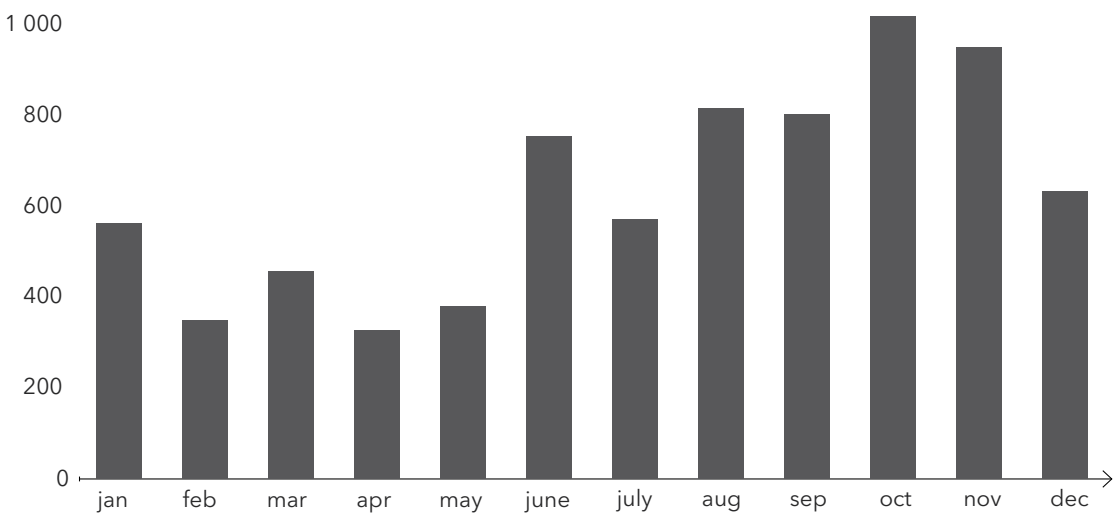
## Reception applications at the Fedasil arrival centre in 2019



### Reception network: arrivals (IN) and departures (OUT) in 2019



### Reception network: arrivals (IN) and departures (OUT) in 2019: balance IN/OUT



| TOTAL          | PERSONS        |
|----------------|----------------|
| IN             | + 23 158       |
| OUT            | - 15 875       |
| <b>Balance</b> | <b>+ 7 283</b> |

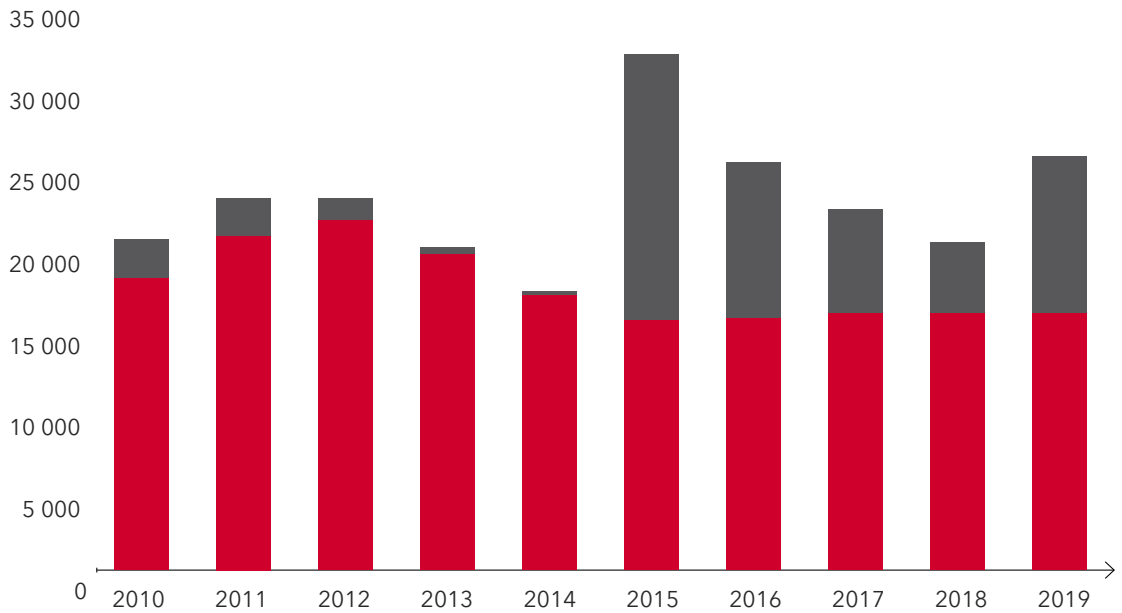


## Evolution of the reception capacity

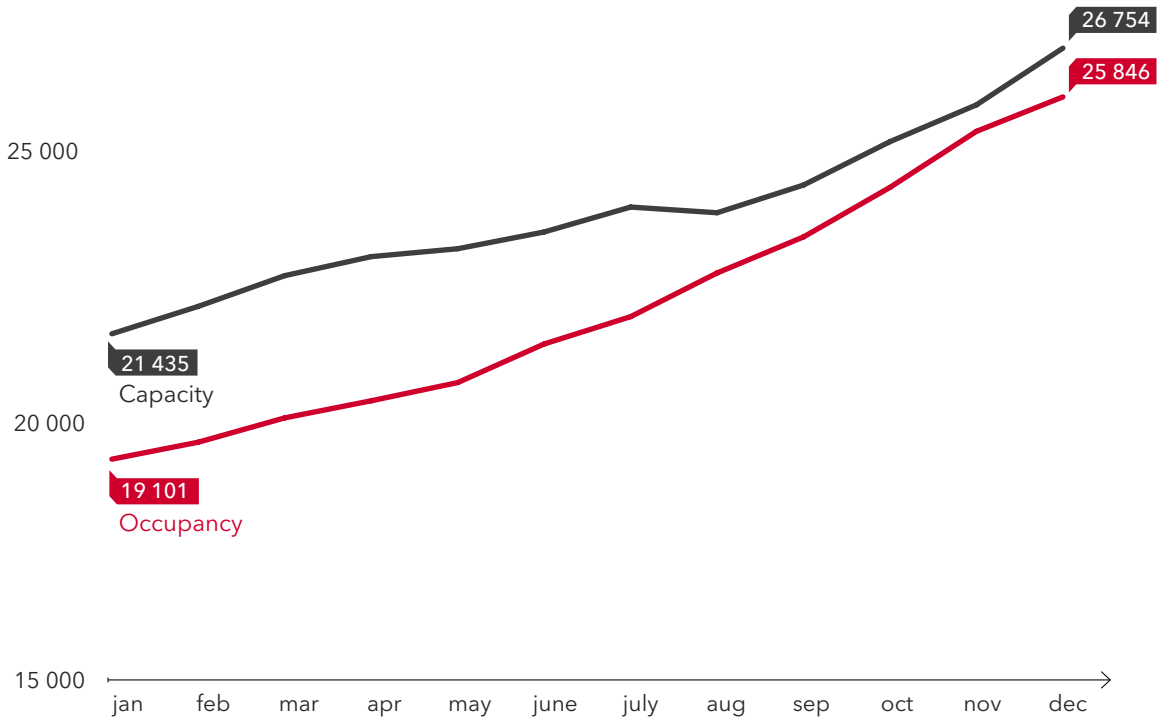
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Situation end of December of each year

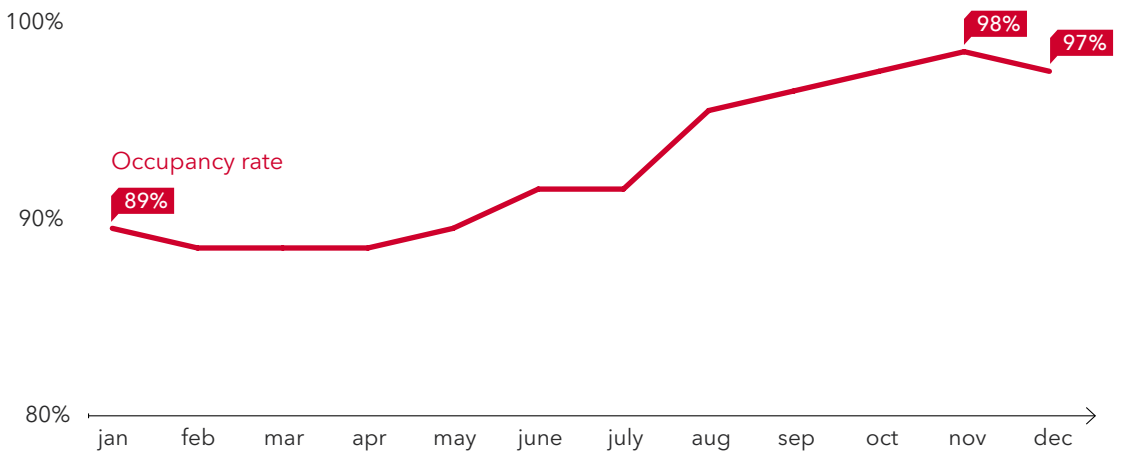
- Structural reception capacity
- Temporary reception capacity and buffer capacity



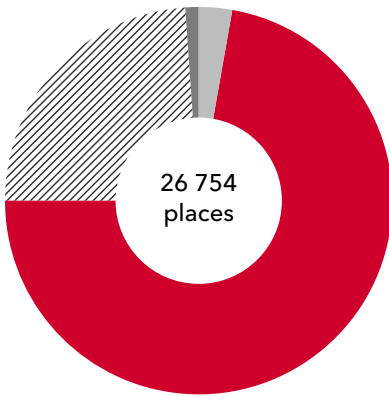
## Evolution of the reception capacity and the occupancy in 2019



## Evolution of the occupancy rate in 2019

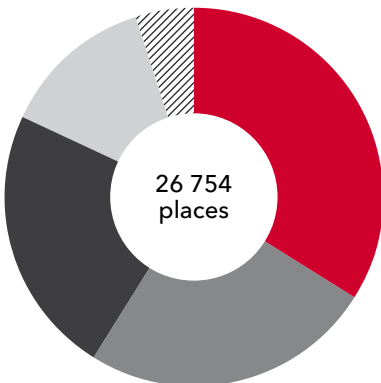


## Capacity and occupancy by reception type / end 2019



|  | CAPACITY      | OCCUPANCY RATE % |
|--|---------------|------------------|
| ● <b>1st phase reception</b><br>Arrival centre, COO for UM   | 839           | 87               |
| ● <b>Collective housing</b><br>Federal centres, Croix-Rouge, Rode Kruis, Samusocial and other partners | 19 167        | 98               |
| ⊘ <b>Individual housing</b><br>CPAS (public social welfare centre), Caritas, Ciré and other partners   | 6 478         | 95               |
| ● <b>Open return places</b><br>Federal centres   | 270           | 44               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>26 754</b> | <b>97</b>        |

## Contribution of the partners / end 2019



|                             | PLACES        |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| ● Fedasil                   | 9 056         |
| ● French-speaking Red Cross | 6 716         |
| ● CPAS                      | 6 014         |
| ● Dutch-speaking Red Cross  | 3 627         |
| ⊘ Other partners            | 1 341         |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>26 754</b> |

## Profile of the persons accommodated / end 2019

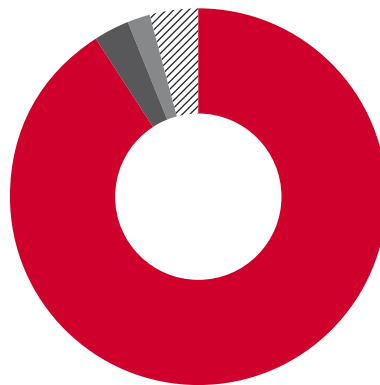
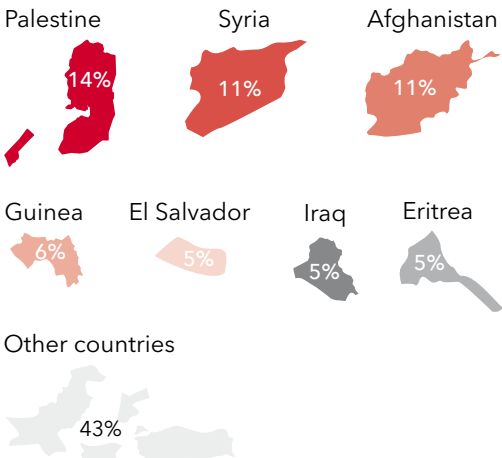
Each figure represents 10%



|                                     | %  |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| ● Families                          | 51 |
| ● Single men                        | 37 |
| ● Single women                      | 6  |
| ⊗ UM (Unaccompanied foreign minors) | 6  |

|         | %  |
|---------|----|
| ● Men   | 66 |
| ● Women | 34 |

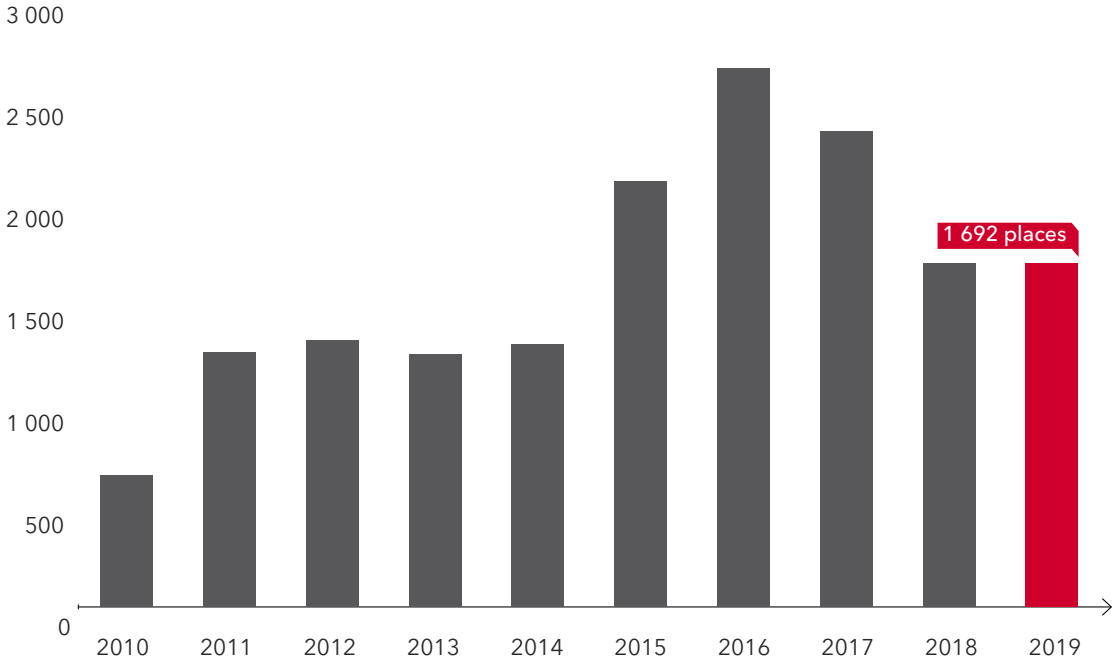
## Administrative status of the persons accommodated / end 2019



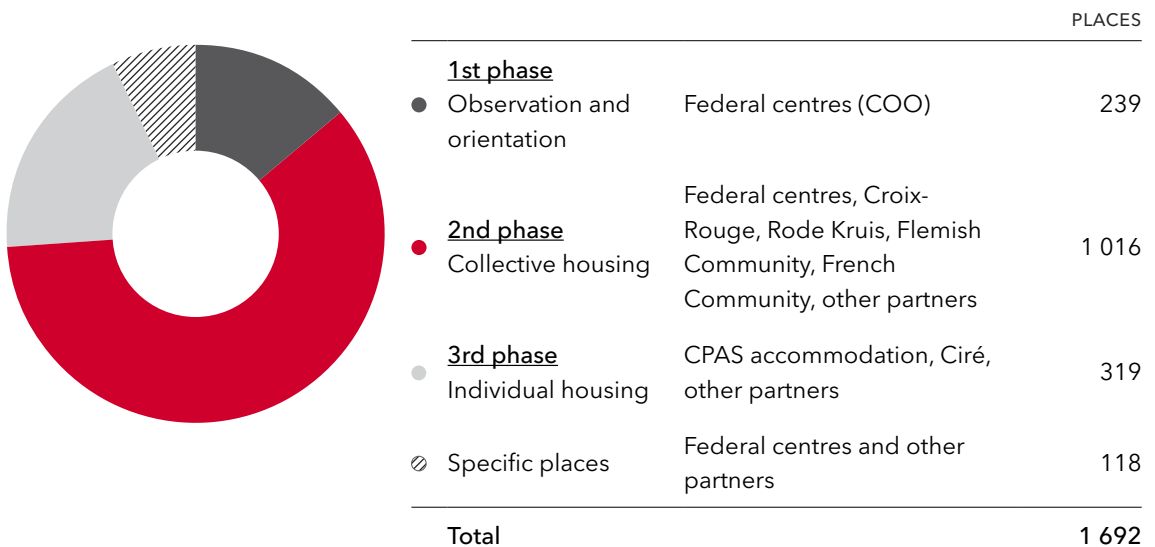
|   | %  |
|---|----|
| ● Applicants for international protection (including UM) whose application is being processed | 91 |
| ● Persons with a residence permit (transition period)   | 3  |
| ● Applicants for multiple international protection  | 2  |
| ⊗ Other situations  | 4  |

## Unaccompanied foreign minors (UM) : evolution of the reception capacity

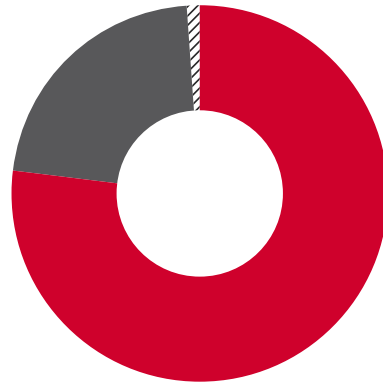
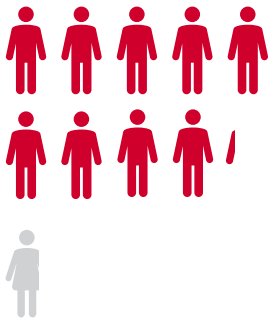
Situation end of December of each year



## UM: capacity by reception phase / end 2019



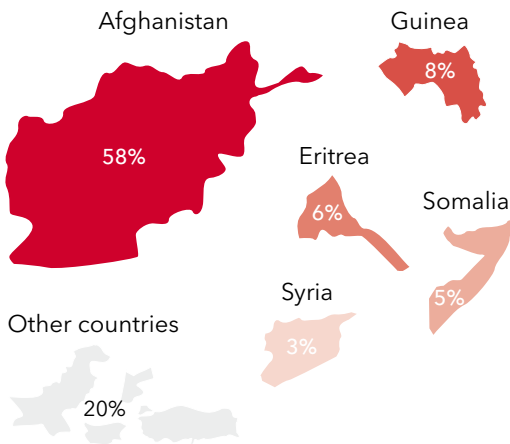
## Profile of the accommodated UM / end 2019



|         | %  |
|---------|----|
| ● Boys  | 91 |
| ● Girls | 9  |

|                     | %  |
|---------------------|----|
| ● 16 years and more | 77 |
| ● 12-15 years       | 22 |
| ▨ 11 years and less | 1  |

\* Each figure represents 10%



# RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES

Belgium has had a structural resettlement programme since 2013. Our country has thus committed to accepting a quota of vulnerable refugees each year.

In recent years, the refugees who have arrived in Belgium were mainly Syrian refugees from Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Our country has also taken in Congolese refugees from the Great Lakes Region and refugees detained in Libya, through the emergency transit mechanism of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

For the period 2018-2019, Belgium's commitment was to receive a total of 2,000 refugees. However, resettlement operations have been suspended since July 2019. This situation can be explained by the saturation of Fedasil's reception network. In 2020, however, Belgium has reaffirmed that it will continue its resettlement commitments for the coming years.

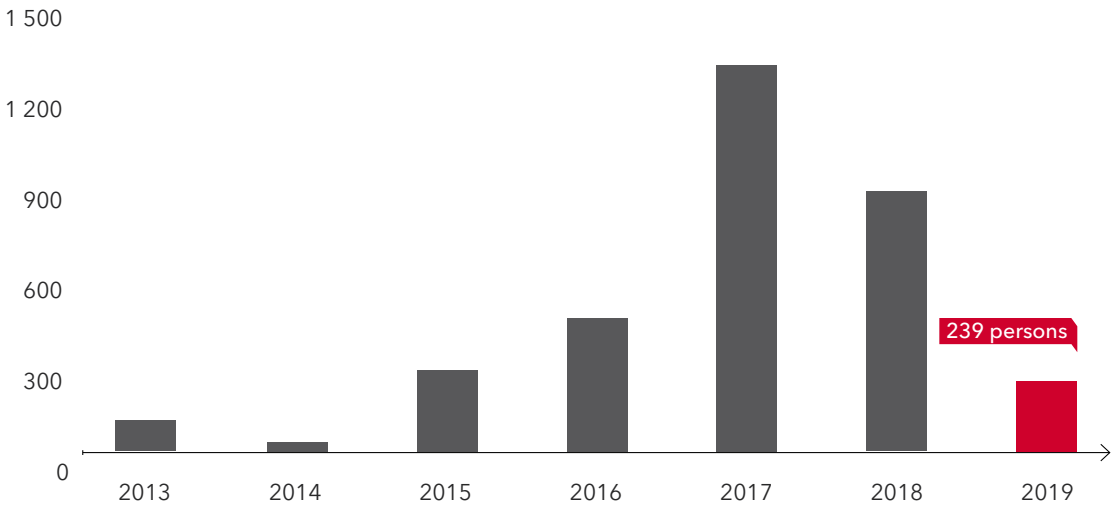
In 2019, 239 people were resettled in Belgium, bringing the total to 1,119 people for the period 2018-2019. Fedasil focused on the reform and development of BELCO, the cultural orientation programme for resettled refugees.

Between 2013 and 2019, a total of 3,290 refugees were resettled in Belgium, 88% of them Syrian.

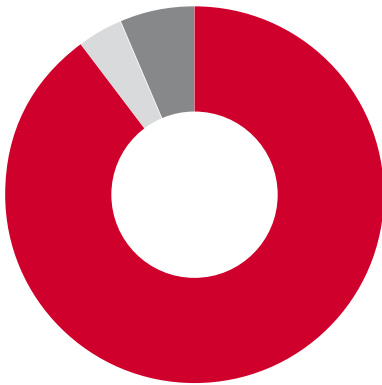
The resettlement programme is funded by the AMIF, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the European Union.

More information is available at [www.resettlement.be](http://www.resettlement.be)

## Number of refugees arrived in Belgium in the framework of resettlement



## Profile of the refugees resettled in 2019



| COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | INITIAL COUNTRY OF RECEPTION | PERSONS    |
|-------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| ● Syria           | Turkey                       | 215        |
| ● Syria           | Libanon                      | 9          |
| ● Syria           | Jordan                       | 15         |
| <b>Total</b>      |                              | <b>239</b> |

|                | PERSONS    |
|----------------|------------|
| ● Families     | 234        |
| ● Single men   | 4          |
| ● Single women | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>239</b> |

\* Each figure represents 20 persons



# VOLUNTARY RETURN

In 2019, 2,426 migrants decided to return home with the assistance of the voluntary return programme. 46% of them received additional support to facilitate their reintegration into their country of origin.

## Fewer returns

The number of voluntary returns from Belgium continues to fall, with a 19% drop in the number of returnees compared with 2018.

This decrease is reflected among asylum seekers, whether they have been rejected or not, who are choosing voluntary return in ever smaller numbers, but also among countries of destination (fewer returns to Georgia and Ukraine, for example).

## Awareness

The majority of the returnees were foreigners without a valid residence permit (63% of returns). To provide them with information, Fedasil has also extended its network of partners among the local administrations and organisations: Liège, Anderlecht, Mechelen and the province of Limburg now have a project to raise awareness about returns.

A new outreach team was also set up in 2019: Fedasil's "outreachers" have the task of informing undocumented and street migrants (especially migrants in transit) about the possibilities of reception, social support and return.

## Assistance in the country of destination

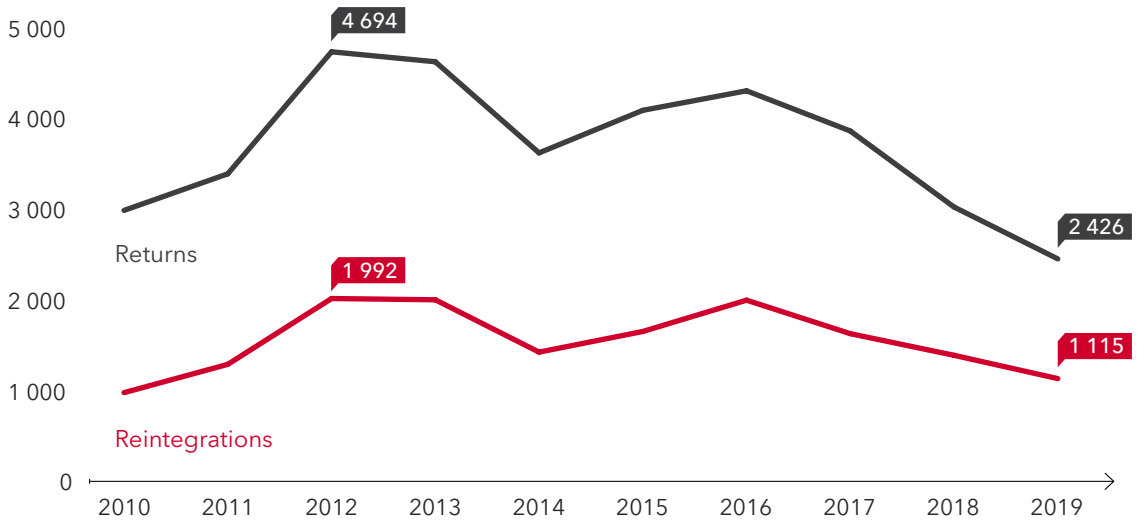
1,115 of the returnees in 2019 received reintegration assistance, i.e. almost one person in two. The reintegration programme helps to address the problems faced by migrants on their return, such as the renovation or rental of a home, job searches and medical expenses.

The IOM (International Organization for Migration) and Caritas International are in charge of the preparation from Belgium. Reintegration is monitored on the ground by their local offices or partners.

The Belgian voluntary return programme receives European funding from the AMIF fund.

More information is available at [www.voluntaryreturn.be](http://www.voluntaryreturn.be)

## Evolution of voluntary returns from Belgium (number of returnees)



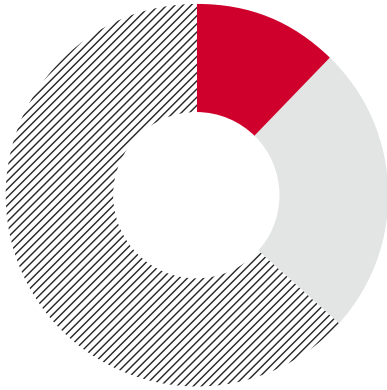
### Comment

The figures also include the voluntary returns to the countries of origin organised by the Immigration Office (50 persons in 2019). However, these figures do not include voluntary returns carried out within the framework of the Dublin Convention (organised by the Immigration Office to the European countries where migrants have already applied for international protection).

## Countries of destination in 2019

| RETURNEES (GLOBAL FIGURE,<br>WITH OR WITHOUT REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE) |              | RETURNEES WITH REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE |              |
|--|--------------|---|--------------|
| Brazil   | 458          | Iraq                                    | 94           |
| Romania  | 348          | Brazil                                  | 79           |
| Ukraine  | 292          | Armenia                                 | 78           |
| Iraq   | 101          | Russia                                  | 58           |
| Georgia  | 101          | Georgia                                 | 53           |
| Armenia  | 81           | Ukraine                                 | 51           |
| Albania  | 76           | Afghanistan                             | 44           |
| Mongolia   | 72           | Palestine                               | 40           |
| Russia   | 69           | Albania                                 | 36           |
| Slovakia   | 52           | Mongolia                                | 32           |
| Others   | 776          | Others                                  | 550          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>2 426</b> | <b>Total</b>                            | <b>1 115</b> |

## Profile of the returnees in 2019



|  | PERSONEN     |
|--|--------------|
| ● Applicants for international protection          | 302          |
| ○ Rejected applicants for international protection | 592          |
| ⊗ Irregular migrants                               | 1 532        |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>2 426</b> |

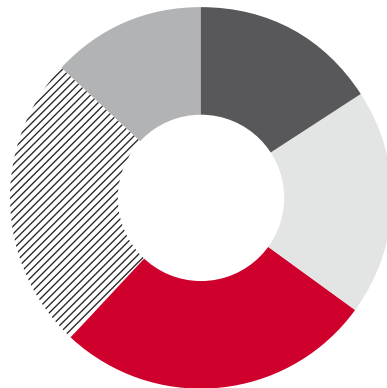
|                        | %  |
|------------------------|----|
| ● Families             | 43 |
| ○ Single men and women | 57 |

\* Each figure represents 10%



|         | %  |
|---------|----|
| ● Men   | 61 |
| ● Women | 39 |

\* Each figure represents 10%



|               | %  |
|---------------|----|
| ● 0-17 years  | 16 |
| ● 18-25 years | 19 |
| ● 26-35 years | 27 |
| ⊗ 36-50 years | 25 |
| ● + 51 years  | 13 |

**Fedasil** is the federal Belgian government body responsible for the reception of applicants for international protection (asylum) and other target groups. Fedasil guarantees the quality and conformity of the different reception structures. Fedasil also coordinates the organisation of voluntary returns to countries of origin.

This review presents the events and statistics for 2019 for reception, resettlement and voluntary returns.

The latest information and news about our organisation can be found on our website, [www.fedasil.be](http://www.fedasil.be)

The information for applicants for international protection is available (in 12 languages) at [www.fedasilinfo.be](http://www.fedasilinfo.be)