

Review 2014



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Contents

FOREWORD BY JEAN-PIERRE LUXEN, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FEDASIL	5
KEY EVENTS OF 2014	6
RECEPTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS	8
VOLUNTARY RETURN	15
INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES	18

Foreword by the Director-General of Fedasil



I am delighted to send you the 2014 review of the Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers. A year marked by a significant

increase in asylum applications in Belgium and, consequently, by the number of people arriving at the reception structures of Fedasil and its partners.

However, as the news tragically reminds us, every day conflicts across the world push unparalleled numbers of migrants on the road to exile. The humanitarian drama that is currently taking place in the Mediterranean goes beyond the Belgian or European context. Nevertheless, Fedasil wishes to be an organisation which, through its work, helps to provide a human response to an extremely complex issue.

Our contribution is reflected in particular through our involvement in the refugee resettlement programme in Belgium. In 2014-2015, this international solidarity project, supported by the Federal Government, plans to receive some 300 Syrian refugees who fled to in Turkey or Lebanon and around one hundred Congolese refugees who sought refuge in Burundi. This project allows us to offer these individuals real prospects for the future.

At European level, Fedasil is also providing its expertise to other countries and foreign partners, particularly in southern Europe. Our Agency regularly contributes to the missions of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Our employees have therefore travelled to Italy, Greece, Cyprus and Bulgaria in order to share their expertise with a view to improving the reception of asylum seekers.

Finally, I want to highlight that the new reception model, implemented by the Agency and supported by our State Secretary, gives Belgium great flexibility in terms of the reception of asylum seekers. We can now respond to any a political will to accommodate more migrants or deal with an unexpected, large-scale influx.

This mission is also reflected in our commitment to meet the specific needs of all those entitled to reception, whatever their profile, their application status or their vulnerability. Our reception model aims to improve the quality of services on offer and humanise the fate of the migrants who arrive in our country. An objective which cannot be achieved without the valuable contribution of our many partners, both in terms of reception and voluntary return.

I hope you enjoy reading this reviewit.

Jean-Pierre Luxen,
24 April 2015.

Key events of 2014

NEW POLITICAL AUTHORITY

The Michel I Federal Government was sworn in on 11 October 2014, with Theo Francken as State Secretary for Asylum and Migration. He succeeds Maggie De Block and therefore takes over responsibility for Fedasil and other asylum bodies. The coalition and Mr Francken's policy document provide in particular for a new reception model and rapid and correct procedures and pays special attention to unaccompanied minors and the voluntary return of migrants.



EVALUATION OF THE RETURN PROCEDURE

In 2014, Fedasil conducted a large-scale survey among 500 social workers to evaluate the return procedure. This procedure (introduced in 2012) aims to encourage the voluntary return of those individuals who receive a negative decision to their asylum application. Asylum seekers who have been turned down are given an 'open return place' (300 places are available and divided between 4 Fedasil centres). The evaluation puts forward 21 recommendations for improving the procedure. Their implementation in the field began in late 2014.

EBOLA PREVENTION

The Ebola virus has raged in West Africa since 2014. Fedasil, in cooperation with the Immigration Office and the FPS ministry of Public Health, has implemented additional precautionary measures for asylum seekers arriving from 'at-risk' regions. A procedure has been set up to monitor their health. However, the contagion risk remains very low. No suspected cases were recorded in reception structures in 2014.



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PERSONNEL

A code of conduct for those working in the reception of asylum seekers has been set out in a Ministerial Decree. It was written by a working group comprised of representatives from Fedasil's partners and employees. This code specifies common behavioural guidelines. Four core values form the basis of our code of conduct: respect, customer focus, impartiality and discretion. Fedasil has developed a training course on this topic for its personnel with the slogan "Whatever our differences, we share the same values. No matter how different, we all carry the same values".



REDUCTION IN RECEPTION CAPACITY

In December 2014, the Council of Ministers approved a savings plan that included a 16.4 million euro reduction in Fedasil's 2015 budget. This cost-saving measure is largely achieved by decreasing reception capacity. In total, 1,212 places will be permanently closed (including the Fedasil centre in Virton in December 2014) and 845 structural places will be converted into buffer places (which is a total of 2,057 places affected). This decision, already announced in the coalition agreement, is the logical development for the budgetary context that affects all Federal institutions. The objective is to return to a 'normal' capacity, as it stood prior to the reception crisis (16,000 reception places in 2008). This measure is also the 2nd phase of the restructuring which began in 2013, with a reduction of 5,748 places between 2013 and 2014.



MY FUTURE

In September 2014, Fedasil launched its pilot project, 'My Future', which is aimed at unaccompanied foreign minors (MENA) who have no prospect of legal residence in Belgium. 'My Future' offers them intensive and structured support that prepares them for their adult future. It is organised from the Fedasil centres in Bovigny and Arendonk. The procedure offers information on the future direction of the young person, professional training and a combination of individual coaching and group sessions. All MENA unaccompanied foreign minors can register on a voluntary basis.



QUALITY STANDARDS FOR RECEPTION

Fedasil's management plan aims to provide an equivalent reception in all reception structures. The definition of quality standards is therefore one of the Agency's priorities. In 2014, Fedasil conducted the first audit tests in two reception centres to monitor infrastructure and safety standards. These initial audits are being used to develop methodology and determine the impact of the standards. In the future, Fedasil hopes to review the standards for material assistance and support for residents.



Reception of asylum seekers

In 2014, 24,323 people applied to Fedasil's Dispatching service for a reception place. 16,566 people received a place compared with 15,455 people in 2013 (+7%). This rise was a result of the increase in asylum seekers observed in Belgium in 2014 (+9% compared with 2013). Syria was the leading country of origin of the arrivals.

At the end of 2014, Fedasil and its partners had a total of 18,015 places, divided between group centres and individual housing. This is a reduction of over 2,800 places in one year. As provided for in the coalition agreement, the reduction in capacity will continue, reaching a total of 16,636 places in 2015, which was the operational capacity prior to the reception crisis in 2008. Fedasil also has a reserve capacity which includes unused 'buffer' places that can quickly become operational in the event of a sudden influx of asylum seekers. At the end

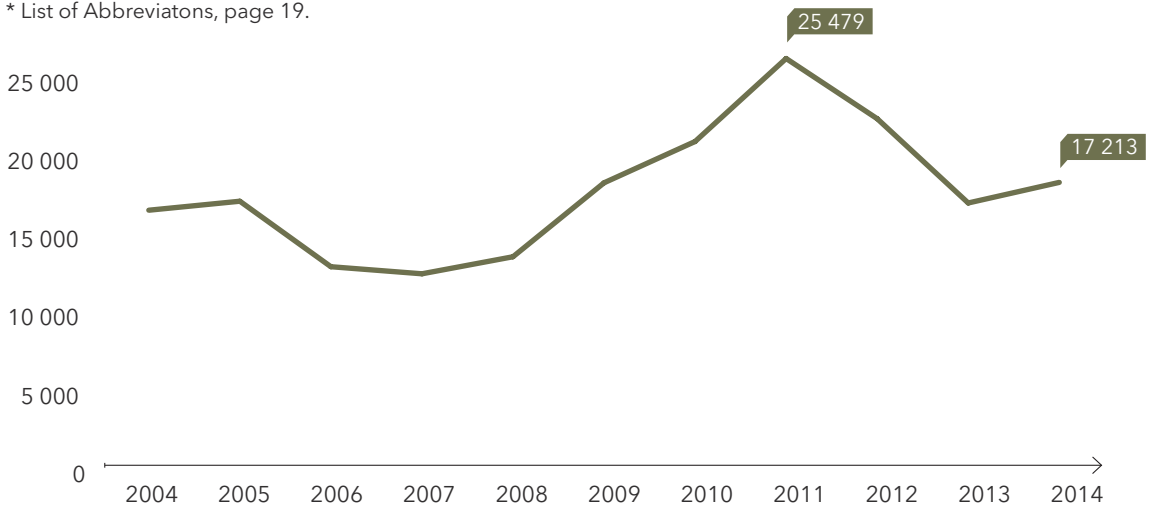
of 2014, the network had 1,433 buffer places (not included in the total capacity).

Although Fedasil recorded more departures than arrivals into the network (16,566 arrivals and 17,476 departures, which is a negative balance of 910 people), the occupancy rate in reception structures increased in 2014 due to the large reduction in capacity. The occupancy rate in the network was 77% at the end of 2014, compared with 71% at the end of 2013.

The profile of the residents is comparable to previous years: a majority of families (56% of people received) and single men (32%), mainly awaiting a decision about their asylum application. Among the people received, the main countries of origin were Syria, Afghanistan, Russia and Guinea.

Evolution of asylum applications in Belgium (Source CGRS*)

* List of Abbreviations, page 19.



Reception applications at the Fedasil Dispatching in 2014

32%

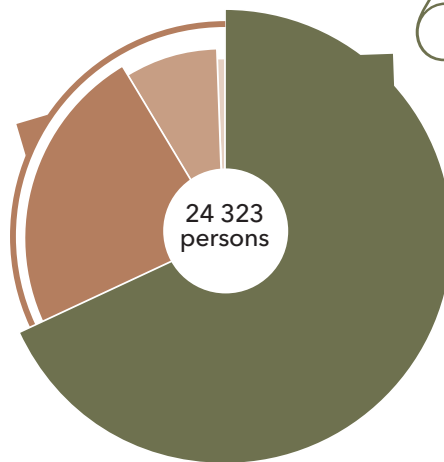
Persons not accommodated

- Multiple asylum applications*
- No show**
- Non-allocations***

* Asylum seekers with multiple asylum claims who are not automatically entitled to accommodation

** Persons who do not want accommodation

*** EU-citizens

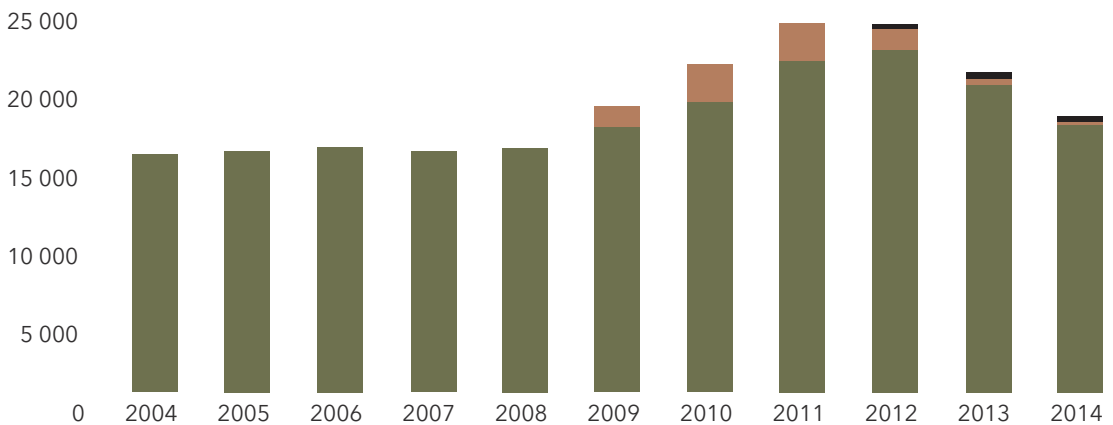


68%

Persons accommodated

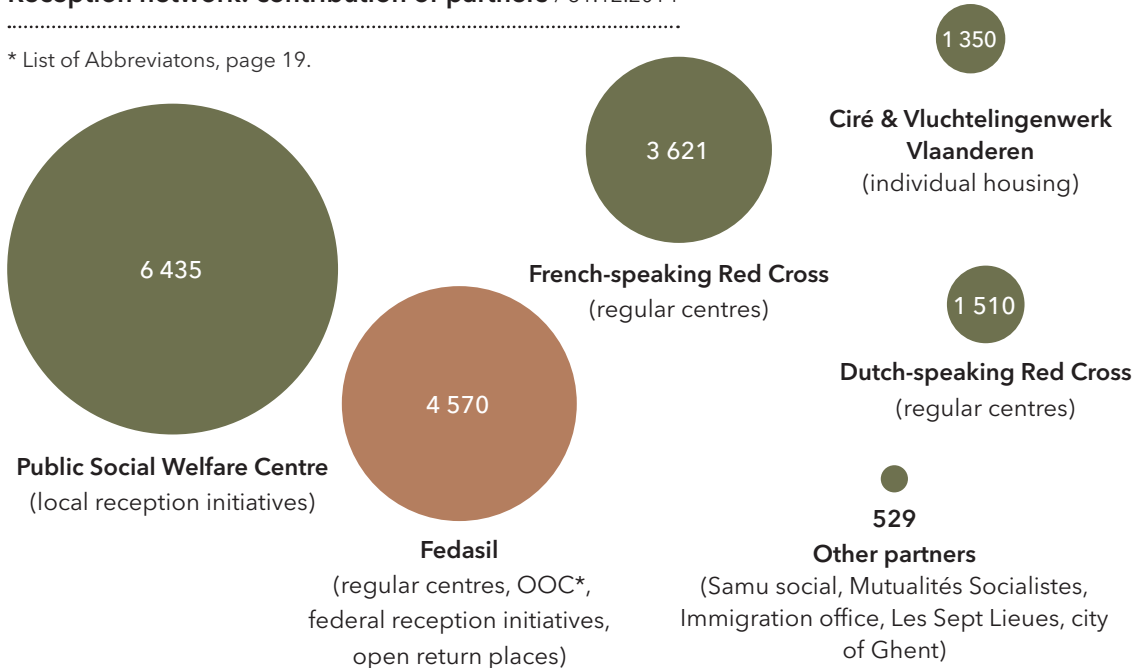
Evolution in reception capacity / Situation at the end of December of every year

- Structural reception capacity
- Emergency/transit reception capacity
- Open return places

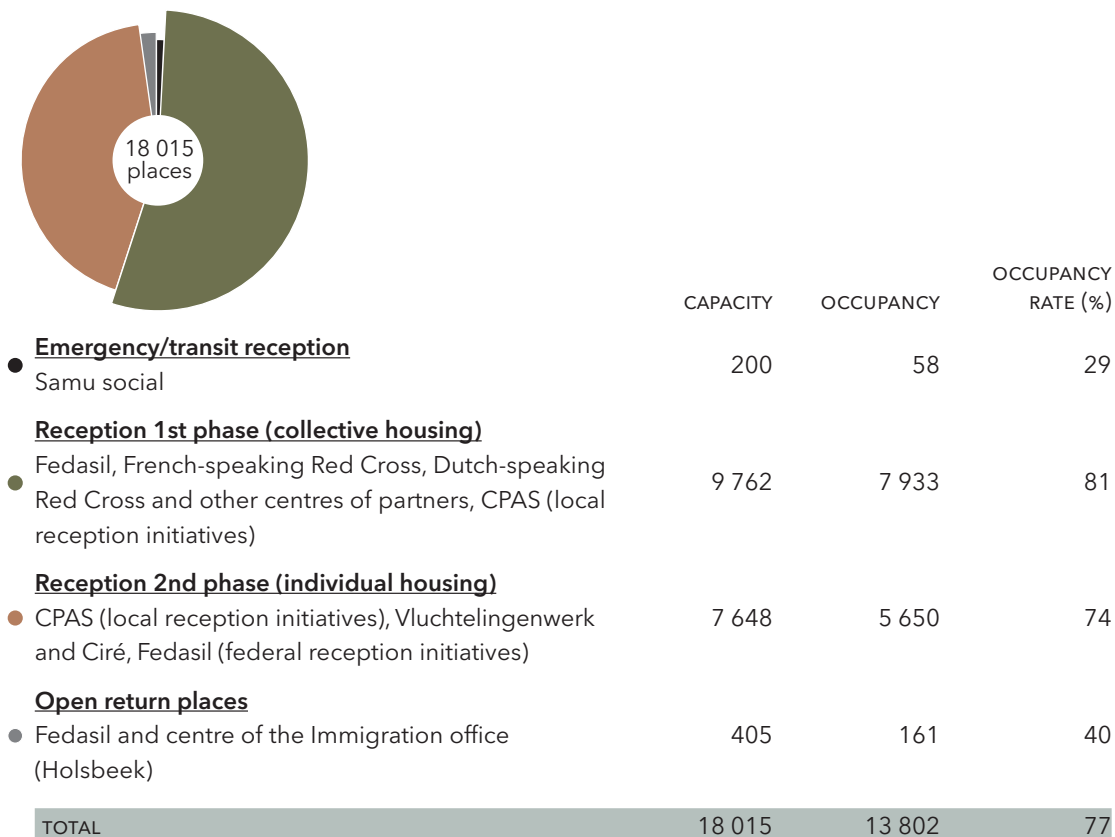


Reception network: contribution of partners / 31.12.2014

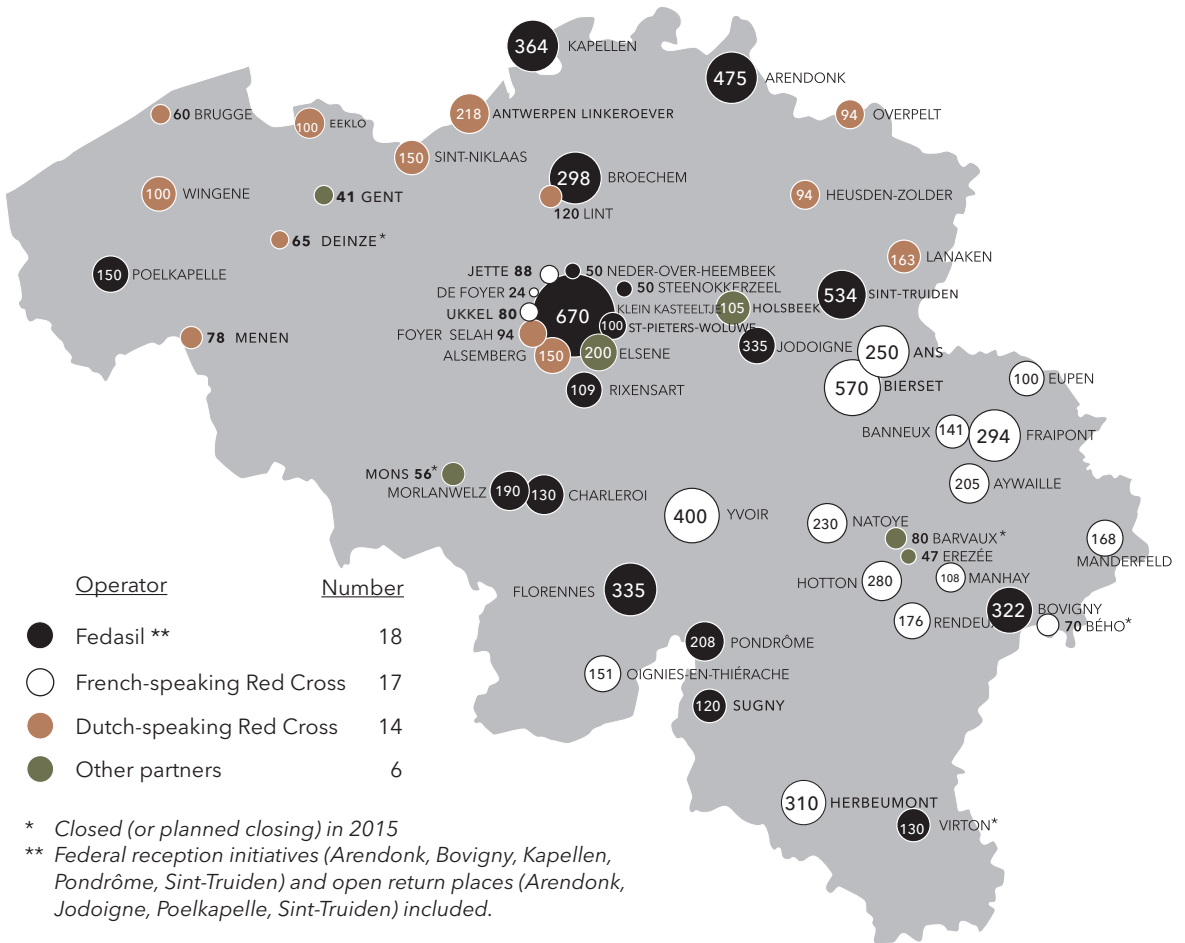
* List of Abbreviations, page 19.



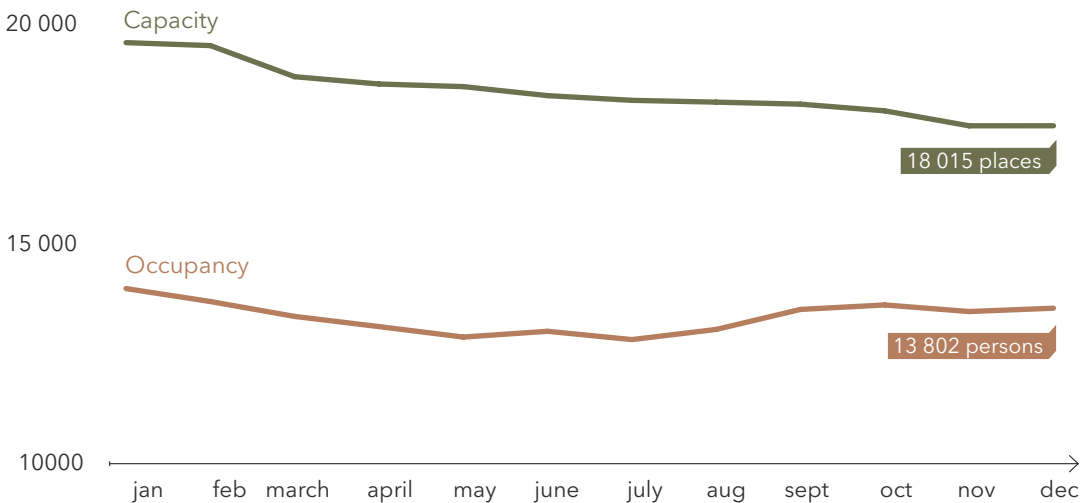
Reception network: capacity and occupancy by reception phase / 31.12.2014



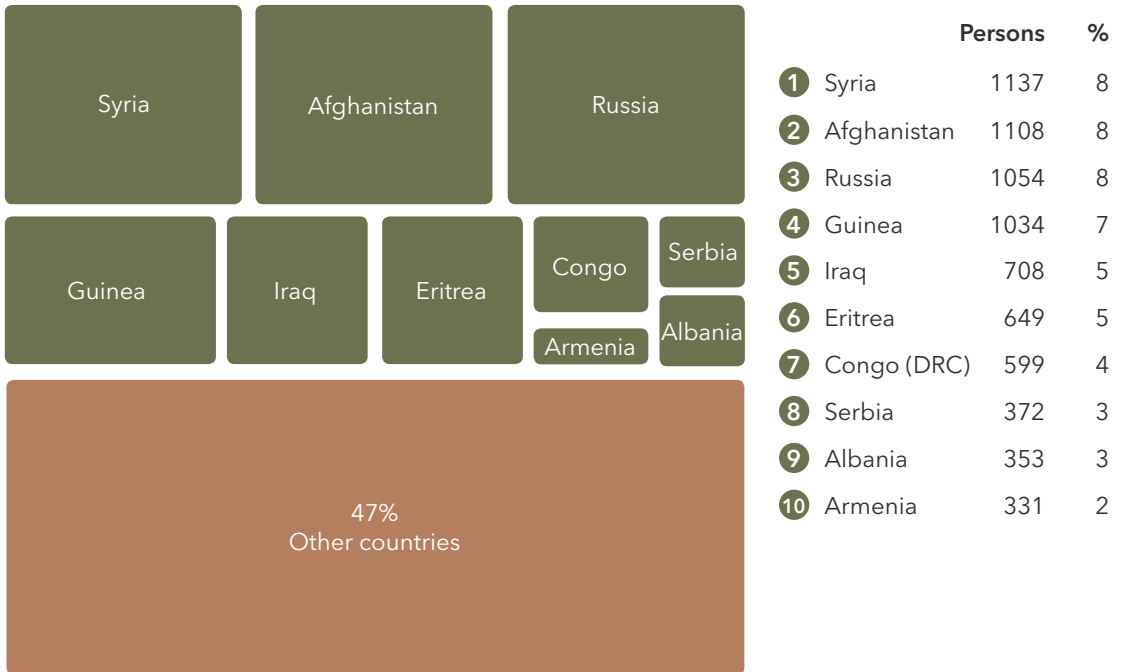
Location of the reception centres / 31.12.2014



Evolution of the occupancy in the reception network / Situation at the end of each month



Top 10 of countries of origin of accommodated persons / 31.12.2014



Family composition of accommodated persons / 31.12.2014

Families 56%



Single men 32%



Single women 8%



Unaccompanied foreign minors 4%



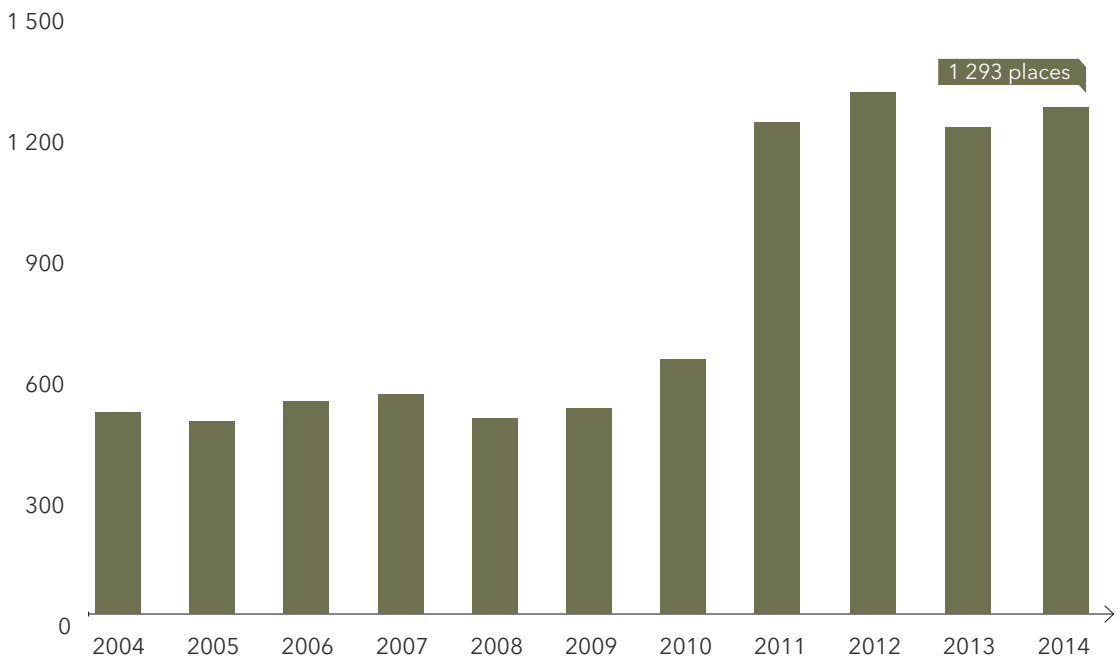
Administrative status of accommodated persons / 31.12.2014

* List of Abbreviations, page 19.

	%
Asylum seekers whose file is in treatment (IO*, CGRS* or CCE*)	68
Persons with appeal at the Council of State	< 1
Persons with a residence permit (refugees, subsidiary protection, regularised)	10
Persons who have a right of appeal (claim refused)	10
Persons whose asylum application has been rejected but who obtained an extension of their residence permit	6
Persons whose asylum application has been rejected who are within the delay of the order to leave the territory or who wait for this order	4
Persons in open return places (voluntary return path)	1
Unaccompanied foreign minors without asylum application	< 1
Families illegally staying in the country, entitled to reception	3

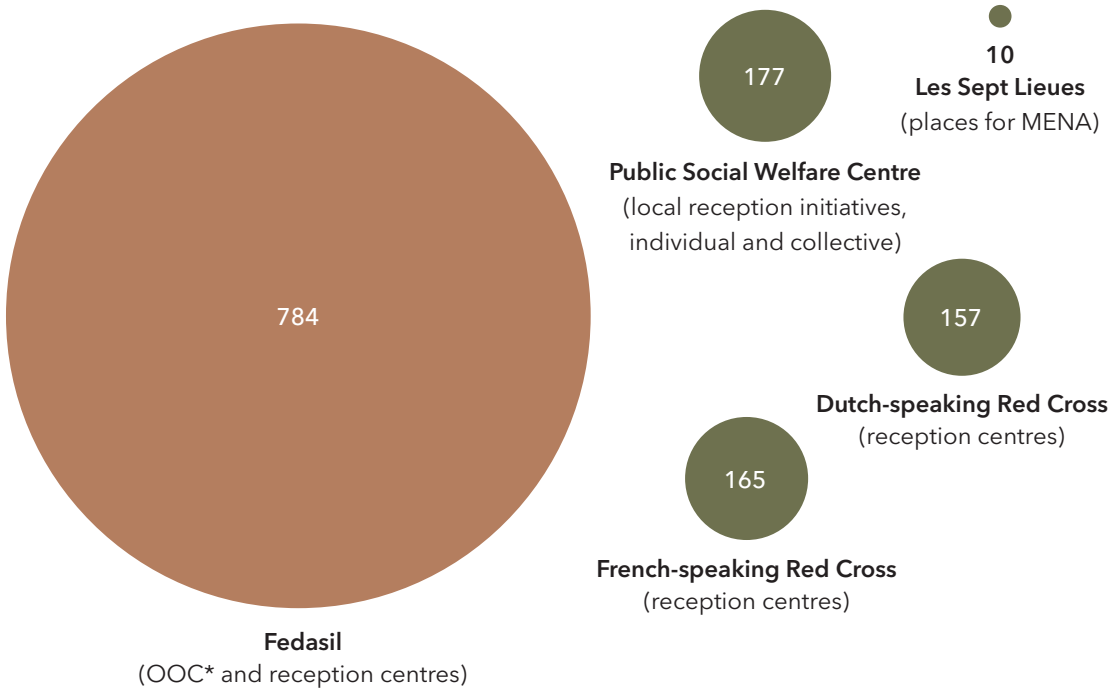
Evolution of the reception capacity for unaccompanied foreign minors

Situation at the end of December each year



**Reception capacity for unaccompanied foreign minors (MENA):
contribution of the partners / 31.12.2014**

* List of Abbreviations, page 19.



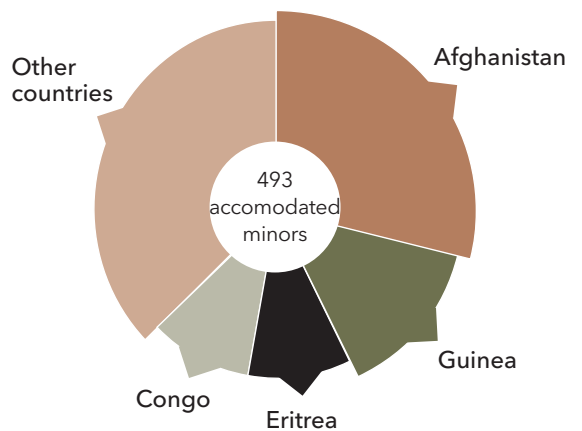
Mena: reception capacity by phase

on 31.12.2014

	PLACES	(%) OCCUPANCY
1st phase observation Fedasil	120	64
2nd phase stabilisation Fedasil, French-speaking Red Cross, Dutch-speaking Red Cross, Public Social Welfare Centre	1 023	30
3rd phase guided autonomy Public Social Welfare Centre, Les Sept Lieues	150	76
Total	1 293	38

Main countries of origin of accommodated unaccompanied foreign minors

on 31.12.2014



Voluntary return

In 2014, 3,587 people* decided to return voluntarily to their country of origin with the help of the Belgian voluntary return programme. 1,405 of them also received support for reintegration.

With an average of 300 people per month, the number of returns in 2014 remained high, but a fall of 20% can be seen compared with the previous year. The decrease is mainly in the asylum seekers category, with fewer people applying for asylum in Belgium in 2013 and the first half of 2014. As a result, a lower proportion of asylum seekers, who may or may not have been turned down, made a voluntary return this year. The largest group is that of illegal immigrants (58%).

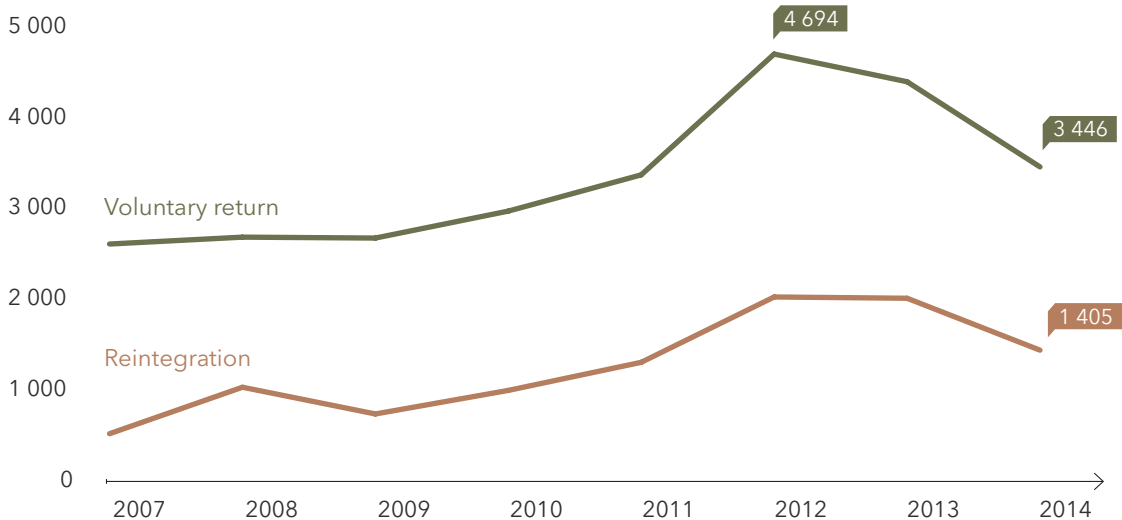
In terms of nationalities, Romania, Russia and Ukraine represent 40% of returns. Romania be-

came the leading return destination in 2014 with 573 returns compared with 105 returns in 2013. The other most frequent destinations were the Balkan States (Serbia, Kosovo, Albania), Mongolia and Brazil. It should be noted that returns to Brazil continued to fall in 2014 (40% less compared with 2013). Many Sub-Saharan African countries also appear in the list of destination countries.

Aid for reintegration also involves a large number of countries, particularly the Caucasus, where there are many returns: Russia (Chechnya and Dagestan), Georgia and Armenia.

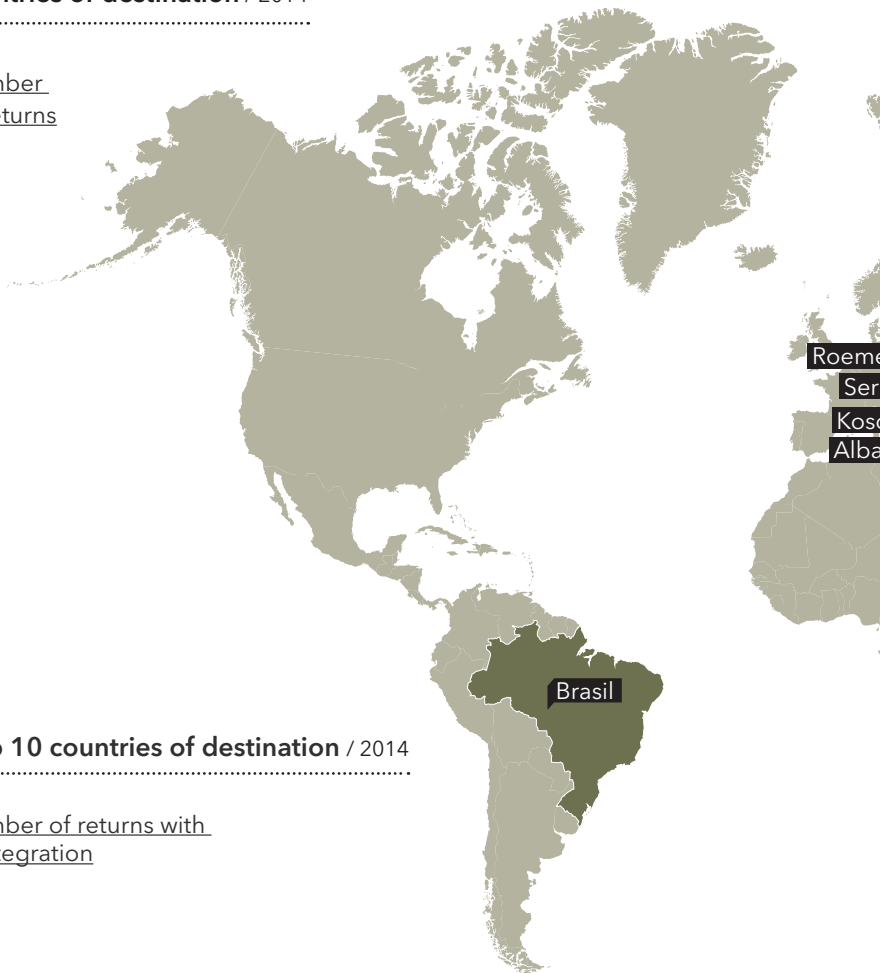
* This figure includes returns organised by Fedasil and the IOM (3,446) and by the Immigration Office (141) in 2014.

Evolution in voluntary returns (persons) from Belgium *(Source : Fedasil and IOM)*



Voluntary return: top 10 countries of destination / 2014

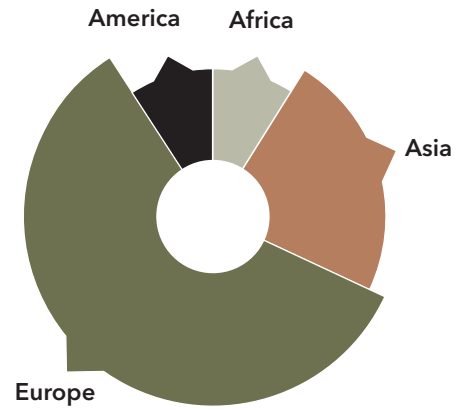
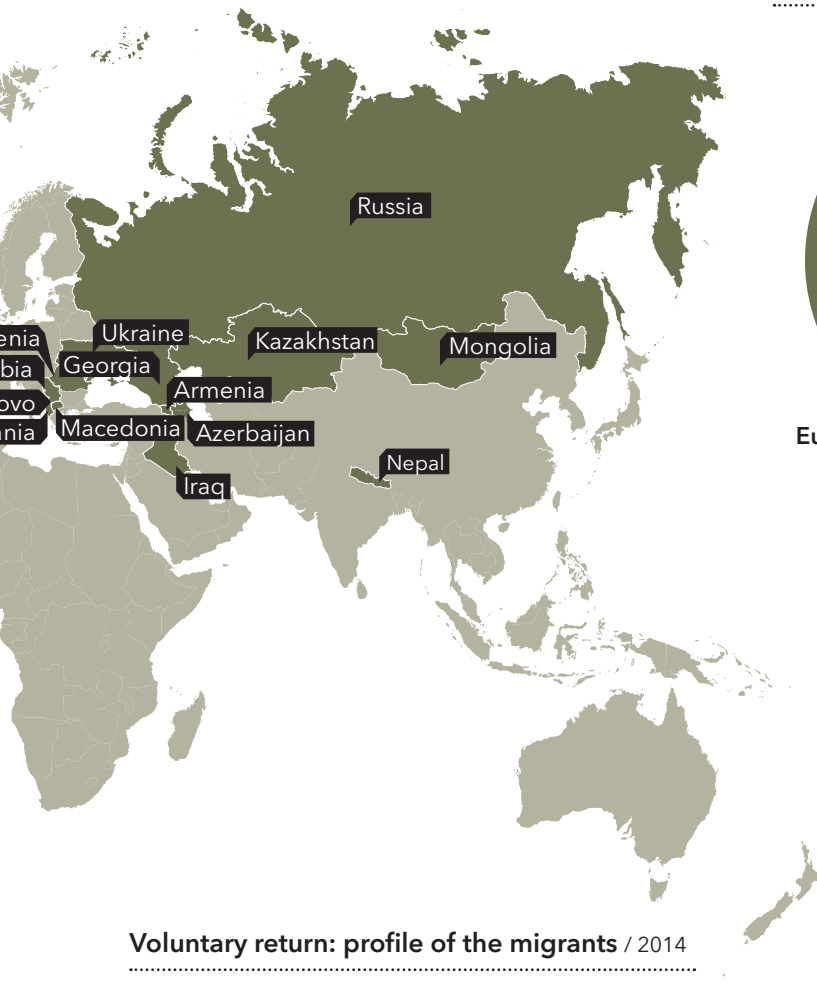
	<u>Number of returns</u>
1 Romania	573
2 Russia	436
3 Ukraine	428
4 Brasil	211
5 Serbia	163
6 Georgia	127
7 Mongolia	125
8 Kosovo	117
9 Armenia	116
10 Albania	97



Reintegration assistance: top 10 countries of destination / 2014

	<u>Number of returns with reintegration</u>
1 Russia	394
2 Georgia	107
3 Armenia	91
4 Kazakstan	46
5 Iraq	45
6 Macedonia	44
7 Ukraine	44
8 Serbia	38
9 Nepal	37
10 Azerbaijan	30

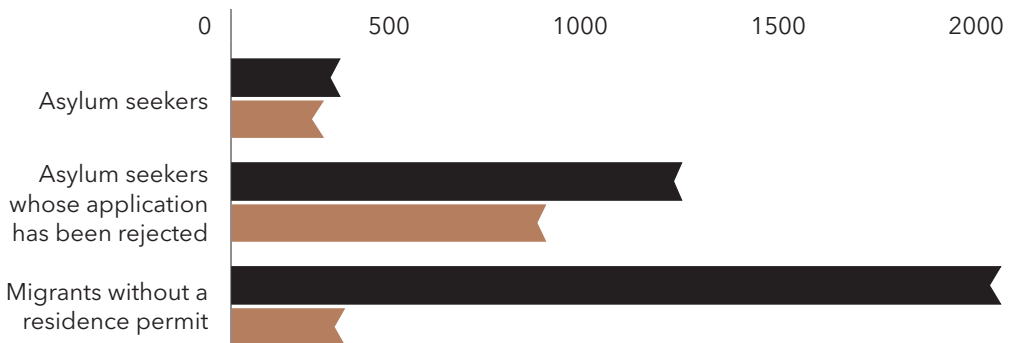
Voluntary return by continent / 2014



Voluntary return: profile of the migrants / 2014

■ Voluntary return = 3 587 persons

■ Reintegration = 1 405 persons



International activities

Resettlement of refugees

Under the European resettlement programme, Belgium agreed to accommodate 400 refugees in 2014 and 2015.

In September 2014, the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) selected 75 Syrian refugees. Most of them refugees who had been in Turkey for over a year, living in Istanbul, Mardin and Gaziantep. Fedasil visited Istanbul in November to meet the group and inform them about their future life in Belgium.

The first Syrians to be resettled arrived in December 2014 with the support of the International Organisation for Migration and the Belgian Consulate in Istanbul. They were accommodated in the Fedasil reception centres in Ponderôme and Saint-Trond for six weeks.

Fedasil coordinated the search for housing through a call to Public Social Welfare Centres. In total, 17 Public Social Welfare Centres offering suitable accommodation were selected. The resettled refugees will be monitored for at least 12 months by the Public Social Welfare Centres and the two NGOs partnering the resettlement programme: Convivial and Caritas International.

European expertise

The Agency has been internationally active for many years. Fedasil coordinates two European consultation platforms in particular: the European Platform of Reception Agencies (EPRA) for the exchange of strategic information regarding reception, and the Common Support Initiative (CSI), which supports voluntary returns.

The Agency is also involved in European networks such as the European Migration Network (EMN) for the creation of an information base on migration and in operational cooperation projects including ERIN (European Reintegration Network) for the joint organisation of support for reintegration in several countries of origin.

Furthermore, Fedasil regularly contributes to short-term expertise missions as part of EASO activities. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) contributes to the development of the common European Asylum System by improving cooperation between Member States and supporting States that are subject to particular migratory pressure.

In 2014, Fedasil members were among the teams of experts sent by EASO to countries in difficulty. The Agency has provided its expertise in Bulgaria (training lawyers legal experts and evaluating progress in terms of reception), Greece (training for coordination and reception infrastructure personnel), Italy (analysis of reception capacity management) and Cyprus (support for the reception system and improved management of the Kofinou reception centre). Fedasil experts, as part of a multi-disciplinary team bringing together colleagues from several Member States, have also started to develop a training curriculum regarding reception.



List of Abbreviations

- CCE** Le Conseil du Contentieux des Etrangers (Council for Alien Disputes)
CGRS Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless persons
IO The Immigration Office
OOC Observation and Orientation Centre

Fedasil is in charge of guaranteeing the granting of material aid to asylum seekers and other categories of foreigners in Belgium. Fedasil assures quality and conformity throughout the entire reception network. Fedasil also coordinates the voluntary return programs for Belgium.

In this review we highlight the main events and the reception and voluntary return statistics for 2014. For the latest information and news about our organisation, visit our website www.fedasil.be.

All about reception