

# REVIEW 2018

Reception - Resettlement - Voluntary Return



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

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Deze balans bestaat ook in het Nederlands.

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On the cover: Arrival Centre - © Fedasil/Layla Aerts

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# FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

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I am delighted to share with you the 2018 review of the Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers in Belgium.

This review includes an eventful end of year.

At the start of the year, we were still talking about reducing the number of reception places, but the situation has gradually changed since summer 2018. The relative increase in applications for international protection (but incommensurable with 2015) and the increased time required to process dossiers have resulted in critical levels of occupation in most of our reception facilities.

To address this - sadly predictable - situation, the government has taken a range of measures to increase capacity and reduce the number of arrivals.

It is also against this background that we opened our 'arrival centre'. The aim of this pilot project, developed with the Immigration Office at the Petit-Château in Brussels, is to improve the initial reception of new applicants and respect their dignity as much as possible. This is a crucial project.

Over the next few months, Fedasil will continue to adapt its reception network according to demand. Through the supervisory Minister, we received the resources we need to expand our reception capacity. This is a major challenge, as the

availability of public buildings is decreasing due to the significant contributions already required of our usual partners, namely Defence and the Building Authority.

2019 is an election year. Our main demand of the next government is that it adopts, once and for all, an action plan that can allow us to adapt to the variations in protection applications. I am referring in particular to the system of buffer places that we presented two years ago.

This action plan was assessed at a cost that is considerably lower than the cost involved in repeatedly opening/closing centres. Operational logic must be able to take precedence over purely budgetary logic. This plan puts forward a rational and thus professional approach to future crises that will undoubtedly continue to affect the asylum sector for years to come.

Lastly, I would like to stress the importance of the refugee resettlement programme in Belgium. Our country is already involved in this solidarity programme, together with the UNHCR and the IOM, and is implementing it with the CGRS.

You will find in this 2018 Review the most recent developments regarding resettlement as well as the evolution of voluntary returns to countries of origin.

I hope you enjoy reading it.

Jean-Pierre Luxen,  
4 April 2019

# RECEPTION OF APPLICANTS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

In contrast to the European trend (10% drop compared with 2017), Belgium experienced an increase in protection applications in 2018 (+19%).

## **Increase in occupation**

In 2018, 19,486 persons joined the Fedasil reception network (+33% compared with 2017). The main countries of origin were Syria, Palestine (increase) and Afghanistan (decrease).

Arrivals experienced a particular increase in early summer 2018. From August, the number of arrivals in centres was higher than the number of departures. The IN/OUT balance was largely positive, and the number of arrivals has been increasing ever since.

While we can see an increase in protection applications, we can also note the increased time required to process these applications, resulting in a longer stay in the centres.

The reception centres have gradually reached saturation point and a range of measures have been taken to ensure that a place can be allocated to everyone who is entitled to one. At the end of 2018, Fedasil and its partners were accommodating more than 18,500 people (compared with fewer than 16,000 at the start of the summer).

## **Creation of places**

On several occasions during 2018, Fedasil requested the creation of a stock of buffer places (in anticipation of a crisis), then the opening of new centres (to address the shortage of places).

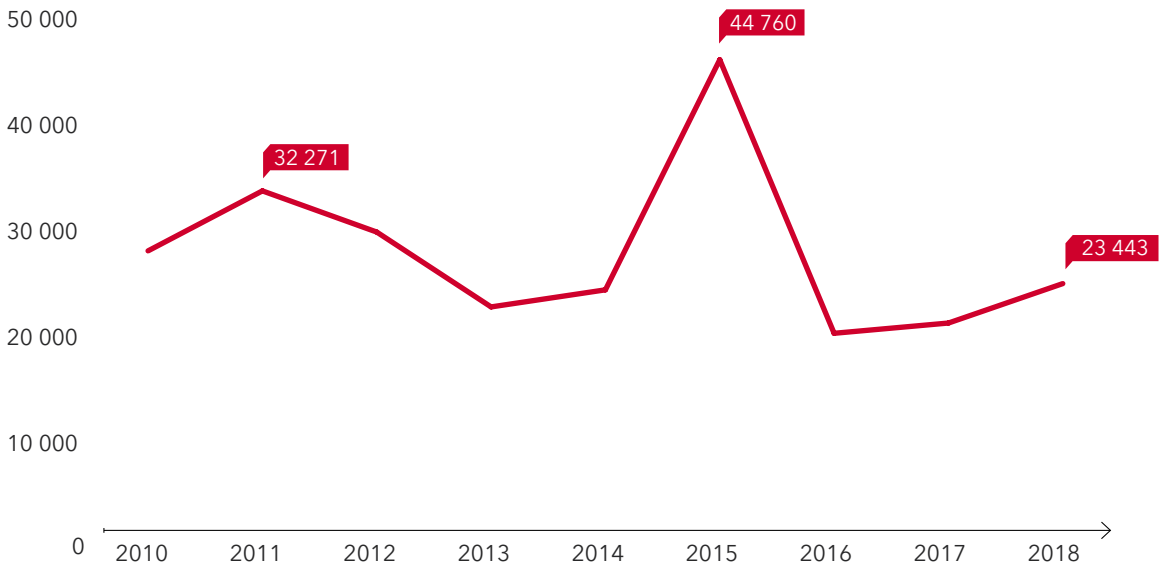
At the end of September, the government agreed to extend temporary places that were due to close at the end of the year. Fedasil subsequently received the resources it needed to open up new reception places (1,500 places at the start of November and 1,500 places at the end of December). The capacity of several reception centres was increased and Fedasil was soon able to open a new centre in Lommel. Other centres will open later in 2019 (Zaventem, Mouscron, Jambes, Mechelen, etc.).

At the end of 2018, Fedasil was managing a network of 21,190 places, divided between around 60 centres and individual housing. 1,689 places were reserved for unaccompanied minors (UM).

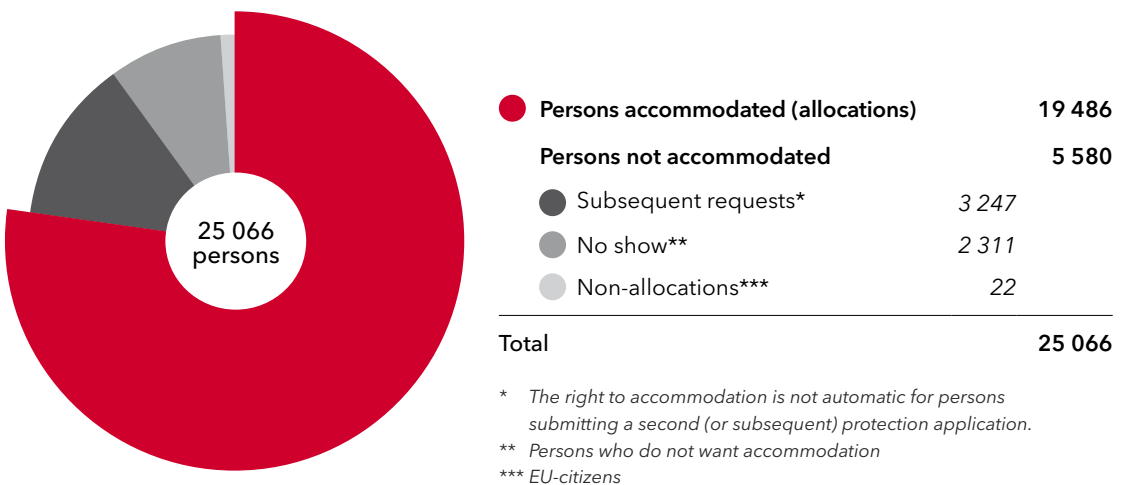
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## Evolution of applications for international protection (number of persons) in Belgium

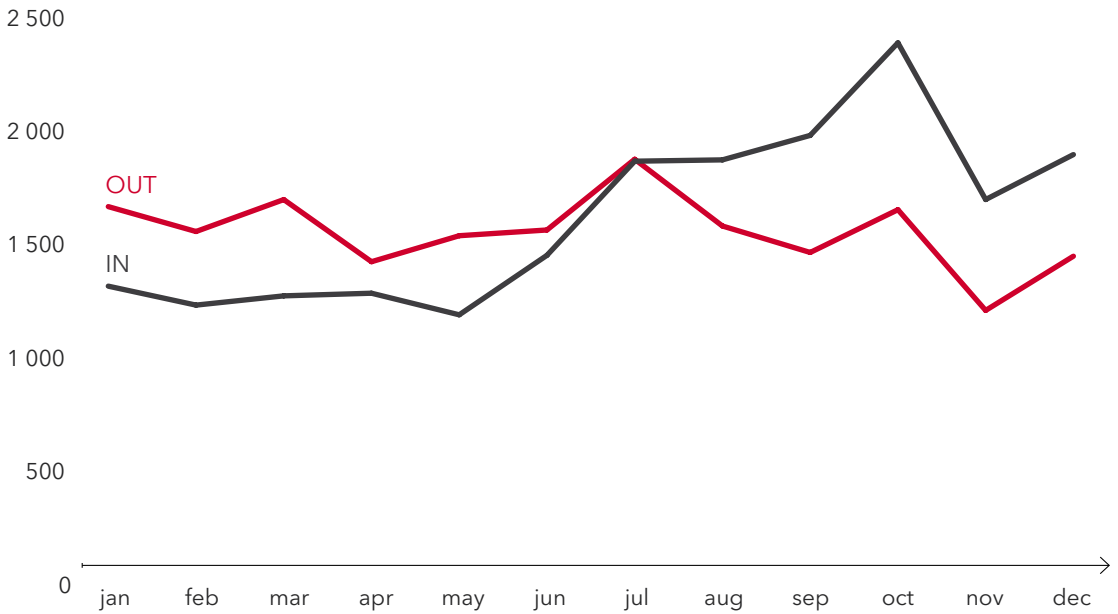
(Source CGRS)



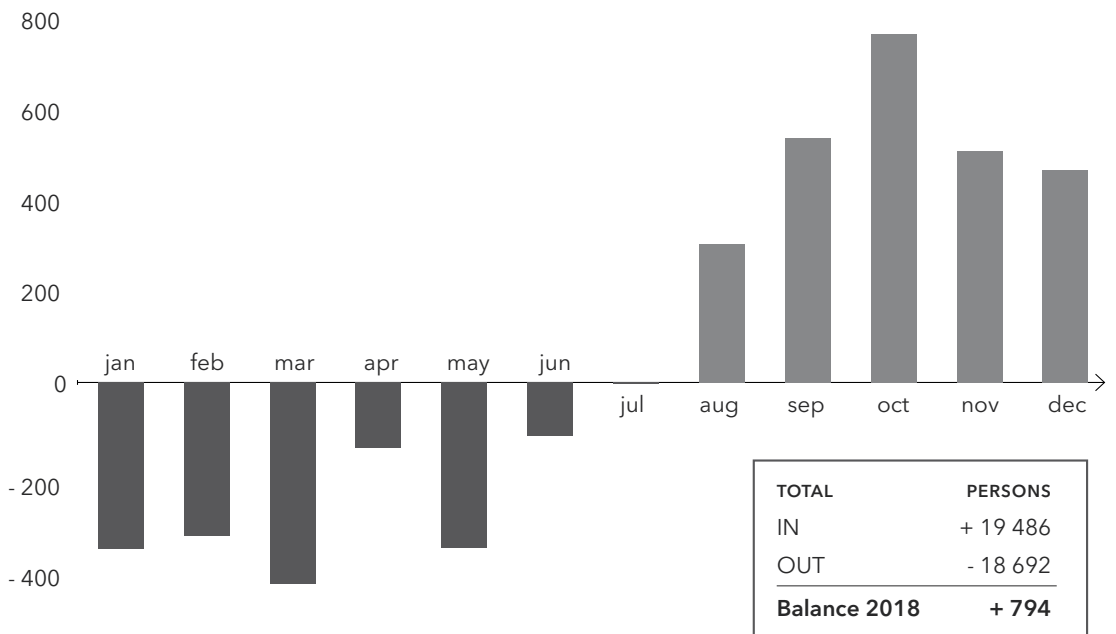
## Reception applications at the Fedasil Dispatching in 2018



## Reception network: arrivals (IN) and departures (OUT) in 2018



## Reception network: arrivals (IN) and departures (OUT) in 2018: balance IN/OUT



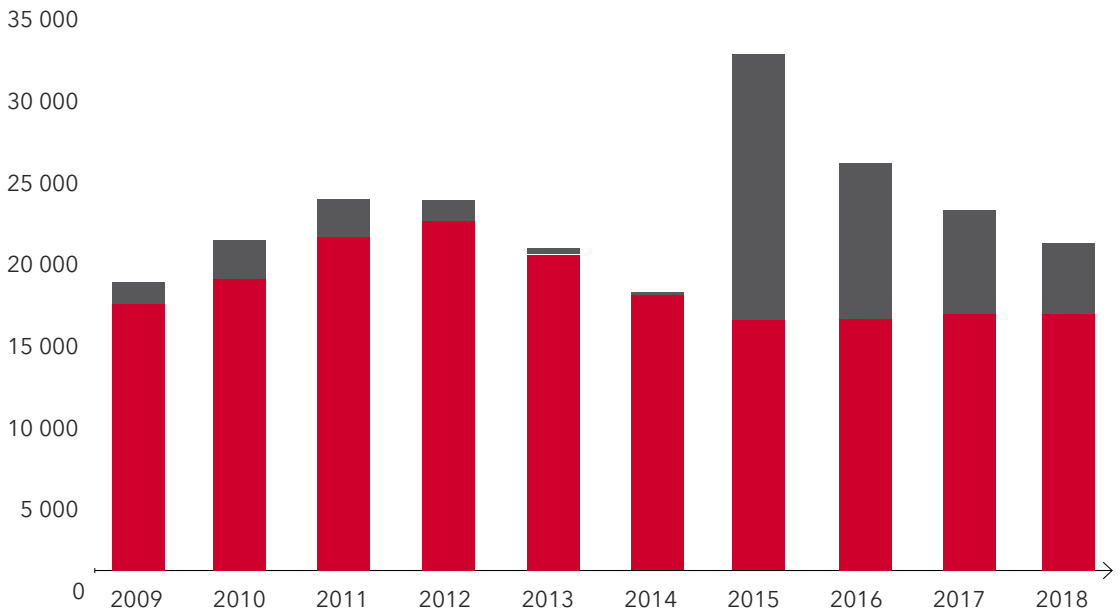


## Evolution of the reception capacity

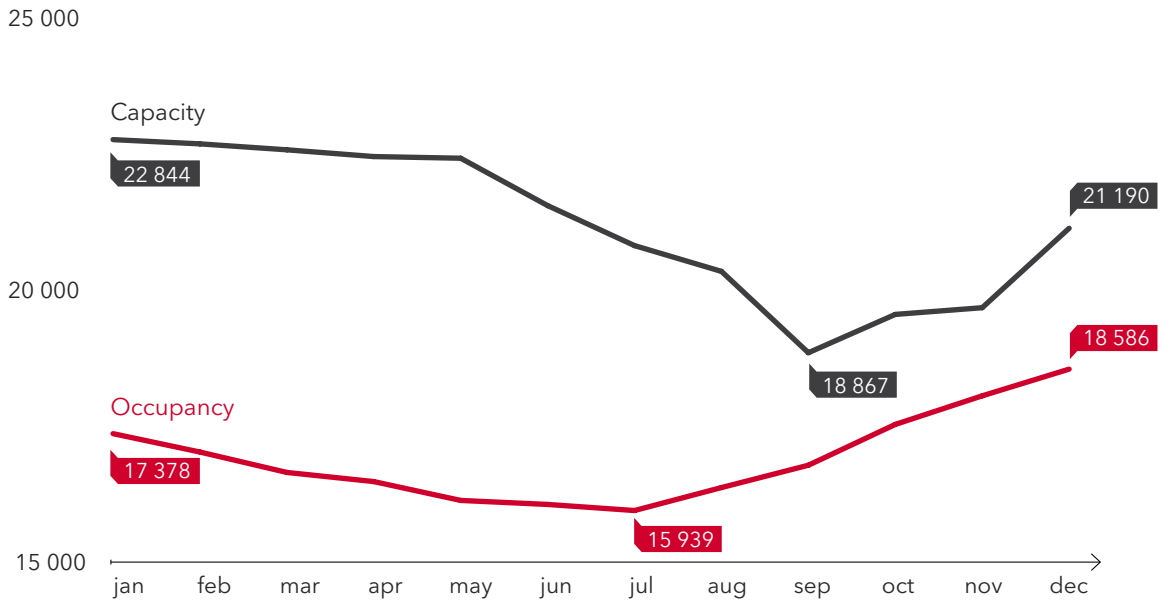
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Situation end of December of each year

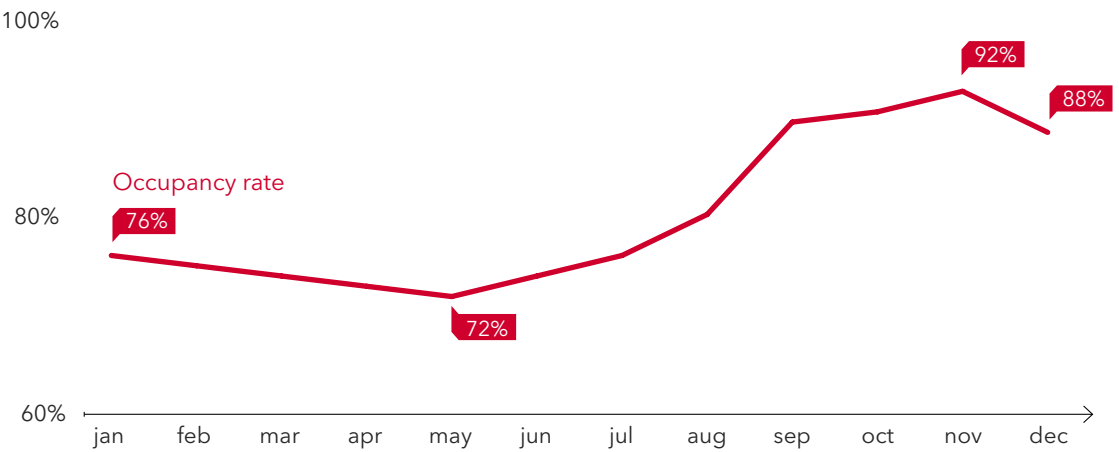
- Structural reception capacity
- Temporary reception capacity and buffer capacity



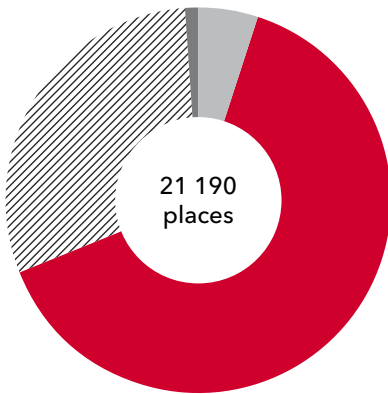
## Evolution of the reception capacity and the occupancy in 2018



## Evolution of the occupancy rate in 2018

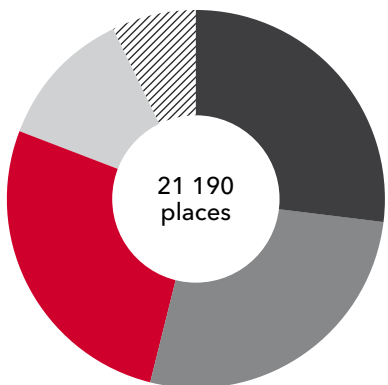


## Capacity and occupancy by reception type / end 2018



	CAPACITY	OCCUPANCY RATE %
● <b>1st phase reception</b> Arrival centre, COO for UM	1 076	54
● <b>Collective housing</b> Federal centres, Croix-Rouge, Rode Kruis, Samusocial and other partners	13 537	88
⊗ <b>Individual housing</b> CPAS (public social welfare centre), Caritas, Ciré and other partners	6 307	94
● <b>Open return places</b> Federal centres	270	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>21 190</b>	<b>88</b>

## Reception network: capacity per partner / end 2018

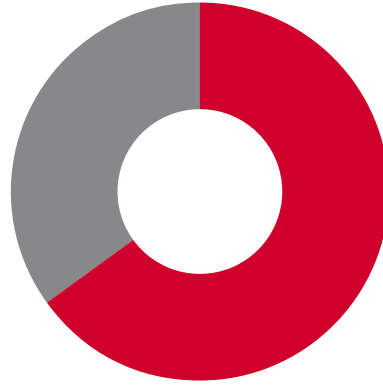


	PLACES
● CPAS	5 803
● French-speaking Red Cross	5 752
● Fedasil	5 701
● Dutch-speaking Red Cross	2 607
⊗ Other partners	1 327
<b>Total</b>	

## Profile of the persons accommodated / end 2018



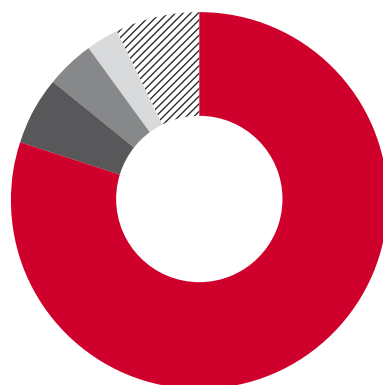
	%
● Families	52
● Single men	36
● Single women	7
⊗ UM (Unaccompanied foreign minors)	6



	%
● Men	65
● Women	35



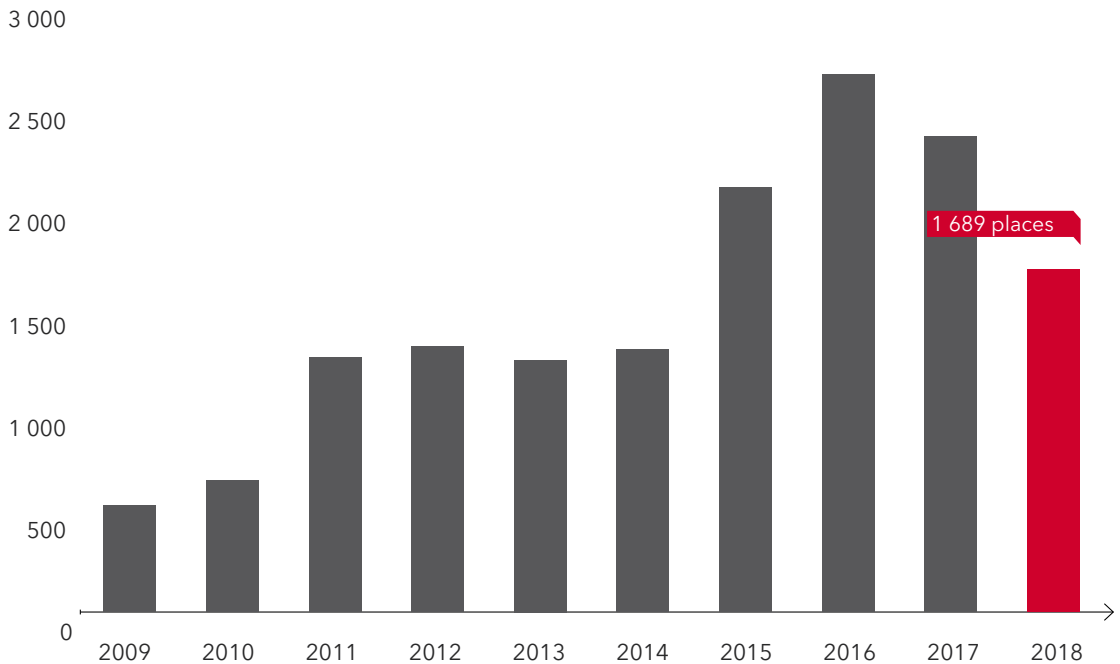
	%
● Afghanistan	13
● Syria	13
● Palestine	12
● Iraq	7
● Guinea	7
⊗ Others	52



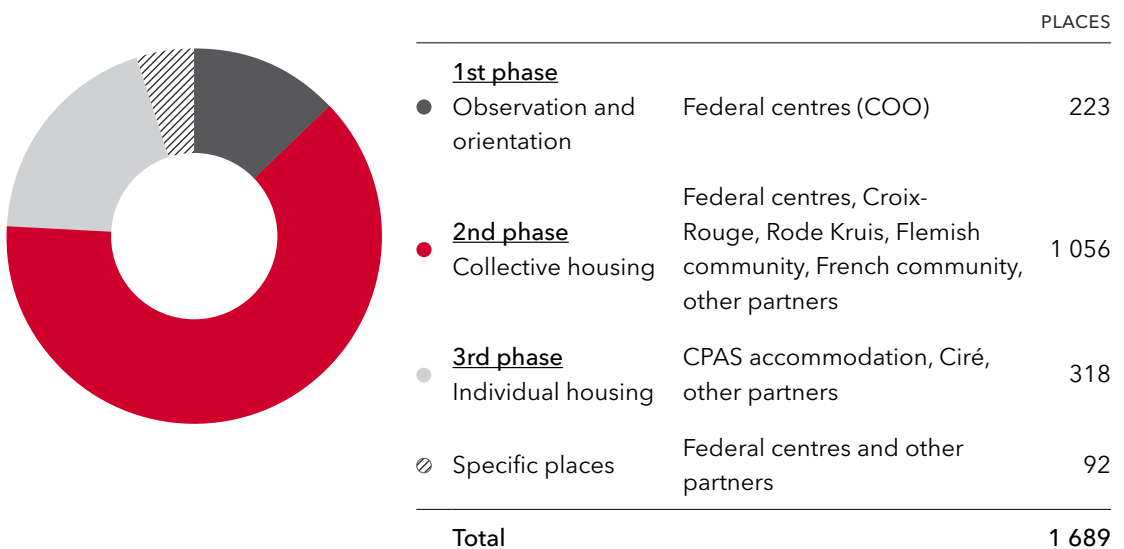
	%
● Applicants for international protection (including UM) whose application is being processed	80
● Persons with a residence permit (transition period)	6
● Persons in open return places	4
○ Resettled refugees	3
⊗ Others	7

## Evolution of the reception capacity for foreign unaccompanied minors (UM)

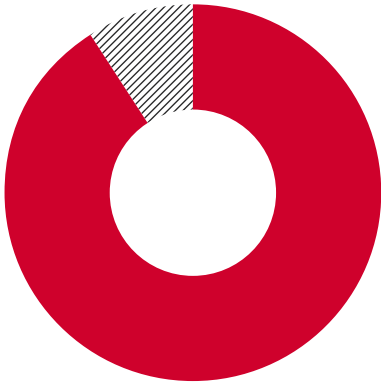
Situation end of December of each year



## UM: capacity by reception phase / end 2018



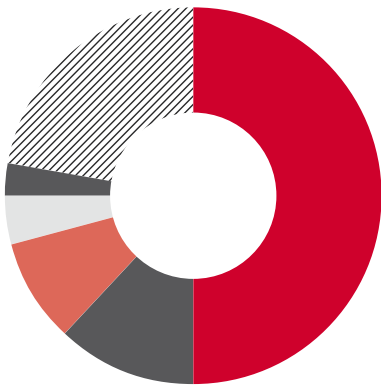
## Profile of the accommodated UM / end 2018



	%
● Boys	91
⊘ Girls	9



	%
● 17 years and more	37
● 16 years	40
● 15 years	16
● 14 years	4
⊘ 13 years and less	3



	%
● Afghanistan	50
● Guinea	12
● Eritrea	9
○ Somalia	4
● Albania	3
⊘ Other countries	22

# RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES

Belgium has had a structural resettlement programme since 2013. Our country is committed to taking in an annual contingent of refugees with few or no integration prospects in their first reception country.

Our commitment in 2018 was to take in a total of 1,150 refugees. However, the Belgian government suspended the arrival of refugees at the end of October due to the increased occupation of reception centres. In concrete terms, 880 refugees were resettled between January and October 2018 and the arrival of the latest Syrian refugees was postponed.

The new Asylum Minister relaunched the programme at the start of 2019 so that Belgium could meet its international commitments.

The people resettled in 2018 were primarily Syrians accommodated in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. Belgium also organised a resettlement mission in Niger for the first time (43 Eritrean and Somali refugees).

The resettlement programme receives European funding (AMIF). Between 2013 and 2018, 3,051 refugees were resettled in Belgium, 87% of them Syrian.

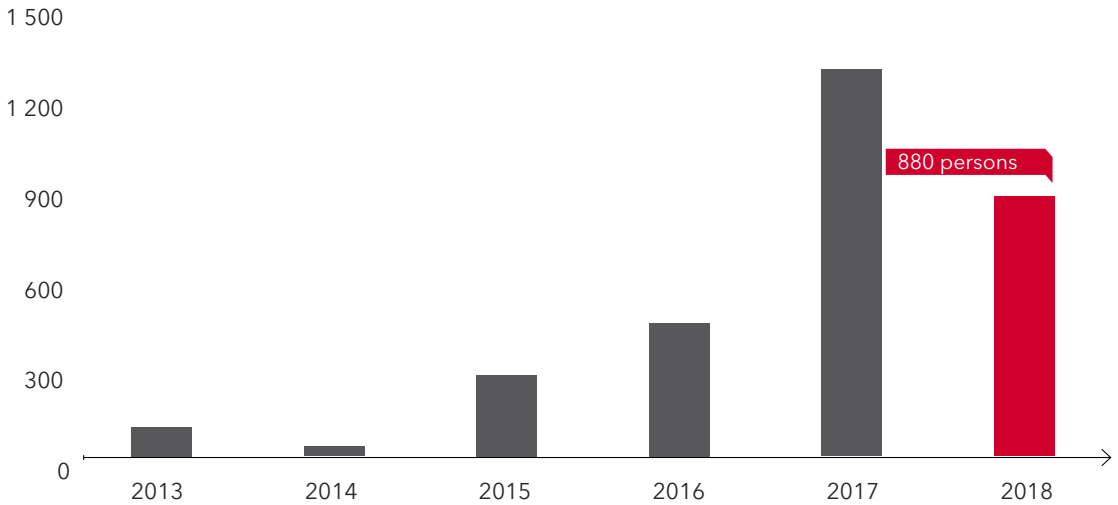
[More information is available at  
www.resettlement.be](http://www.resettlement.be)

## RELOCATIONS FROM GREECE AND ITALY

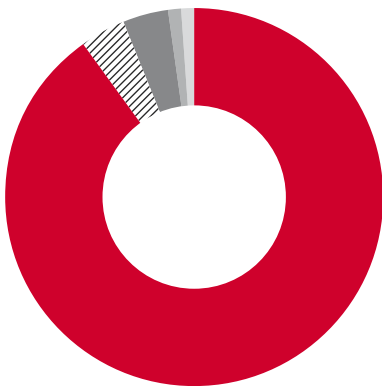
Belgium took part in the European relocation scheme between 2015 and 2018. A total of 1,162 protection applicants were relocated to Belgium, most of them in 2017. However, the remaining 57 persons were relocated in 2018, before the programme ended.

The goal of relocating international protection applicants was to ease the pressure on Member States experiencing significant migratory pressure (mainly Greece and Italy).

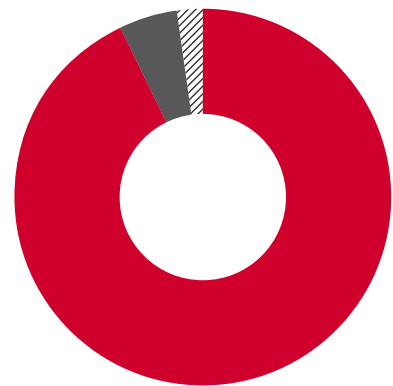
## Number of refugees resettled in Belgium



## Profile of the refugees resettled in Belgium in 2018



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	INITIAL COUNTRY OF RECEPTION	PERSONS
● Syria	Lebanon	802
⊘ Congo (DRC)	Uganda	34
● Eritrea	Niger	33
● Somalia	Niger	10
● Iraq	Lebanon	1
Total		880



	PERSONS
● Families	814
● Single men	45
⊘ Single women	21
Total	880



# VOLUNTARY RETURN

In 2018, 2,994 migrants decided to return home with the aid of the voluntary return programme. 46% of them received additional aid to facilitate their reintegration into their country of origin.

## **Fewer returns**

The number of voluntary returns decreased for the second year in a row. There was a 22% drop in the number of returnees compared with 2017. The main destination countries were Ukraine, Georgia and Romania. The drop in returns involved mainly Ukrainian, Romanian and Iraqi migrants. The destinations that experienced an increase included Georgia and Poland.

## **Awareness**

The majority of the returnees were foreigners without a valid residence permit (56% of returns). The others were protection applicants whose protection application was pending or had been rejected.

Fedasil plans to continue raising awareness among illegal immigrants. As these people are outside the reception network, Fedasil organises information sessions for front-line personnel. Some of Fedasil's partners are also present in the reception facilities for the homeless that open in winter. The aim is to inform as many people as possible about the possibilities for return.

Fedasil has also expanded its network of partners among the local authorities. The cities of Liège, Anderlecht and Mechelen now have a returns awareness project.

## **Aid in the country of destination**

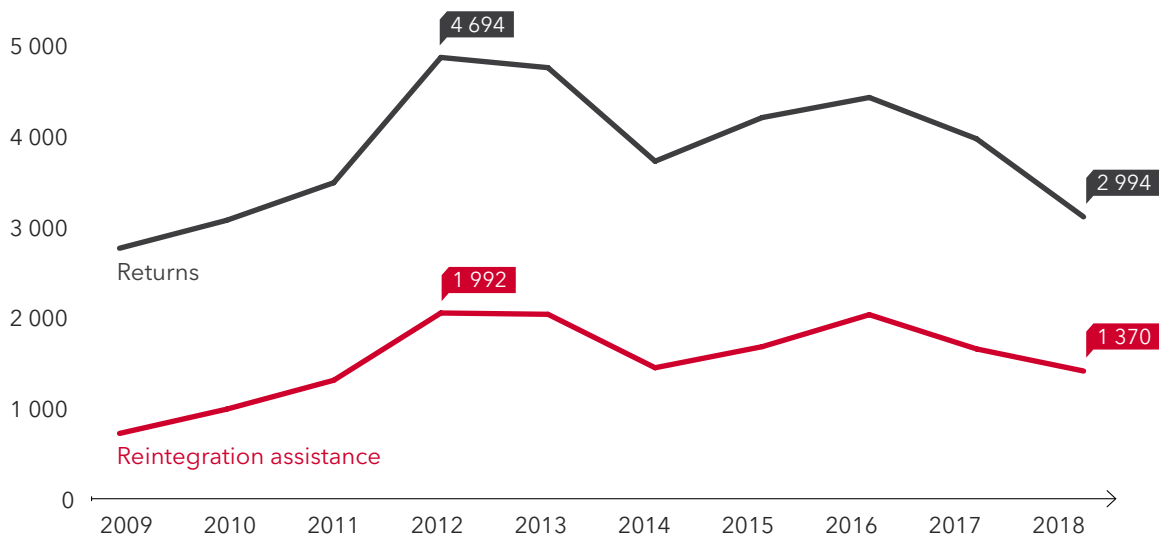
46% of returnees also received reintegration assistance. Reintegration helps to address the problems faced by migrants upon their return, such as the renovation or rental of a home, job searches and medical expenses.

This aid is monitored on the ground by the local partners of Caritas and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Fedasil has also launched a partnership with the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel), with which a first project is being developed in Guinea.

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

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

## Voluntary returns from Belgium (number of returnees)



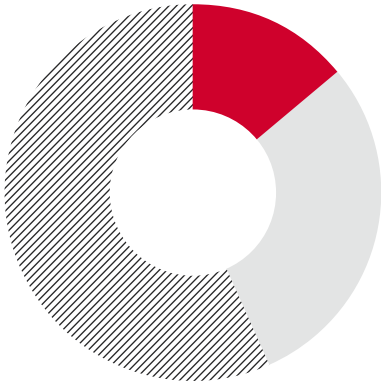
**Comment** - The figures also include the voluntary returns organised by the Immigration Office (48 persons in 2018). However, the figures do not include voluntary returns carried out within the framework of the Dublin Convention (organised by the Immigration Office to the European countries where migrants have already applied for international protection).

## Countries of destination in 2018

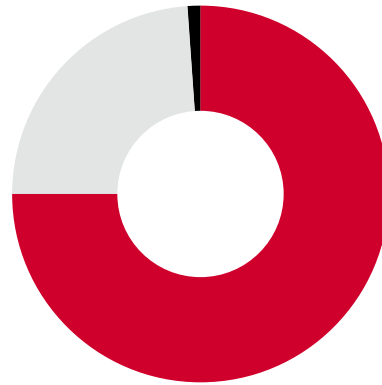
RETURNEES (WITH AND WITHOUT REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE)		RETURNEES WITH REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE	
Ukraine	547	Georgia	356
Georgia	432	Iraq	165
Romania	383	Ukraine	79
Brazil	331	Brazil	73
Iraq	172	Armenia	67
Albania	101	Albania	49
Armenia	74	Russia	46
North Macedonia	62	North Macedonia	40
Slovakia	61	Serbia	38
Mongolia	58	Lebanon	27
Others	773	Others	430
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 994</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 370</b>

## Profile of the returnees in 2018

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	PERSONS
● Applicants for international protection	424
○ Rejected applicants for international protection	879
⊘ Irregular migrants	1 691
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 994</b>



	PERSONS
● Families	2 275
○ Single men and women	708
● UM	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 994</b>

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 2018 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).

**[www.fedasil.be](http://www.fedasil.be)**