

REVIEW 2021

Reception - Resettlement - Voluntary return



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FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL



I am delighted to share with you the 2021 review of the Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers in Belgium.

The year was marked by a reception crisis, the largest since 2010, which required enormous efforts to be able to offer accommodation and quality support as quickly as possible to people seeking protection in our country. This was the third reception crisis we have faced since 2015, and it came during a specific period marked by the management of a health crisis.

These successive crises have demanded a lot from our organisation and our dedicated employees. Many efforts were required each time. The underlying cause of these crises is that the reception network, and the asylum chain as a whole, cannot cope with sudden increases in influx. The insufficient number of buffer places in reception structures, and the limits faced by the asylum authorities in rapidly developing their capacity, have led to reception crises that could have been avoided. This feeling is clearly shared by our employees who, in October and November, made their voices heard for the first time in years. Not against a policy, but rather in favour of a policy that should make the asylum chain resilient for years to come.

As an organisation, we are pleased that in July 2021, at the suggestion of Fedasil and the Secretary of State Mahdi, the federal government

decided that Fedasil will have 5,400 buffer places in the future. This package should put us on the road to greater stability. This stability is absolutely necessary because the various crises have also had an impact on our internal operation, which has been under increasing pressure in recent years.

In response to these two concerns - a flexible network and robust internal operations - Fedasil's new management plan focuses on building resilience in the organisation and strengthening its internal operations. By creating a new 'Strategy & Organisation' department, we want to increase the maturity of the Agency; with the strategic 'Dynamic buffer places policy' project, we want to make all the organisation's services flexible, so that the organisation as a whole can keep pace with the influx.

This will allow us to focus on our other critical challenges, namely improving the quality of the reception offered to residents and enhancing the well-being of our staff.

2021 was also the first year of my mandate as Director General of Fedasil. It was a turbulent year, once again. I would like to thank all our employees who give their best, day after day, for the 30,000 people accommodated in our reception network. The challenges are great, but so are the daily achievements.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Kegels

July 2022

RECEPTION OF APPLICANTS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

In 2021, the number of applications for international protection ('asylum applications') registered in Belgium returned to the level observed before the coronavirus crisis. 20,211 applicants received a place in the Fedasil network during 2021. This is an increase of 68% (or 6,566 people) compared to 2020.

Almost 30% of the people who entered the network were Afghan nationals, mostly young adult males or unaccompanied minors (UMs).

Reception network under pressure

In addition to the increase in arrivals, Fedasil also recorded a decrease in departures from the reception centres due to the extended duration of asylum procedures (and therefore the length of stay in the reception facilities). The number of people accommodated by Fedasil increased throughout 2021.

In this context, Fedasil has sought to rapidly increase its reception capacity so it can offer accommodation to people entitled to it. Around ten collective centres have opened their doors. By the end of 2021, the network comprised 30,000 reception places - up from 28,000 places at the beginning of the year. The specific reception capacity for UMs has increased considerably, with almost 700 places created during the year, reaching a total of 2,715 places for UMs by the end of 2021.

However, despite the numerous efforts of Fedasil's teams and partners, between October and December 2021 several people were unable to receive accommodation on the day their application for protection was registered. They had to return to the arrival centre (the 'Petit-Château' in Brussels) in the following days to receive a place, which caused queues and a difficult humanitarian situation for several weeks.

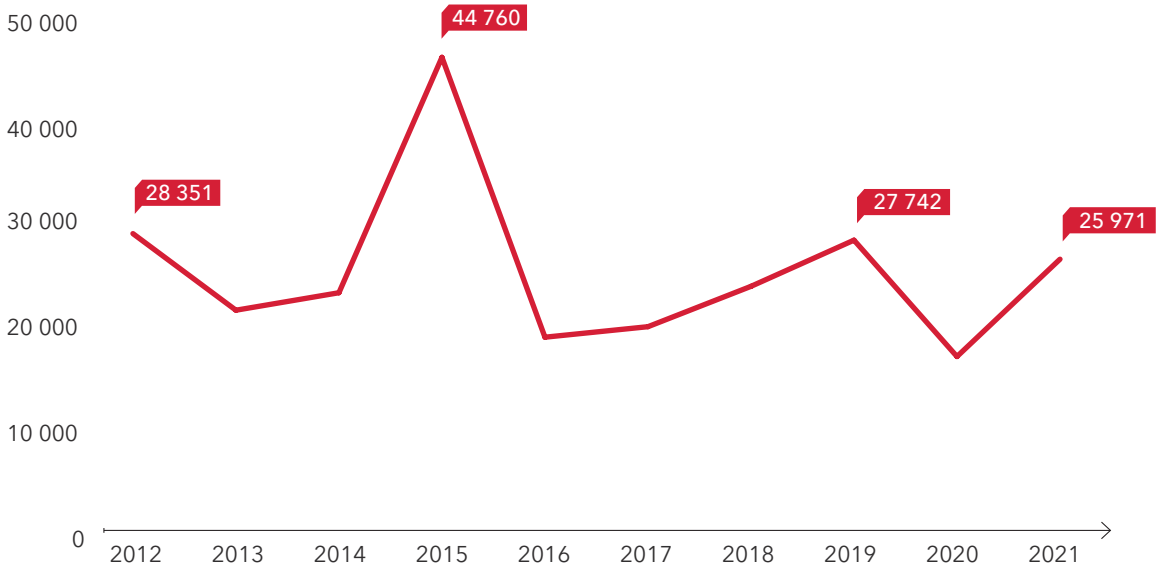
It should also be noted that the reception network was impacted by the floods in Wallonia, which temporarily deprived Fedasil of more than 1,000 reception places in July 2021. It is also important to note that some places in the centres were reserved for Covid-19 isolation and were therefore not available (around 1,200 places reserved at the end of 2021).

By the end of 2021, the occupancy rate in the reception network was 94% (or 98% excluding the Covid-19 isolation capacity).

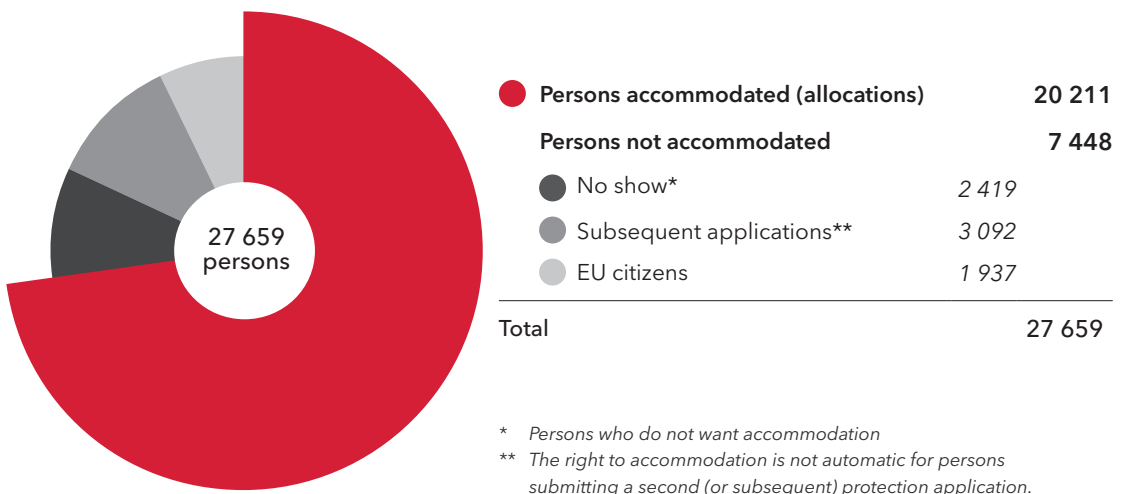
Throughout the year, Fedasil continued to look for new reception sites to reduce the pressure on the centres. Several centres have opened in 2022.

More information is available at www.fedasil.be

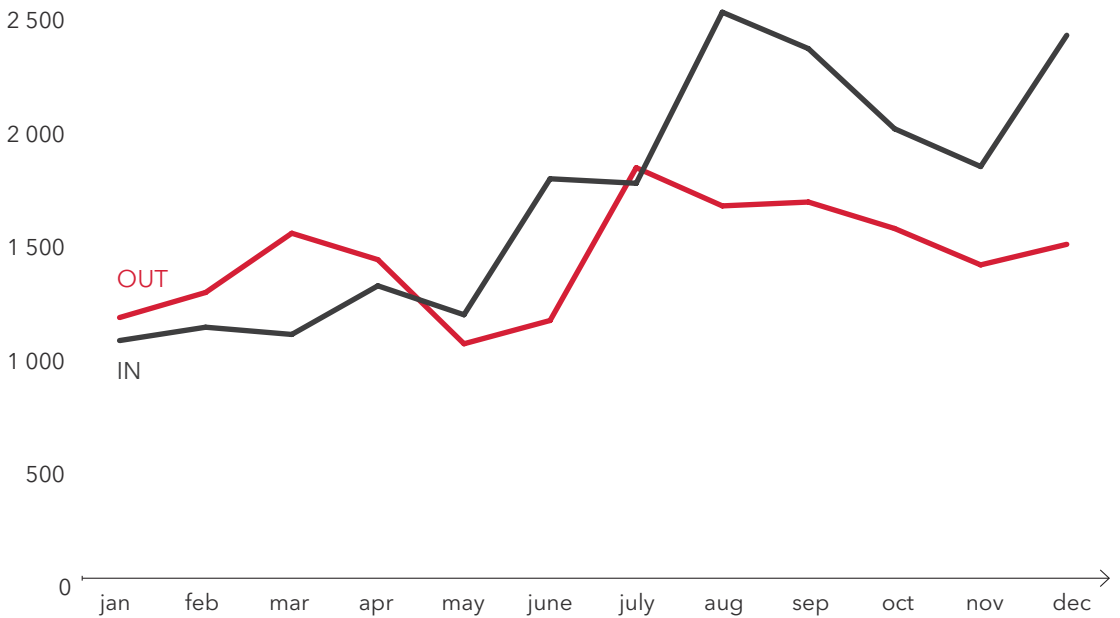
Number of persons who applied for international protection (asylum) in Belgium (Source CGRS)



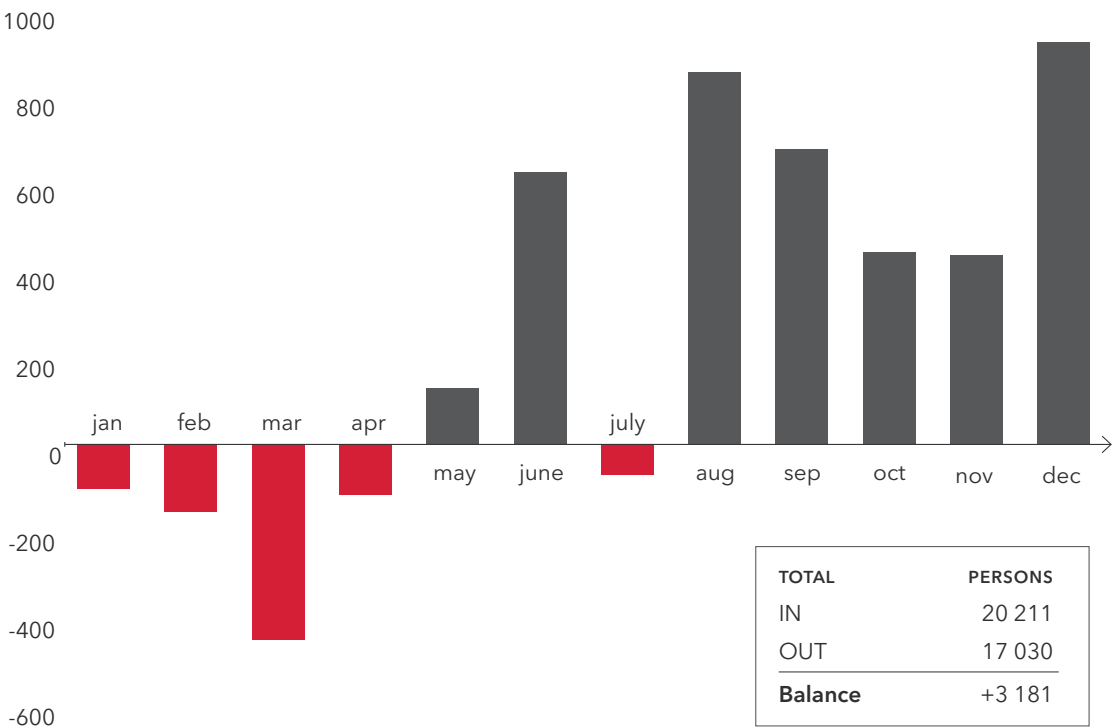
Reception applications at the (Fedasil) arrival centre in 2021



Reception network: arrivals (IN) and departures (OUT) in 2021



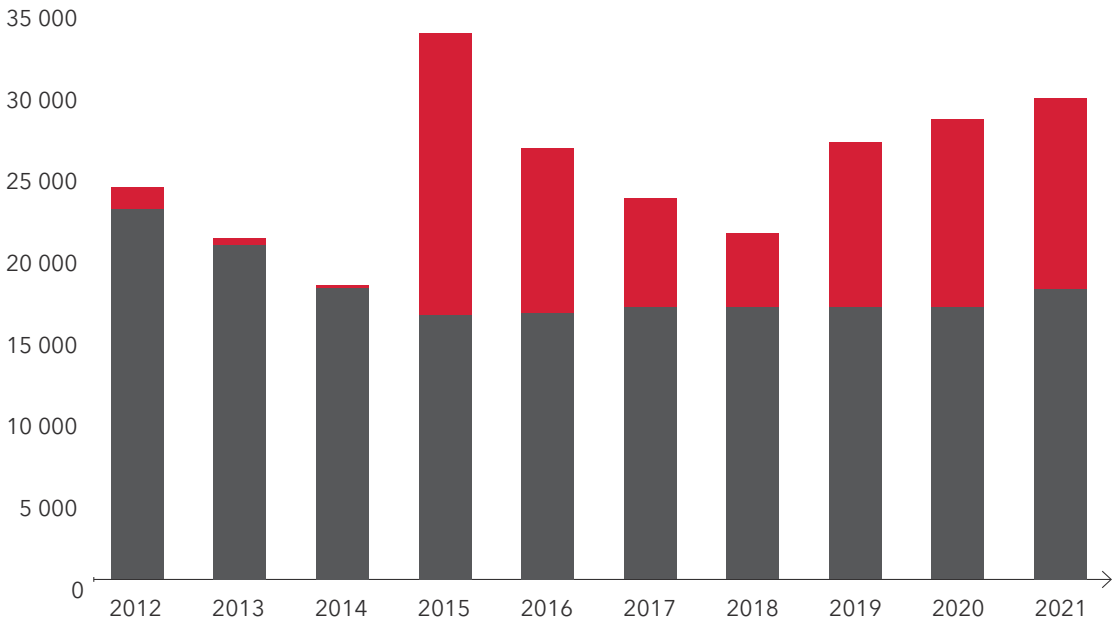
Reception network: arrivals (IN) and departures (OUT) in 2021: balance IN/OUT



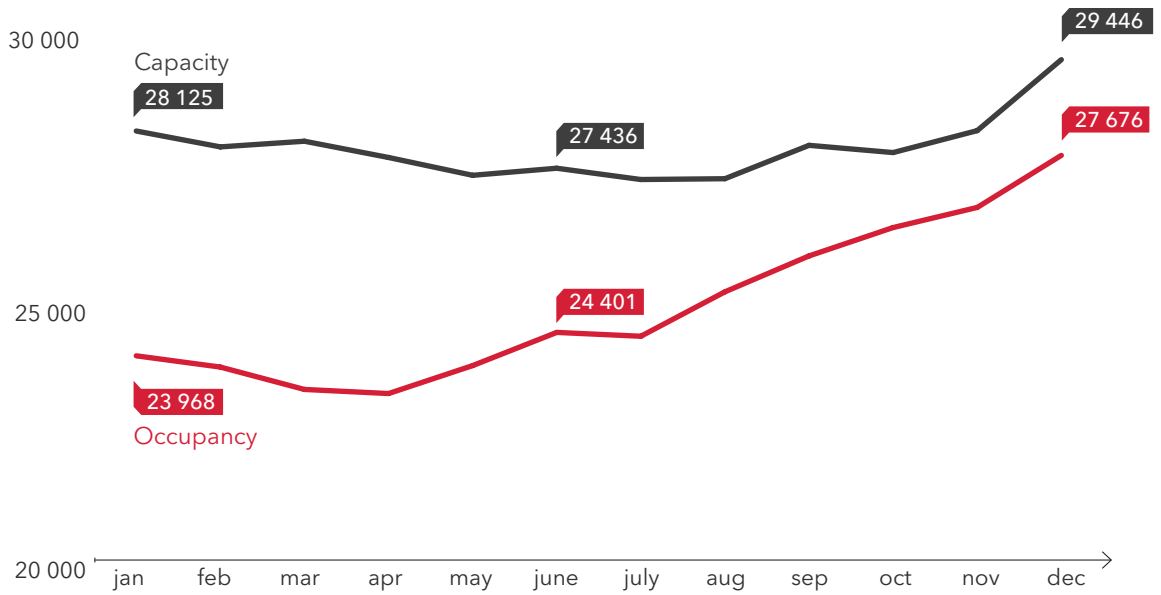
Evolution of the reception capacity

Situation end of December of each year

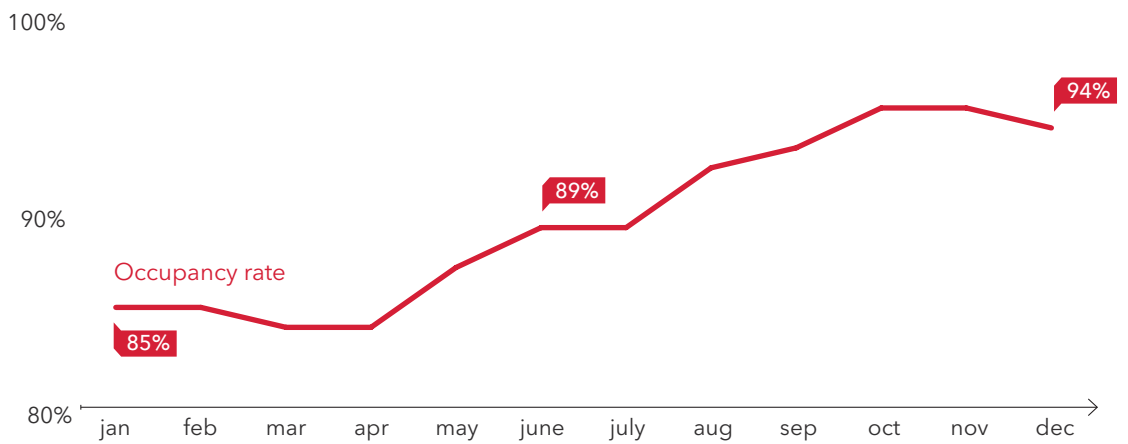
- Structural reception capacity
- Temporary capacity (emergency, activated buffer places)



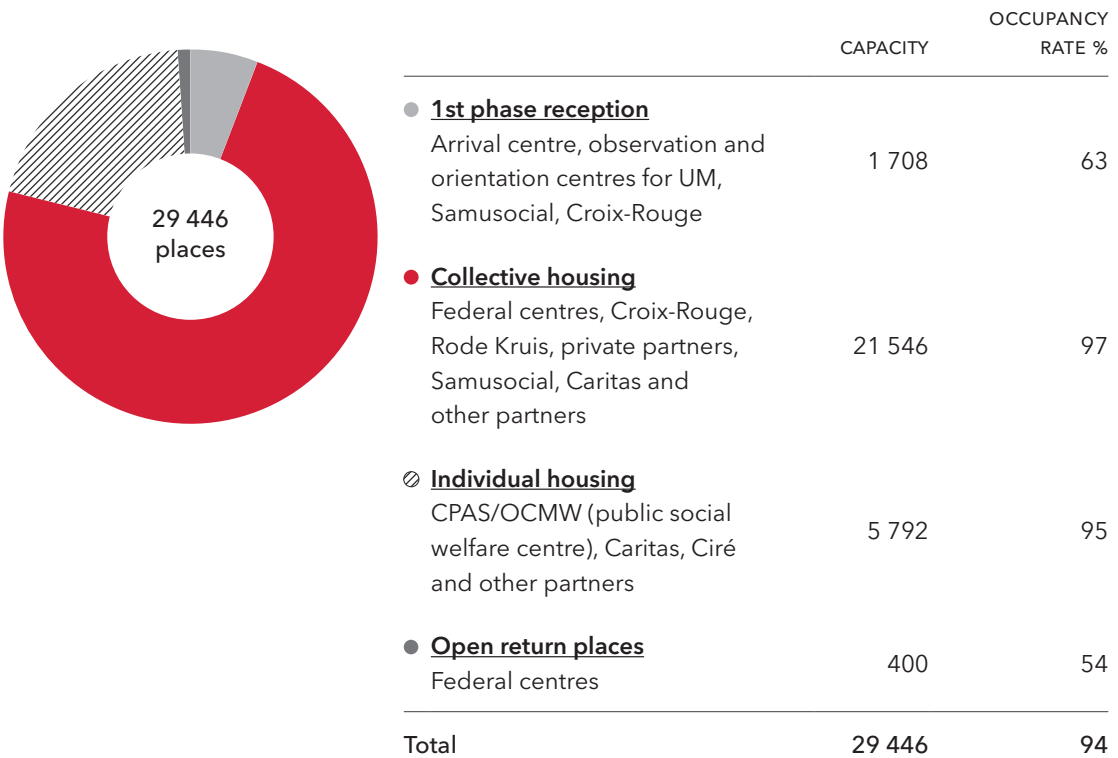
Evolution of the reception capacity and the occupancy in 2021



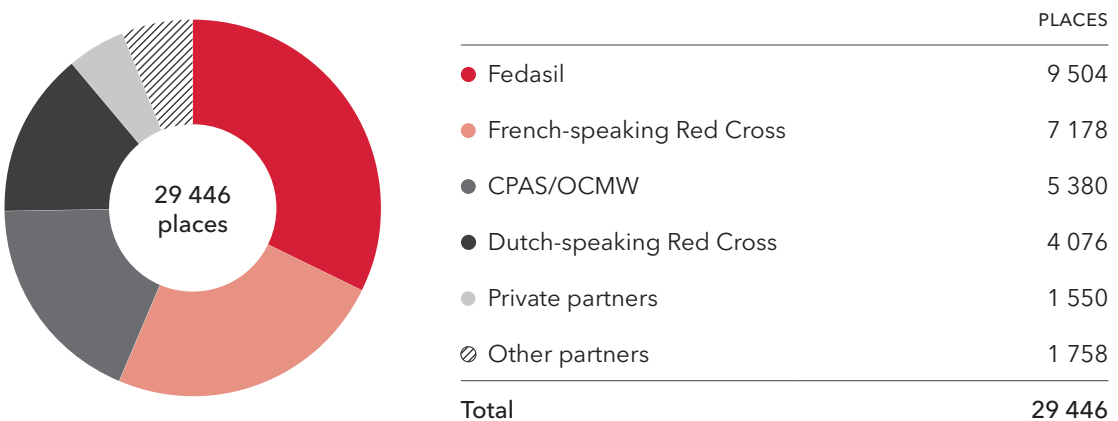
Evolution of the occupancy rate in 2021



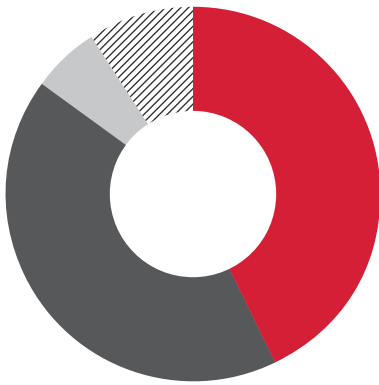
Types of reception places / end 2021



Contribution of the partners / end 2021



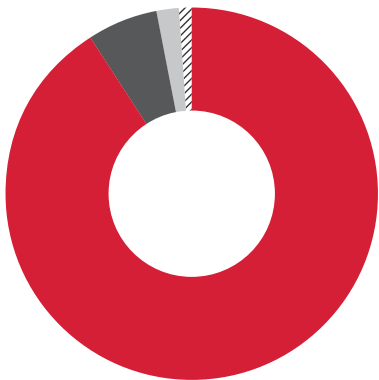
Profile of the persons accommodated / end 2021



	%
● Families	43
● Single men	42
● Single women	6
⊗ UM (Unaccompanied foreign minors)	9



	%
● Men	69
● Women	31



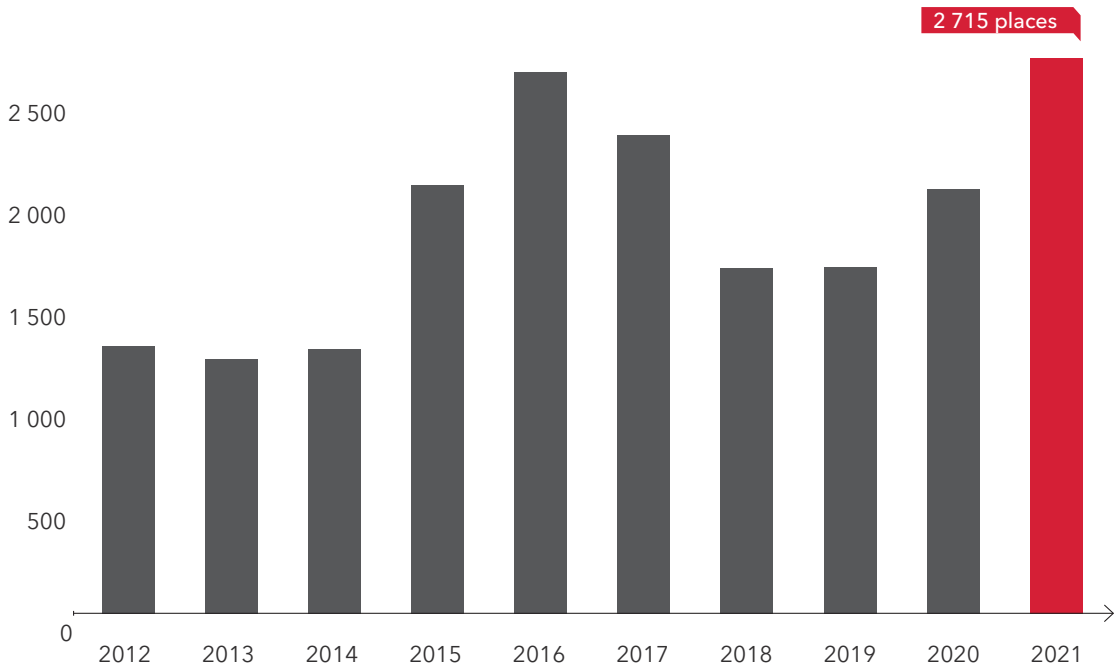
	%
● Adults	67
● Minors	33

	%
● Applicants for protection (including UM) whose application is being processed	92
● Persons with a residence permit	6
● Resettled refugees	2
⊗ Other administrative situations	<1

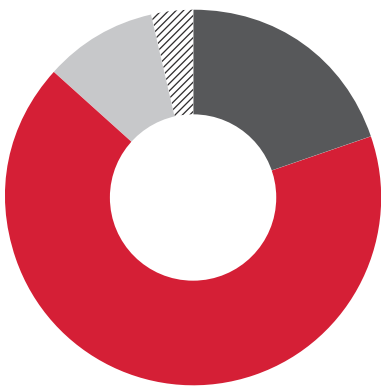
	%
Afghanistan	26
Syria	10
Palestine	9
Eritrea	7
Somalia	5
Guinea	5
Iraq	3
El Salvador	3
Congo (DRC)	2
Cameroon	2
Others	28

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

Situation end of December of each year

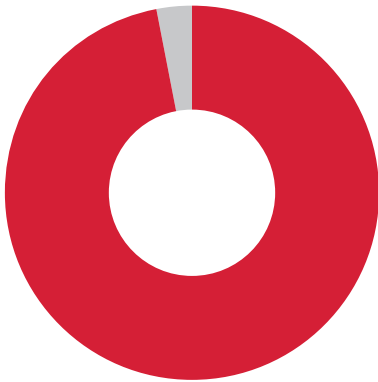


UM: capacity by reception phase / end 2021

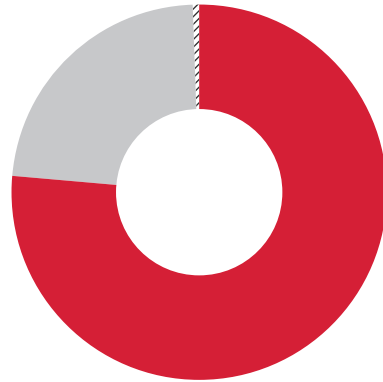


		PLACES
1st phase	Federal centres (Arrival centre and COO), Samusocial, Croix-Rouge	541
● 2nd phase	Federal centres, Croix-Rouge, Rode Kruis, Flemish Community, French Community, Caritas, CPAS/OCMW	1 818
● 3rd phase	CPAS/OCMW, Ciré, Caritas	260
⊘ Specific places	Fedasil and partners	95
Total		2 715

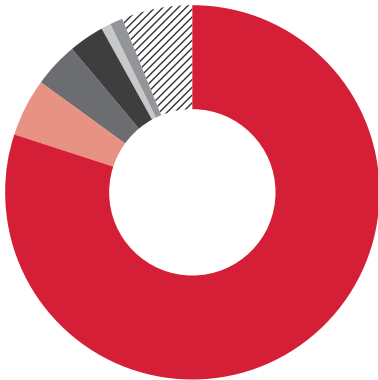
Profile of the accommodated UM / end 2021



	%
● Boys	97
● Girls	3



	%
● 16-18 years	76,5
● 12-15 years	23
⚡ 11 years and less	0,5



	%
● Afghanistan	80
● Somalia	5
● Syria	4
● Eritrea	3
● Guinea	1
● Morokko	1
⚡ Other countries	6

RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES

Belgium has had a structural resettlement programme since 2013. Our country is committed to accepting a quota of vulnerable refugees each year, based on European and national priorities. In 2021, 964 refugees were resettled in Belgium. The initial objective was to resettle some 1,500 refugees in 2021, but the international health situation and the lack of places in the reception network in Belgium did not allow all the transfers to take place. This situation had already been observed in 2020.

The resettled persons were mainly Syrians (908 persons, mainly families) who had been in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. The other refugees were from the African continent. Twenty-four refugees from Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia arrived as part of a UNHCR programme to evacuate detention centres in Libya via Rwanda.

Different reception models

Once in Belgium, the majority of the refugees are received in a Fedasil centre specialised in resettlement. After six weeks in the centre, they move to CPAS/OCMW (Public Centre for Social Welfare) housing or housing managed by Caritas International for a period of six months.

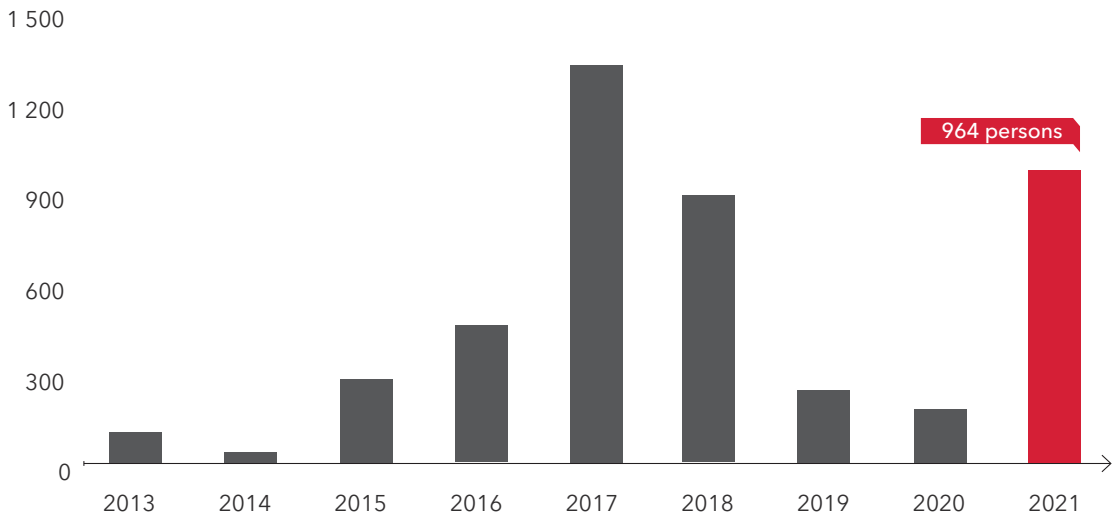
In some cases, resettled persons are accommodated via other trajectories, depending on their specific needs. In 2021, 15 refugees joined local facilities in Belgium via the 'Community sponsorship' programme. This is a pilot project whereby refugees are welcomed and supported in Belgium by a group of people, without going through a reception period in a Fedasil centre. Caritas is an intermediary organisation and is responsible for the supervision of the citizens who welcome the refugees.

The resettlement programme is financed by the European AMIF fund. More information is available at www.fedasil.be/en/resettlement

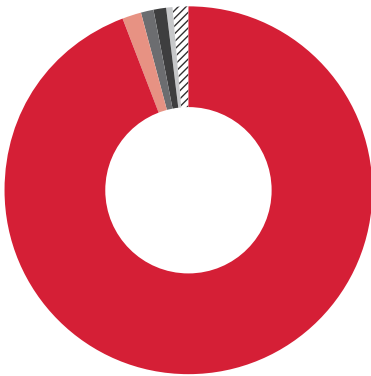
Relocation

In 2021, 43 people from Syria and Afghanistan were relocated to Belgium from Greece. Relocation is a solidarity mechanism within the European Union, whose objective is to support those Member States most affected by migratory flows. Greece requested that vulnerable refugees be relocated to other countries.

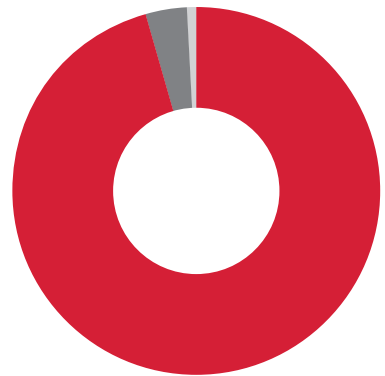
Number of refugees arrived in Belgium in the framework of resettlement



Profile of the refugees resettled in 2021



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	INITIAL COUNTRY OF RECEPTION	PERSONS
● Syria	Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt	908
● Sudan	Egypt, Rwanda	17
● Eritrea	Egypt, Rwanda	11
● Ethiopia	Egypt	10
● Southern Sudan	Egypt	7
⚡ Others		11
Total		964



	PERSONS
● Families	923
● Single men	35
● Single women	6
Total	964

VOLUNTARY RETURN

In 2021, 1,965 people returned voluntarily to their country of origin. This was a slight increase (6%) compared to the previous year. As in 2020, the organisation of returns was disrupted by the coronavirus crisis, both in Belgium and in the destination countries. In spite of this context, Fedasil and the IOM (in charge of organising the journeys) continued to look for solutions, in consultation with the embassies.

The main nationalities were Brazilian (239 persons), Ukrainian (235), Salvadoran (222), Mongolian (166) and Moldovan (120). There was an increase in returns to Ukraine, El Salvador, Mongolia and Moldova compared to 2020. Returns to Brazil, on the other hand, are decreasing.

Returns concern people who have an asylum application under examination, people whose asylum application has been rejected or migrants without a residence permit in our country. In 2021, 49% of voluntary returns (or 955 persons) concerned persons without a residence permit in Belgium.

Assistance in the country of destination

Of the returnees in 2021, 1,344 received reintegration assistance (68% of returnees) to build a new future in the country. Reintegration is monitored on the ground by the offices of the IOM and Caritas International, or via their local partners.

The reintegration programme helps to address the problems faced by people on their return, such as the renovation or rental of a home, job searches and medical expenses. The IOM and Caritas International are in charge of preparations from Belgium.

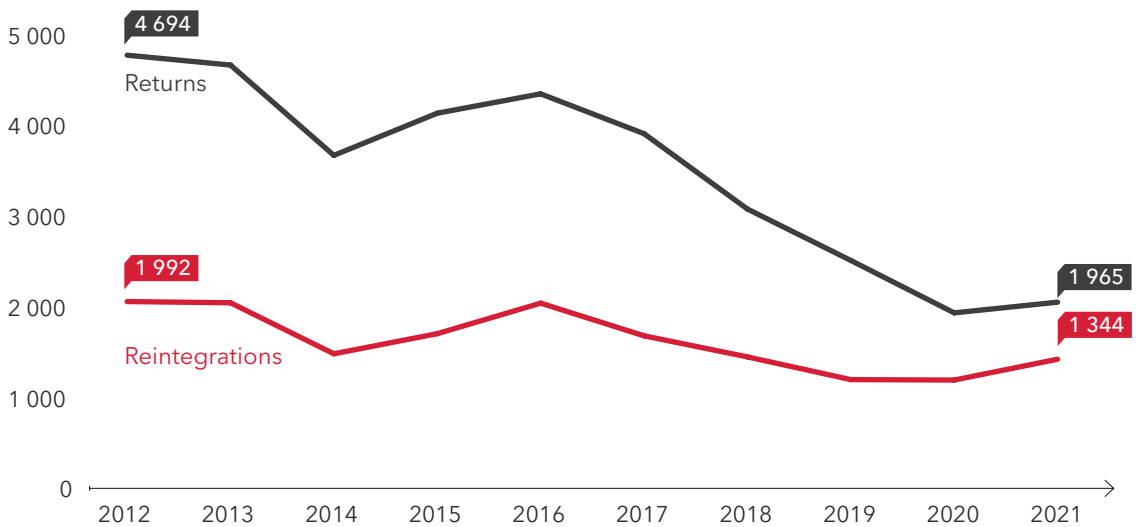
The Belgian voluntary return programme receives support from the European AMIF fund. More information is available at www.voluntaryreturn.be

Informing undocumented migrants

Fedasil has a specific team for informing migrants without a residence permit in Belgium. The 'Reach Out' team meets migrants who are stranded or in transit in our country and provides them with information about their rights and options regarding asylum and return.

During 2021, the Fedasil 'Reach Out' team made a total of 2,044 contacts with migrants (individual or groups) and conducted 471 individual interviews. The most common nationalities were Eritrean (36%), Sudanese (11%) and Ethiopian (10%).

Evolution of voluntary returns from Belgium (number of returnees)



Comment

The figures also include the voluntary returns to the country of origin organised by the Immigration Office (26 persons in 2021). 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 asylum).

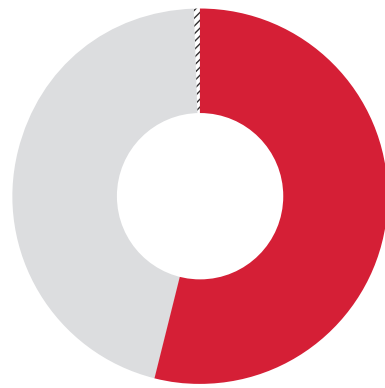
Countries of destination in 2021

	RETURNEES (WITH OR WITHOUT REINTEGRATION)	RETURNEES WITH REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE	
Brazil	239	El Salvador	222
Ukraine	235	Mongolia	165
El Salvador	222	Brazil	125
Mongolia	166	Moldavia	97
Moldavia	120	Georgia	47
Romania	69	Russia	47
Georgia	60	Belarus	47
Russia	53	Iraq	45
Belarus	51	Ukraine	35
Iraq	45	Serbia	30
Others	705	Others	484
Total	1 965	Total	1 344

Profile of the returnees in 2021



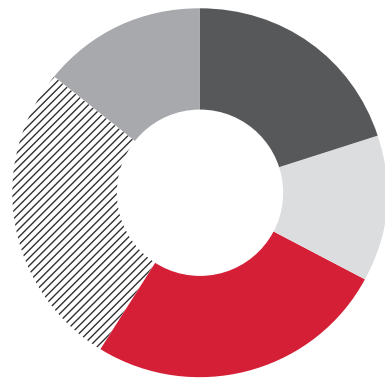
	PERSONS
● Applicants for international protection (asylum)	464
○ Rejected applicants for international protection	546
⊘ Irregular migrants	955



	PERSONS
● Families	1 059
○ Single men and women	900
⊘ UM (Unaccompanied foreign minors)	6



	%
● Men	59
● Women	41



	%
● 0-17 years	20
● 18-25 years	13
● 26-35 years	26
⊘ 36-50 years	27
● + 51 years	14

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Ce bilan est également disponible en français.

Deze balans bestaat ook in het Nederlands.

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Fedasil is responsible for the reception of applicants for international protection (asylum) and other target groups, and guarantees quality and compliance within the various reception modalities. We prepare our residents for life after reception, we coordinate the various voluntary return programmes and implement the commitments made in international programmes such as resettlement and relocation.

This review presents the events and statistics for 2021 regarding reception, resettlement and voluntary returns.

The latest information and news about our organisation can be found on our website, www.fedasil.be

Information for applicants for protection can be found (in 14 languages) on our website www.fedasilinfo.be