New terminology

Belgian legislation has been modified owing to the transposition of European directives concerning the asylum procedure and reception methods. Since 22 March 2018, the law has introduced new terminology. Now, we refer in particular to ‘application for international protection’ instead of ‘asylum application’ and ‘subsequent application’ instead of ‘multiple asylum application’. We use the new terminology in this publication.
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I am delighted to share with you the 2017 review of the Federal Agency for the reception of applicants for international protection in Belgium.

The asylum crisis which we faced in 2015 and the start of 2016 and which placed Fedasil on the frontline, has now settled down in our country.

Today, we are in a ‘streamlining’ phase, because that is what our organisation does, having to adapt its activities to the rhythm of migratory flows. In 2017, we continued the plan to reduce the reception network: no fewer than 3,000 places were closed last year.

On request by the Federal government, this exercise is continuing in 2018 with the closure of 6,500 additional places. This decision is the logical consequence of the decrease in the number of people welcomed in the Fedasil network. The government’s clear aim is to return to the capacity before the crisis - namely 16,600 places - by the start of 2019.

Therefore, 2018 is marked by this new reorganisation of our network with, in addition, the new ‘arrival centre’ project for applicants for international protection. A large-scale and ambitious project that will span several years.

The arrival centre is a wonderful opportunity to rethink our activities dedicated to identifying, registering and guiding newly arrived applicants for international protection. It will also allow us to facilitate and strengthen our collaboration with asylum bodies. This project should provide added value for migrants and reinforce our tradition of quality reception.

An expertise in the field of reception which, more than ever, continues to be exported. In 2017, 23 Fedasil staff members participated in a mission for EASO, the European Asylum Support Office. Most of the missions involved the hotspots in Greece and Italy, but also in Cyprus and Bulgaria. By providing its staff, Fedasil is showing its solidarity with EU countries that are subject to a high level of migratory pressure. Our experts are hailed regularly for their professionalism, motivation and skills. I am particularly proud of them.

Moreover, you will also find in this 2017 Review the most recent developments regarding the resettlement and relocation of migrants in Belgium as well as the evolution of voluntary returns to countries of origin.

Jean-Pierre Luxen,
14 May 2018
RECEPTION OF APPLICANTS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

The arrival of applicants for international protection in Belgium stabilised in 2017. More than 20,000 people presented themselves to Fedasil's Dispatching service – namely a 10% decrease compared to 2016 but half as many as in 2015, a record year for arrivals.

Syria is the first country of origin of applicants who arrived in 2017 (a quarter of the arrivals), in particular via refugee resettlement and migrant relocation programmes. The other main countries of origin were Afghanistan, Guinea and Iraq.

**Drop in occupation**

Throughout 2017 (with the exception of December), there were fewer arrivals than departures in the reception network. Therefore, the number of people welcomed fell steadily from 22,900 (start of January) to 17,800 people (end of December). The occupancy rate fell from 86% to 76%.

The reception network reduction plan, decided by the Federal government in 2016, continued in 2017 with the closure of individual housing managed by the NGOs (Ciré, Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen) and the closure of the centres in Dendermonde and Lubbeck.

At the end of 2017, the network offered a total of 23,300 reception places, namely a decrease of 3,000 places compared to the end of 2016. The aim for 2019, is to regain the ‘structural’ reception capacity of the pre-crisis level of 2015, corresponding to 16,600 places.

**Unaccompanied minors**

The arrival of unaccompanied foreign minors (UM) was also stable in 2017 with around 70 young people/month. The capacity for UM decreased slightly and ‘UM’ places were converted into adult places. At the end of 2017, Fedasil and its partners had 2,341 places for these young people.

The young people accommodated are mainly boys from Afghanistan aged from 16-17 years.

More information is available at www.fedasil.be
Evolution of applications for international protection (number of persons) in Belgium 2010-2017 (source CGRS)

Reception applications at the Fedasil Dispatching in 2017

Persons accommodated (allocations) 14 603
Persons not accommodated 5 429
- Subsequent requests* 3 435
- No show** 1 984
- Non-allocations*** 10

Total 20 032

* The right to accommodation is not automatic for persons submitting a second (or subsequent) asylum request
** Persons who do not want accommodation
*** EU-citizens
Evolution of the reception capacity / 2008-2017

Situation end of December of each year
- Structural reception capacity
- Temporary reception capacity (including emergency/transit) and spare capacity

Reception network arrivals (IN) and departures (OUT) in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN</th>
<th>14,603</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OUT</td>
<td>-19,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance 2017</td>
<td>-5,116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evolution of the reception capacity and the occupancy in 2017

- **Capacity**: 25,901 - 23,338
- **Occupancy**: 22,171 - 17,788

Evolution of the occupancy rate in 2017

- **Occupancy rate**: 86% - 76%
**Capacity and occupancy by reception structure / end 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>% Occupancy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collective housing:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal centres, Croix-Rouge, other partners</td>
<td>13,715</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual housing:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPAS (public social welfare centre), NGO</td>
<td>9,313</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open return places:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal centres</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>23,338</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reception network: capacity per partner / end 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPAS</td>
<td>8,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French-speaking Red Cross</td>
<td>5,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fedasil</td>
<td>4,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch-speaking Red Cross</td>
<td>2,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samusocial</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other partners</td>
<td>1,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>23,338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Profile of the persons who arrived in 2017

- Families: 50%
- Single men: 34%
- Single women: 8%
- UM (Unaccompanied foreign minors): 9%

Profile of the persons accommodated / end 2017

- Applicants for international protection (including UM) whose application is being processed: 75%
- Persons with a residence permit: 6%
- Resettled refugees: 5%
- Persons in open return places: 4%
- Others: 10%

Countries:
- Syria: 24%
- Afghanistan: 9%
- Guinea: 6%
- Iraq: 5%
- Eritrea: 4%
- Albania: 4%
- Palestine: 4%
- Others: 44%
Profile of the persons accommodated / end 2017

- **Men**: 67%
- **Women**: 33%
- **Adults**: 67%
- **Minors**: 33%

Countries:

- **Afghanistan**: 27%
- **Syria**: 13%
- **Iraq**: 9%
- **Guinea**: 5%
- **Russia**: 3%
- **Congo (DRC)**: 3%
- **Palestine**: 3%
- **Eritrea**: 3%
- **Others**: 34%

- **Families**: 50%
- **Single men**: 36%
- **Single women**: 6%
- **UM (Unaccompanied foreign minors)**: 8%

- **Men**: 67%
- **Women**: 33%

- **Adults**: 67%
- **Minors**: 33%
Evolution of the reception capacity for foreign unaccompanied minors (UM) / 2008-2017

Situation end of December of each year

UM: capacity by reception phase / fin 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st phase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation and orientation</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd phase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective housing</td>
<td>1 706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd phase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual housing</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific places</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2 341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**UM: capacity per partner** / end 2017

- Fedasil: 819 places
- French-speaking Red Cross: 625 places
- CPAS: 221 places
- Dutch-speaking Red Cross: 213 places
- Flemish community: 145 places
- French community: 130 places
- Others: 188 places
- **Total**: 2,341 places

**Profile of the accommodated UM** / end 2017

- Afghanistan: 67 places
- Guinea: 6 places
- Eritrea: 4 places
- Albania: 3 places
- Somalia: 3 places
- Syria: 3 places
- Other countries: 14 places

**Profile of the accommodated UM** / fin 2017

- Boys: 94%
- Girls: 6%

- 17 years and more: 48 places
- 16 years: 28 places
- 15 years: 15 places
- 14 years: 5 places
- 13 years and less: 4 places
RESettlement AND RELocAtion

The number of migrants arriving in Belgium via the resettlement programme and the relocation mechanism increased greatly with a total of 2,208 people who received reception in 2017 compared to 652 in 2016.

Resettlements on the rise
Since 2013, Belgium has had a structural resettlement programme and, every year, is committed to taking in a contingent of refugees with little or no integration prospects in their first reception country.

In 2017, 1,309 refugees arrived in Belgium in the frame of the resettlement programme, namely three times more than in 2016. 90% of refugees are Syrian who had fled to Syria's neighbouring countries to escape the war (Turkey, Lebanon, etc.). The others are a group of Congolese refugees in Uganda.

More information is available at www.resettlement.be

Relocation from Greece and Italy
The relocation of applicants for international protection is a mechanism which was implemented by the European Union at the end of 2015 to relieve the burden on the Member States which are under high migratory pressure. The aim is to spread the applicants registered in Italy and Greece between the different Member States.

In 2017, 899 migrants arrived in Belgium: 514 from Greece (mainly Syrians) and 385 from Italy (mainly Eritreans).

The resettlement and relocation programmes benefit from European funding (AMIF fund).
Profile of the refugees resettled in Belgium in 2017

- Families: 1262 persons
- Single men: 34 persons
- Single women: 13 persons
- Total: 1309 persons

Initial country of reception:
- Syria: Turkey 721, Lebanon 299, Jordan 156, Iraq 15
- Congo (DRC): Uganda 118
- Total resettled refugees in Belgium (2013-2017): 1,309 persons
Relocated applicants for international protection in Belgium in 2017

**RECEPTION COUNTRY (IN EU) PERSONS**

- Greece 514
- Italy 385
- Total 899

**PROFILE PERSONS**

- Families 520
- Single men 282
- Single women 71
- UM 26
- Total 899

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN PERSONS**

- Syria 522
- Eritrea 358
- Iraq 11
- Others 8
- Total 899

Relocated applicants for international protection in Belgium (2015-2017)
In 2017, Belgium organised 320 voluntary returns per month on average, representing a total of 3,827 migrants returned to their country of origin. More than 40% of them benefited from additional aid to facilitate their reintegration into the country.

**Decrease in returns**

Compared to 2016, a 10% decrease was recorded in the number of people returned. This decrease can be explained partly by the fall in the arrival of applicants for international protection registered in 2016 and 2017. Therefore, there are proportionally fewer migrants requesting a voluntary return from Belgium.

In 2017, the decrease in departures mainly concerned Iraqi and Afghan applicants.

**Focus on illegal migrants**

However, an increase has been seen in returns by illegal immigrants. These are mainly Ukrainians and Romanians, who never submitted an application for protection in Belgium.

Fedasil and its partners continue to pay particular attention to illegal immigrants. New partnerships have started with associations in contact with migrant communities. Fedasil also informed more than 1,600 frontline workers in contact with these migrants about voluntary return.

**Fedasil return desks**

In order to reach migrants who are not in the reception network, Fedasil has five return desks, which organise services to answer their questions and plan a possible return. Return desks are located in cities (Brussels, Ghent, Liege, Antwerp and Charleroi).

The Fedasil advisors provided support for 50% of the people who returned in 2017. The other candidates for return were supported by our partners.

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

More information is available at www.voluntaryreturn.be/en
Comment
Since 2013, the figures also include the voluntary returns organised by the Immigration Office: 205 in 2013, 141 in 2014, 67 in 2015, 47 in 2016, 83 in 2017. Furthermore, these figures do not include voluntary returns carried out within the framework of the Dublin Convention to the European countries where migrants have already applied for international protection, and which are organised by the Immigration Office.

Countries of destination in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons who returned (with or without reintegration)</th>
<th>Persons who returned with reintegration assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine 906</td>
<td>Iraq 352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania 624</td>
<td>Georgia 263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq 377</td>
<td>Ukraine 171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brasil 285</td>
<td>Albania 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia 282</td>
<td>Russia 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania 134</td>
<td>Afghanistan 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia 106</td>
<td>Kosovo 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo 91</td>
<td>Armenia 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia 88</td>
<td>Morocco 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia 79</td>
<td>Serbia 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others 855</td>
<td>Others 425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 3827</td>
<td>Total 1607</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Profile of the returnees in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicants for international protection</td>
<td>704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected applicants for international protection</td>
<td>938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular migrants</td>
<td>2,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,827</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single men and women</td>
<td>2,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>1,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied minors</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,827</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fedasil is in charge of the reception of applicants for international protection in Belgium and guarantees the quality and conformity of the different reception structures. Fedasil also coordinates the organisation of voluntary returns to the countries of origin.

This review presents the events and statistics for 2017 for reception, resettlement, relocation and voluntary returns. The latest information and news about our organisation can be found on our website, www.fedasil.be.