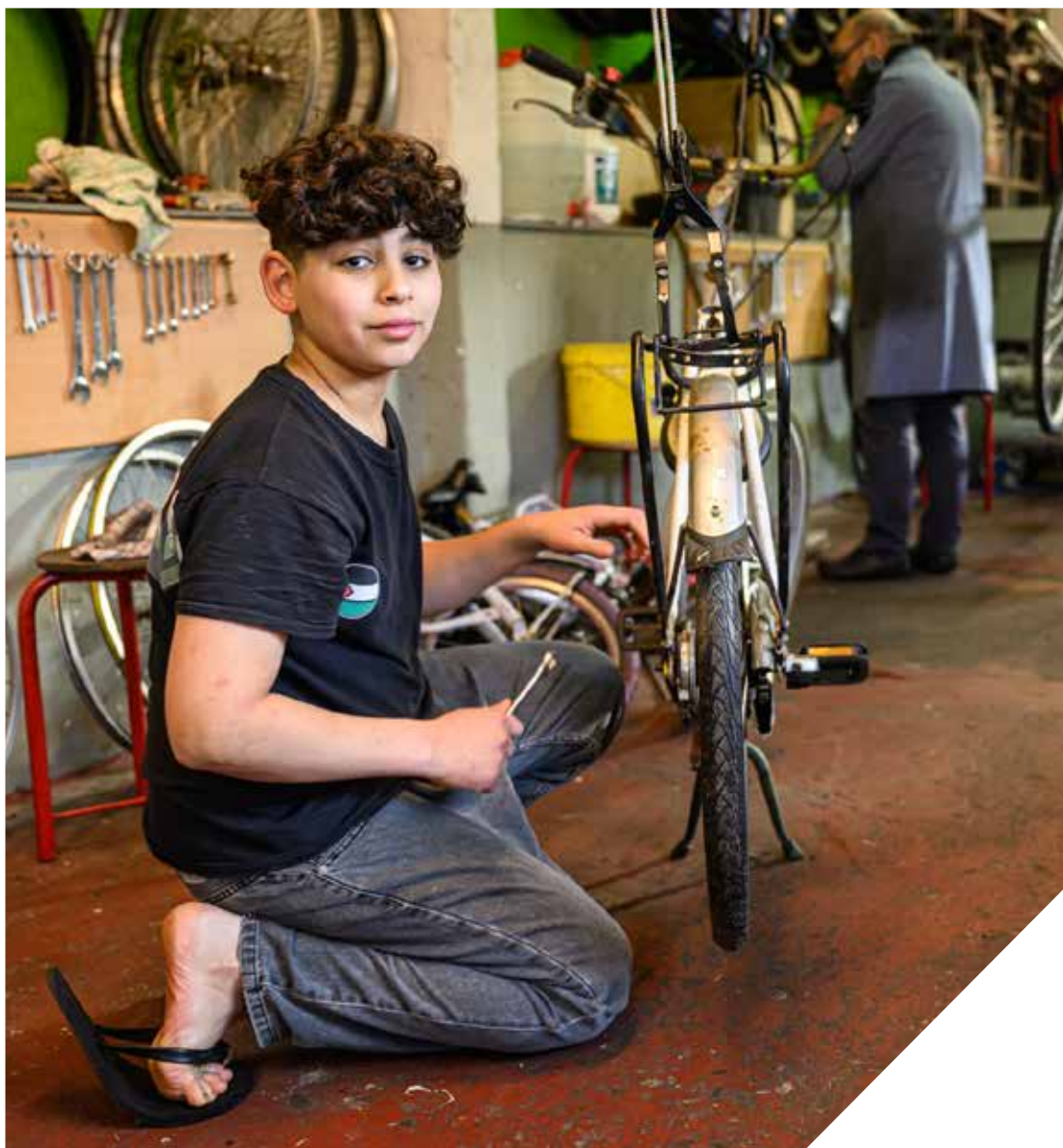


# REVIEW 2024

Reception - Resettlement - Voluntary return



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Ce bilan est également disponible en français.

Deze balans bestaat ook in het Nederlands.

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Brussels, July 2025.

Cover photo: reception centre of Fedasil Kapellen © Joost Joossen

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# FOREWORD



I am pleased to share with you the 2024 review of Fedasil, the organisation responsible for the reception of applicants for international protection in Belgium.

The year was once again marked by the saturation of our reception network, despite record capacity and a large number of measures taken by Fedasil and our political authorities to reduce the length of stay in centres, limit arrivals and encourage departures.

Today, the working environment is changing, with the establishment of a new federal government at the beginning of 2025. The Asylum and Migration policy is ambitious, as are the savings in the budget for the reception of applicants for international protection.

A substantial reduction of the reception capacity is not impossible, provided that the duration of the asylum procedure and the length of stay in our reception structures can be significantly reduced. Such a reduction would be in everyone's interest, especially for people seeking protection who today wait an average of 17 months in our centres. However, in the event of a reduction in reception capacity, I believe it is essential not to repeat the mistakes of the past by closing a large number of centres without giving ourselves the possibility to respond quickly to new arrivals. After the closure of more than 10,000 places in 2016, at the end of the previous asylum crisis, it took a lot of energy and resources to rebuild our network. What Fedasil is advocating

today is the establishment of a dynamic reception system, more resistant to the volatility that is characteristic of the field of asylum, through the creation of buffer places.

This policy of buffer places is not in contradiction with the planned savings regarding reception. On the contrary, it offers a response tailored to needs: if asylum applications in Belgium decrease, Fedasil will be able to deactivate part of its capacity in the centres, limit costs and manage its resources responsibly.

On a personal note, 2024 is the year in which I began my six-year term as Director General of Fedasil. With the management team, we are working on the priorities for the coming years.

It is time to go back to the basics of our mission. First of all, we have to re-establish the rule of law. The waiting list must disappear and people seeking protection must no longer find themselves on the street – in this respect, the trend is positive, as the number of people on this list has been decreasing for several months.

We also have to take account of new realities, such as the large number of people seeking protection who are outside our reception network. Supporting them is one of the challenges for the coming years.

I hope to be able to work on this as quickly as possible, in close collaboration with our many partners and our Minister for Asylum and Migration.

I hope you enjoy reading our annual review.

Best regards,

Pieter Spinnewijn  
Director General, June 2025

# RECEPTION OF APPLICANTS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

**2024 was once again marked by the saturation of the reception network in Belgium, despite a record capacity of over 36,000 places.**

The rise in applications for protection in Belgium (39,615 applications in 2024, +12% compared with 2023), combined with the backlog in processing asylum cases, increased the pressure on the Fedasil network.

Since 2021, applicants for international protection who are entitled to reception have found themselves outside the Fedasil network. Priority for accommodation is given to the most vulnerable (families, minors, women).

## Saturation

Fedasil continued to create new reception places throughout the year. At the end of 2024, the Fedasil network had reached 36,205 places, a net increase of 562 places compared with the end of 2023.

As winter approached, Fedasil used several sites for temporary reception. As in previous years, these were tourist accommodation or centres intended for schools and youth groups. A total of 750 places were available until spring 2025.

Fedasil also used low-cost hotels in Brussels for reception in 2024. This emergency reception, intended for a limited period of time, was reserved for families for which a suitable reception place was not immediately available in the regular centres. At the end of 2024, fewer than 300 families were accommodated in hotels.

Despite the increase in capacity, it was not possible to immediately accommodate everyone who was entitled to a place. In 2024, more than 10,000 single men did not receive a place on the day their asylum application was registered. These people were invited to join a waiting list and be accommodated at a later date depending on the number of places available. In 2024, the average waiting time on this list varied between 3 and 4 months. At the end of December, 3,000 single men were on the waiting list. Several of them were temporarily housed in the Brussels homeless system (2,000 places available under an agreement between the regional and federal authorities).

## Profile of the persons received

At the end of 2024, Fedasil and its partners were accommodating 34,003 people, also a record number. The proportion of people with families was 51%. Palestine (14%) became the leading country of origin of residents in the network, ahead of Syria (11%). Afghans now account for just 10% of residents.

In 2024, the length of stay in the reception network remained high, namely 17.3 months on average (compared with 17.1 months in 2023).

## Unaccompanied minors

The decrease in arrivals of unaccompanied foreign minors (UFMs) observed in 2023 continued the following year. Consequently, in view of the need for places for families, Fedasil converted a certain number of UFM places into generic places. At the end of 2024, the Fedasil network had

3,250 UFM places, a decrease of 284 places compared with the end of 2023.

At the end of 2024, Fedasil and its partners were accommodating a total of 2,436 UFMs, mainly boys (90% of the young people) aged between 16 and 18. Afghanistan remains the leading country of origin (32% of the young people), even though the proportion of young Afghans is declining.

Further information at [www.fedasil.be](http://www.fedasil.be).

## Provision of information to migrants who are difficult to reach

Since 2020, Fedasil has had a mobile, multilingual team that actively approaches and provides information to migrants outside the regular reception network. In 2024, the 'Reach Out' team was able to reach 1,702 migrants in precarious situations. Owing to the crisis situation, the subject of accommodation was often discussed with the people they met. However, the discussions also covered the asylum procedure, requests for the payment of health care, regularisation of status, training, employment and voluntary return.

## Brussels Info Point

Since September 2023, Fedasil has had an information point located in Brussels on the site of the former Bordet Institute. Our 'Info Point' is primarily designed to support the (many) people seeking protection outside the reception network, but migrants in transit and persons without a residence permit can also have a personal interview there. In July 2024, the Red Cross 'Refugee Medical Point' moved to the Fedasil Info Point site.

Fedasil recorded 12,197 visits to its Info Point in 2024. The visitors were mainly single men (86%) whose asylum applications were under examination. The main countries of origin were Palestine (37%), Syria (10%) and Afghanistan (6%). The languages most commonly used were Arabic, French and English. Visitors mainly had questions about housing (requests for a reception place, information about the waiting list) and medical assistance (requests for payment, access to care).

The [www.fedasilinfo.be](http://www.fedasilinfo.be) website, available in 14 languages, also offers useful, up-to-date information.

### Ukrainian refugees

Since the start of the conflict in Ukraine in 2022, the Belgian authorities at various levels have been working together to accommodate refugees from the Ukraine conflict as effectively as possible. Of the 13,277 refugees who passed through the Immigration Office registration centre (Eurostation building in Brussels) in 2024, 15% (1,953 people) expressed the need for a housing solution. Fedasil's role is to screen refugees and match them with the accommodation available in the municipalities.

The Flemish Red Cross provides 250 emergency places for refugees at its reception centre in Brussels (the Ariane centre), offering temporary accommodation until they move to another city or municipality. A further 25 places are also available in Brussels through the "Ukraine Voices" association.

*Under a European directive, displaced persons from Ukraine can register in Belgium to receive temporary protection and, if necessary, accommodation and social assistance. They do not have to apply for asylum and are not accommodated in the Fedasil reception network.*

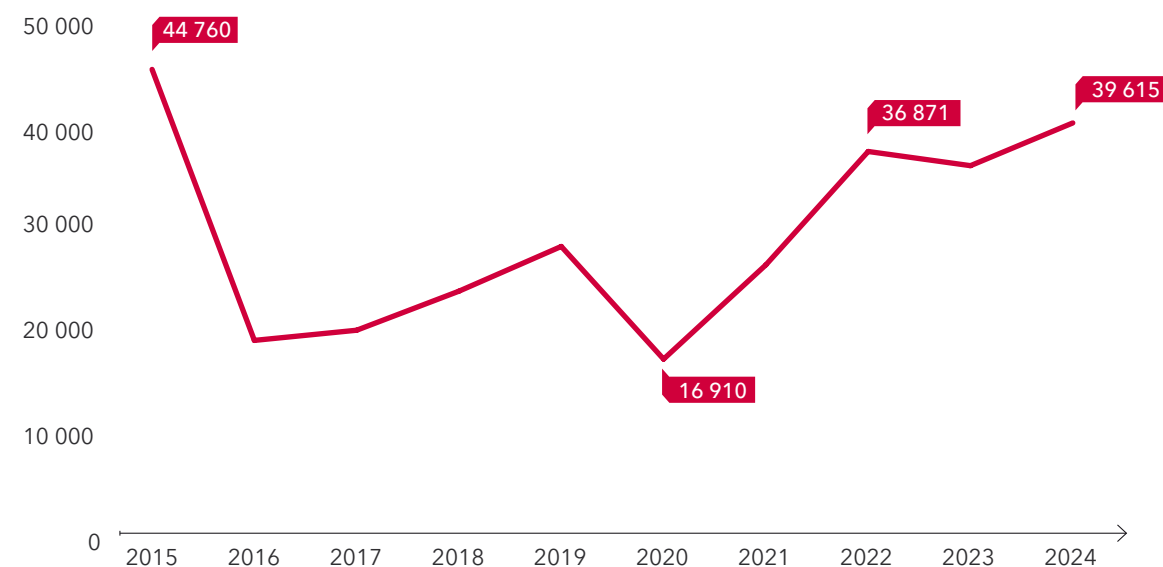
[www.info-ukraine.be](http://www.info-ukraine.be)

### Employment

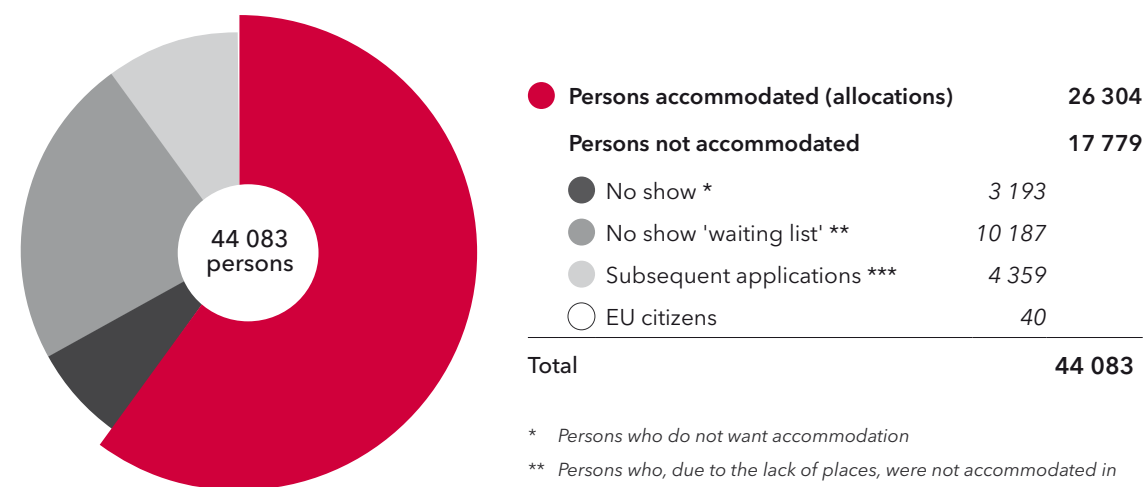
In 2024, Fedasil developed and supported several initiatives to get residents into work. In Belgium, applicants for international protection have access to the labour market four months after submitting their application. Those who work and are accommodated in the Fedasil network retain the right to material assistance but contribute to reception. In 2024, just under 25,000 residents actively participated in the labour market. This means that just over 4 out of 10 residents of working age were in employment.

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

(Source CGRS)



### Reception applications in 2024



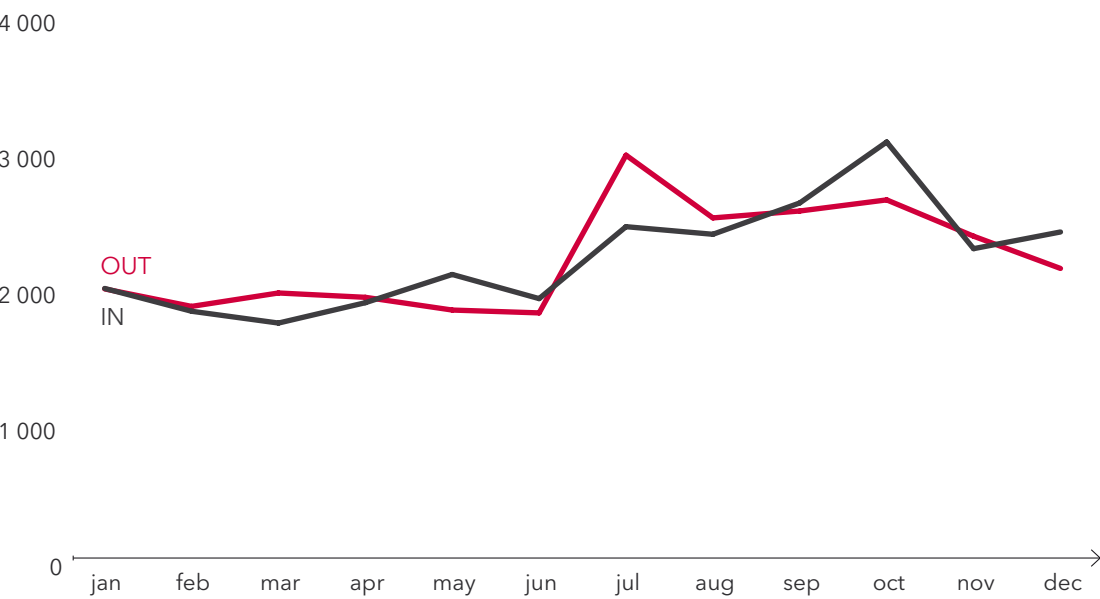
\* Persons who do not want accommodation

\*\* Persons who, due to the lack of places, were not accommodated in 2024. Some registered on a waiting list and were accommodated in 2025.

\*\*\* The right to accommodation is not automatic for persons submitting a second (or subsequent) protection application

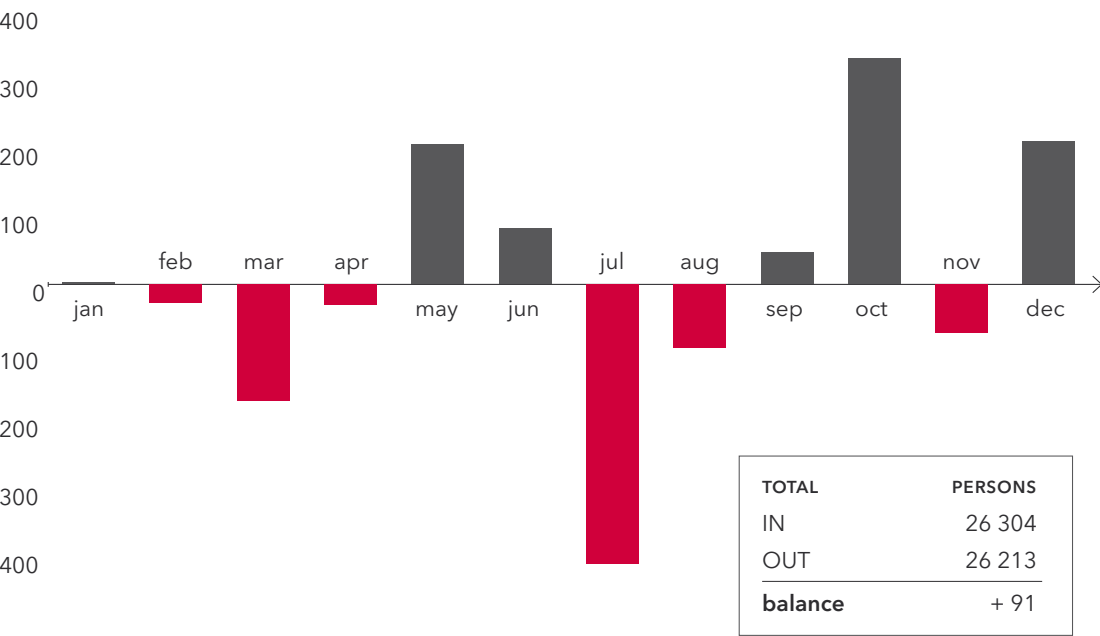
Reception network: arrivals (IN) and departures (OUT) in 2024

The persons who have not been allocated a reception place and have registered on the waiting list are not included in the IN.



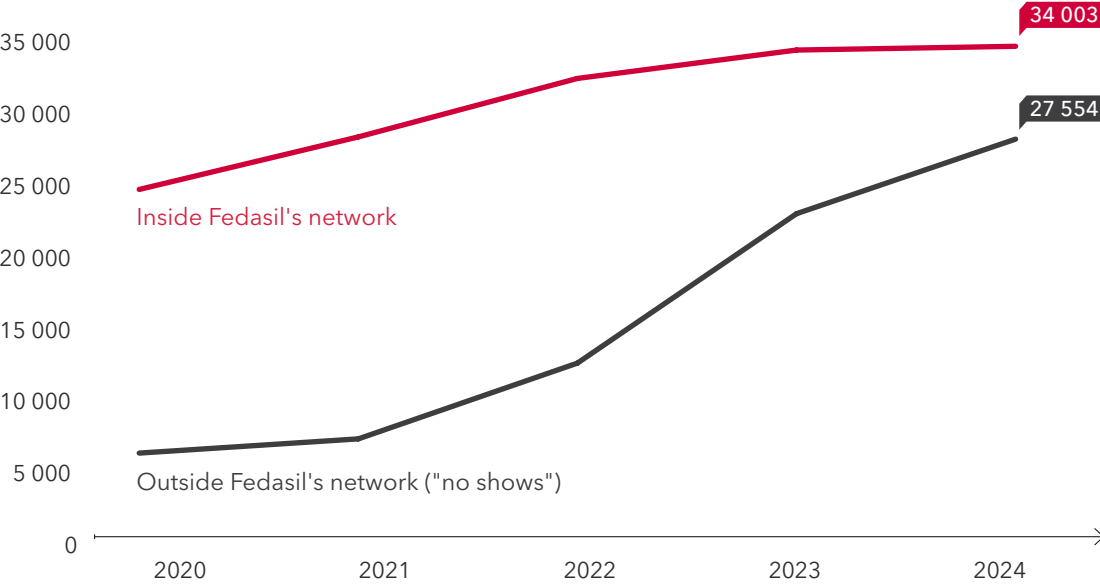
Arrivals and departures in the reception network in 2024: balance IN/OUT

The persons who have not been allocated a reception place and have registered on the waiting list are not included in the IN.



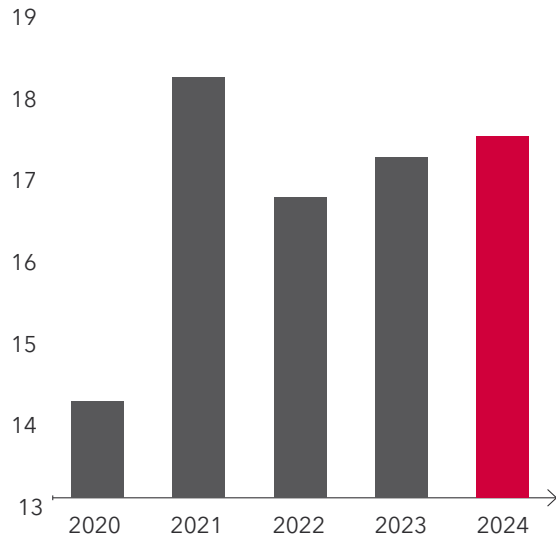
Evolution of the number of applicants for international protection inside and outside the Fedasil reception network

Situation end of December of each year



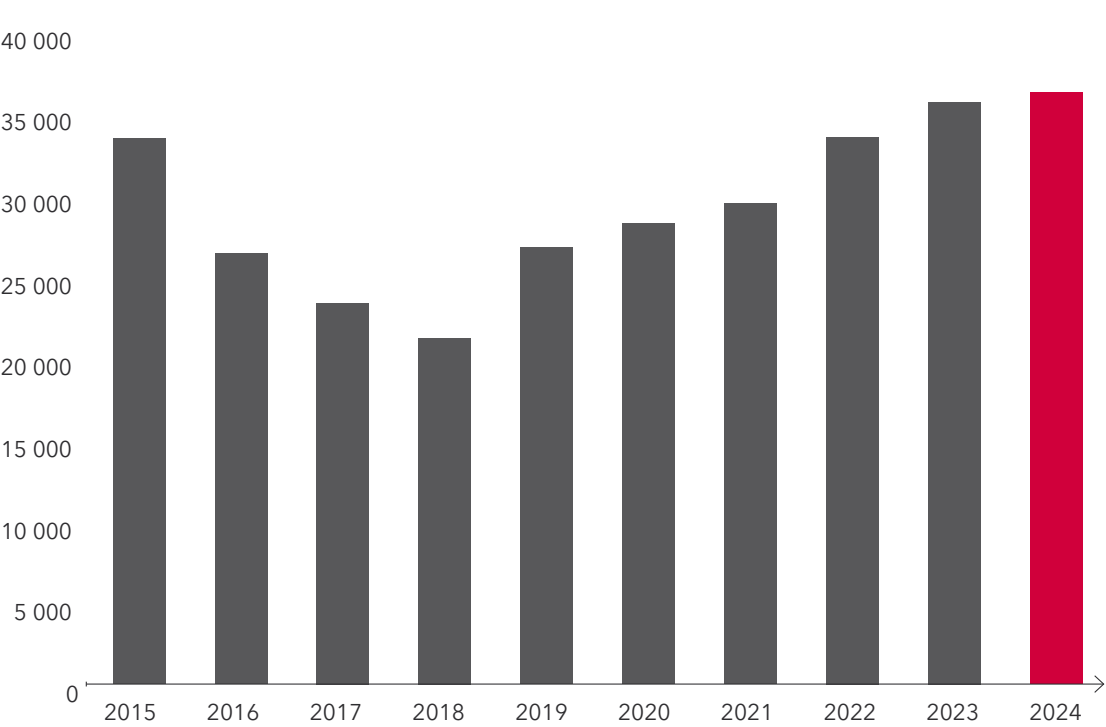
Average length of stay in the reception network

Total length of stay of persons who left the network, by year of departure, expressed in number of months.

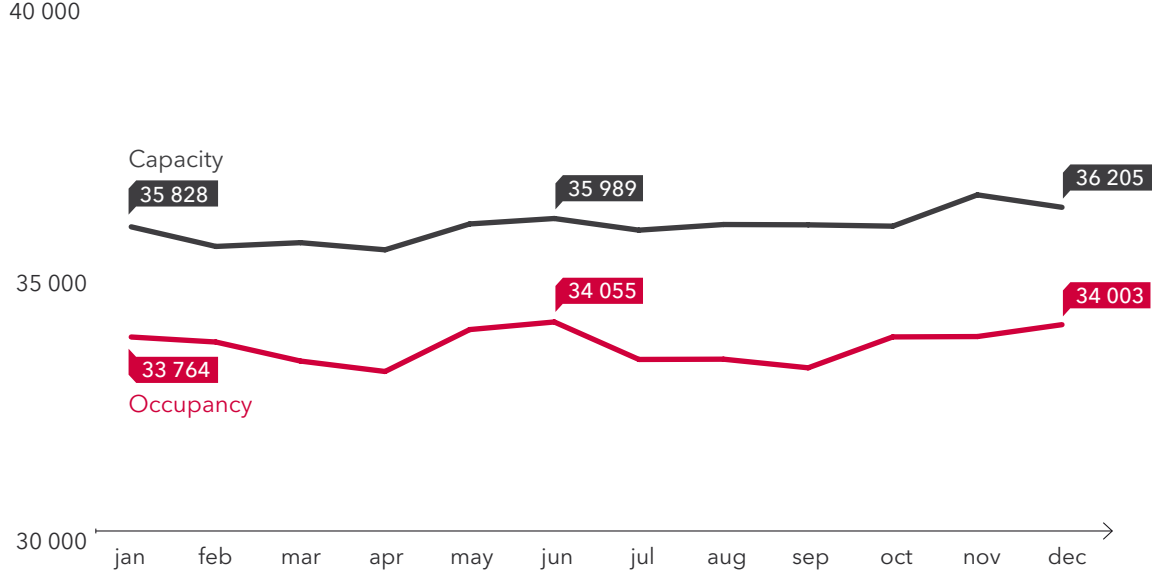


Evolution of the reception capacity

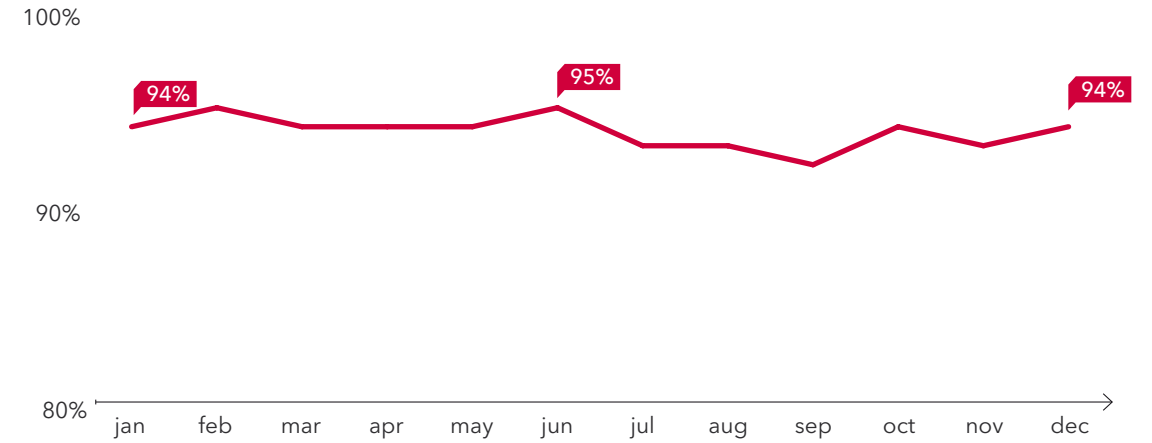
Situation end of December of each year



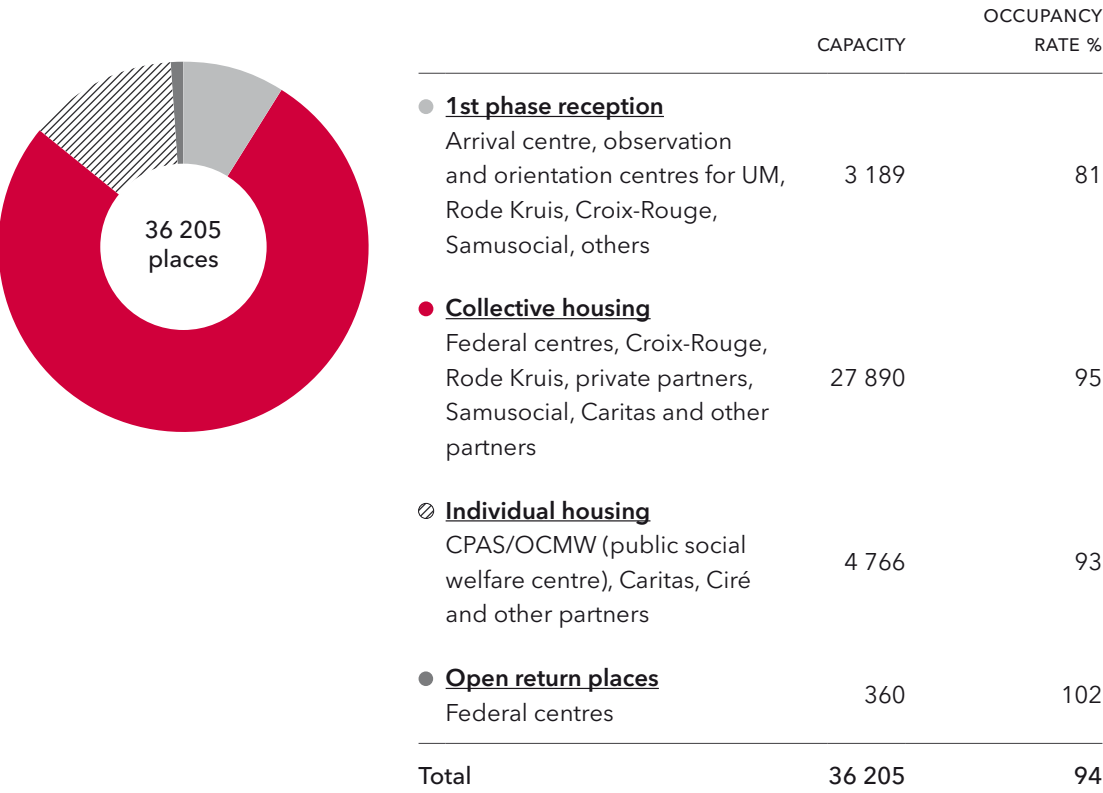
Evolution of the reception capacity and the occupancy in 2024



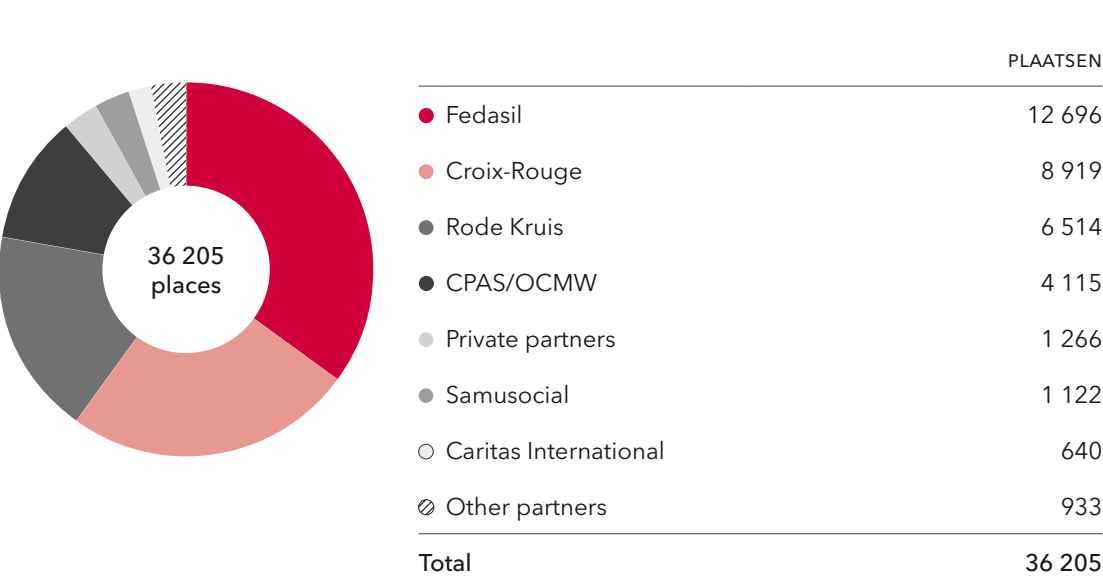
Evolution of the occupancy rate in 2024



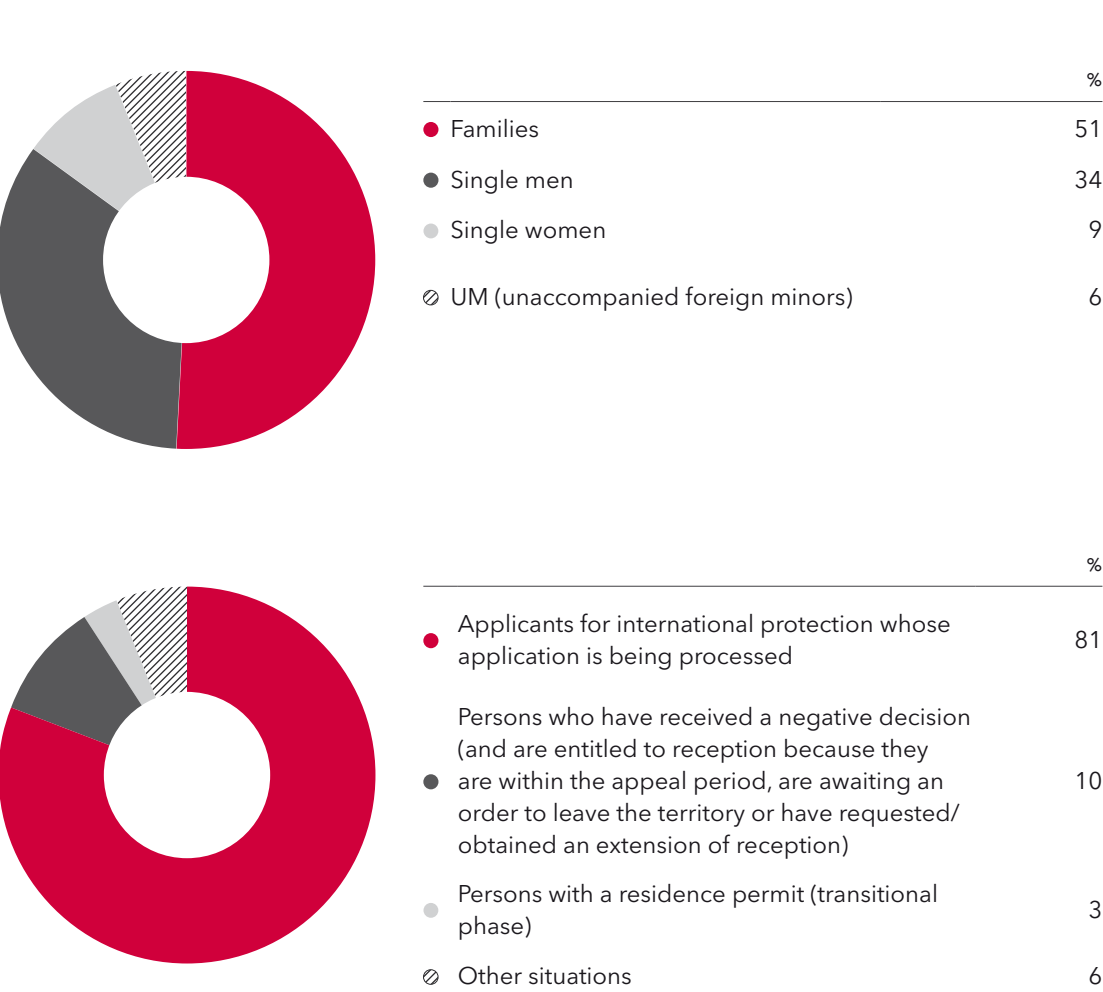
Types of reception places / end 2024



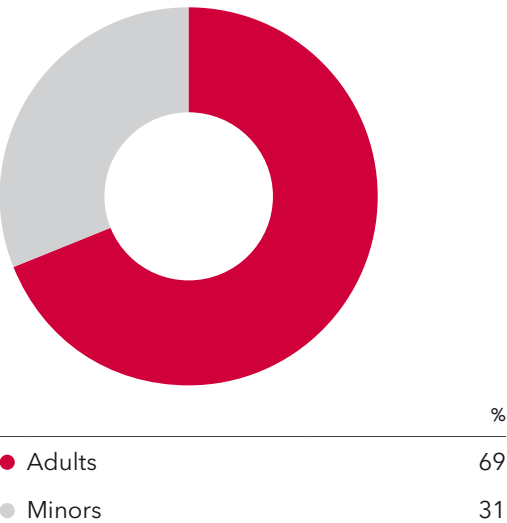
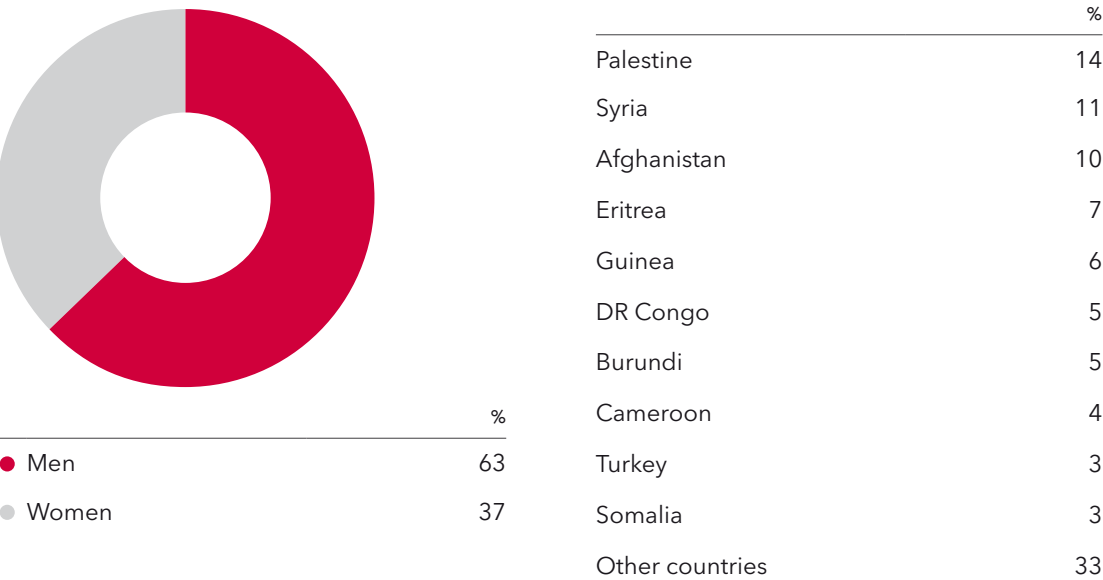
Contribution of the partners / end 2024



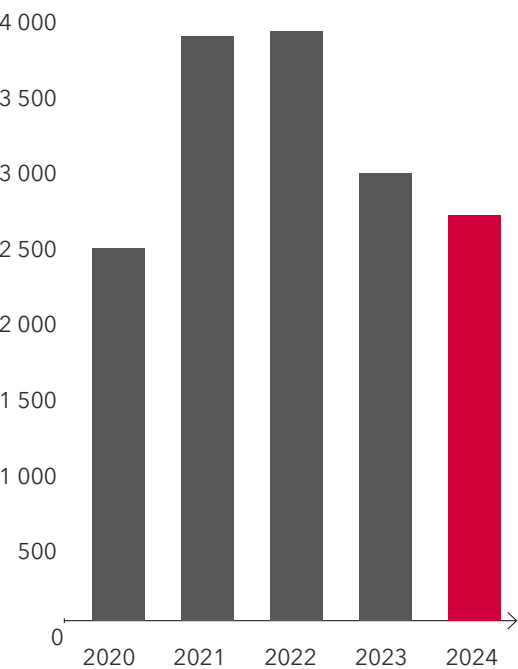
Profile of the persons accommodated / end 2024



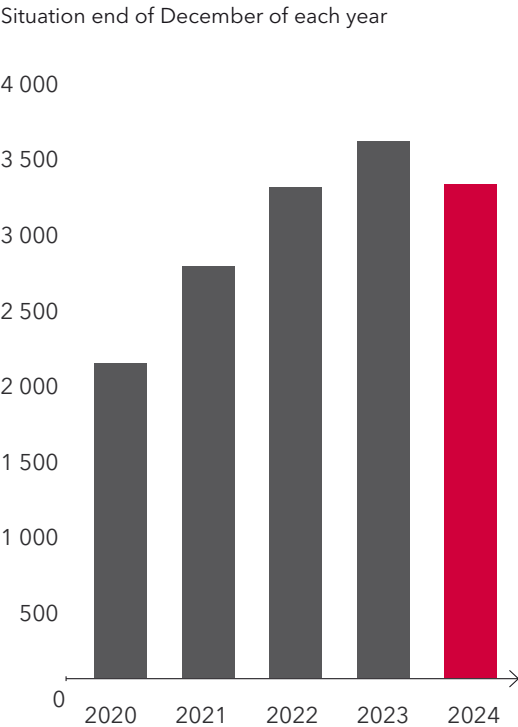
Profile of the persons accommodated / end 2024



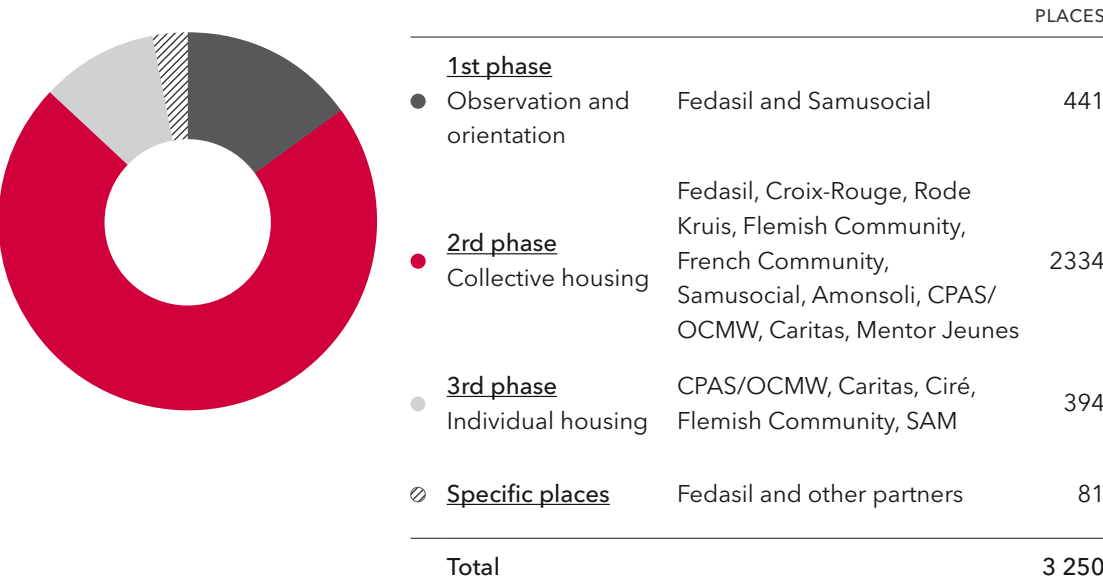
Unaccompanied foreign minors (UM): arrivals in the reception network



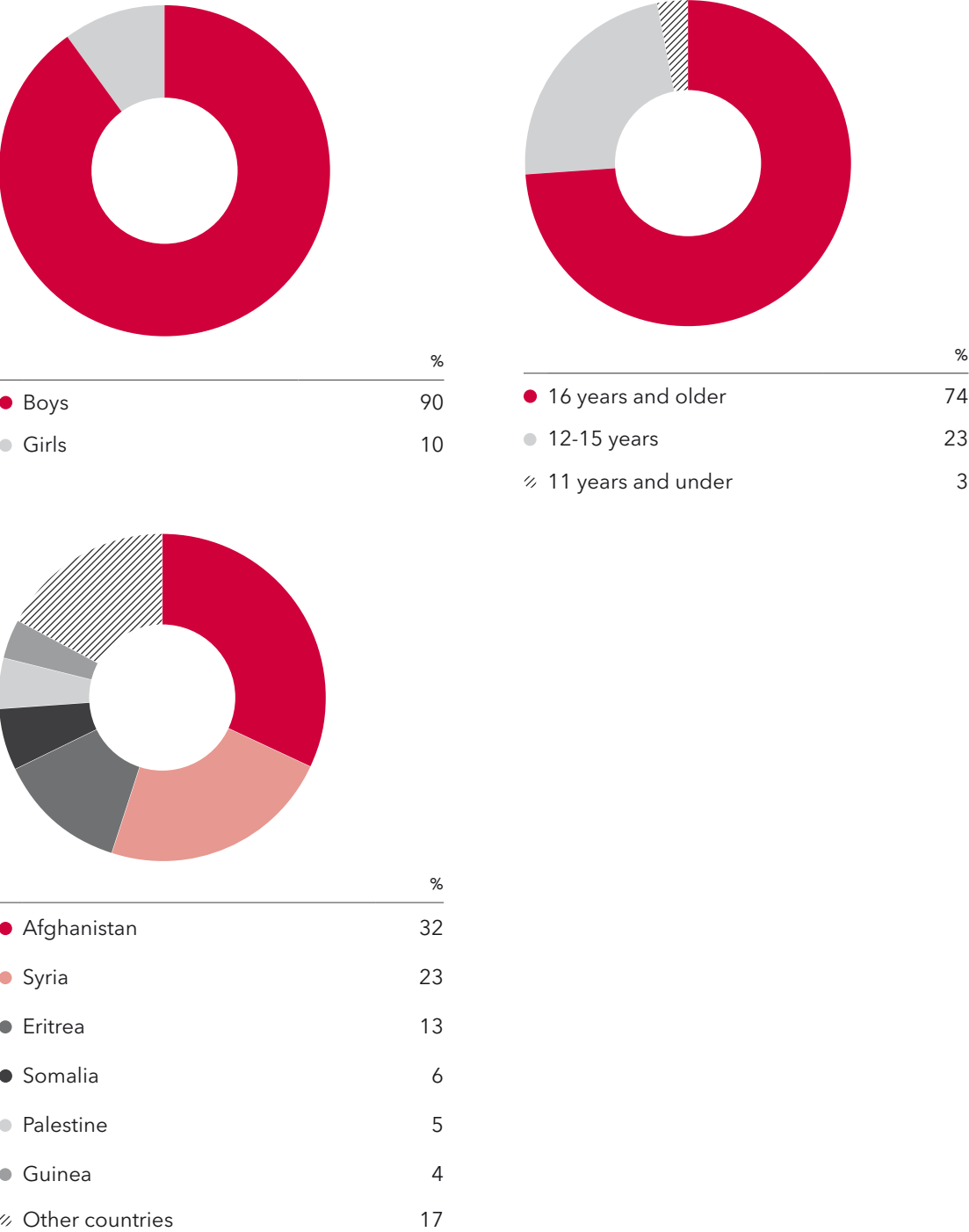
UM: evolution of the reception capacity



Profile of the accommodated UM / end 2024



Profile of the accommodated UM / end 2024



# RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES

487 refugees were resettled in Belgium in 2024, mainly families of Congolese refugees from Rwanda and Syrian refugees from Turkey.

Belgium has had a structural resettlement programme since 2013. Our country is therefore committed to receiving a contingent of vulnerable refugees each year, based on European and national priorities.

In 2024, Belgium resettled 487 refugees. Owing to considerable efforts, our country’s undertaking to resettle 500 refugees was therefore almost met.

The people resettled in Belgium were mainly Congolese refugees from Rwanda and Syrians from Turkey. 84% were families, while 16% were single men or single women. It is worth noting that around 40% were under the age of 18.

It was possible to receive several people outside the reception network through ‘Community Sponsorship’ (sponsorship project) or partner-

ships, and owing to the support of partner organisations and volunteers.

### Other legal migration channels

In addition to coordinating the resettlement programme, Fedasil and several partners have played a role in the deployment of other legal migration channels, in particular as part of pilot projects on migration for work and study for displaced persons staying in a third country.

The resettlement programme is financed by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

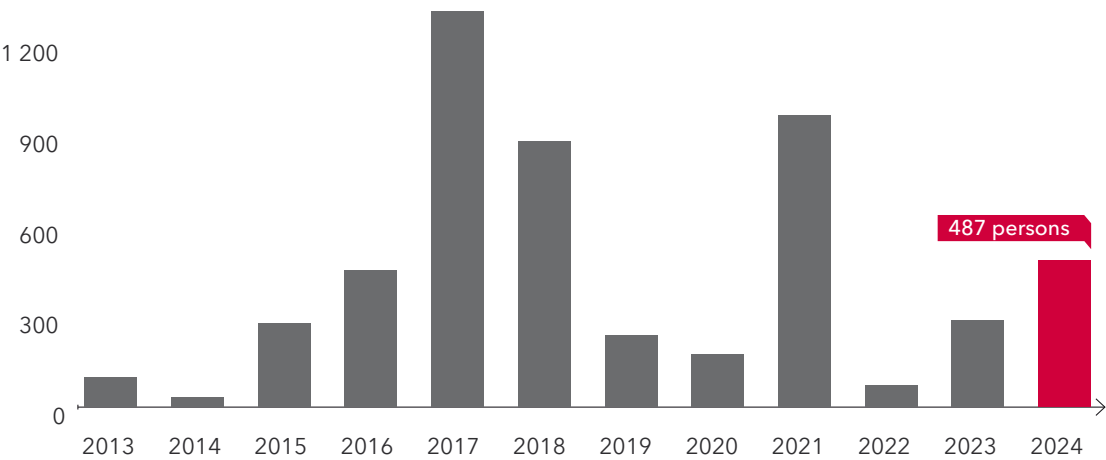
Further information at [www.resettlement.be](http://www.resettlement.be).

### Relocation

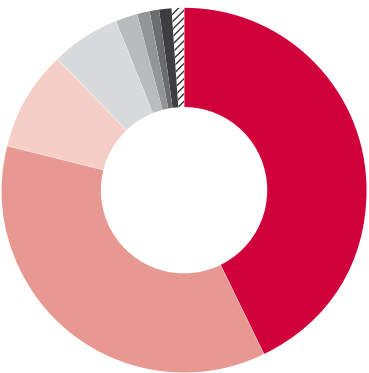
In 2024, 18 people were relocated to Belgium from Cyprus and accommodated in the Fedasil network. These arrivals follow on from a commitment made by Belgium in 2023: in that year, 32 people had already been relocated from Cyprus to our country.

Relocation is a solidarity mechanism within the European Union designed to support those Member States most affected by migration flows. Belgium has already organised relocations from Greece, Italy, Malta and Cyprus, although these are still few in number given the saturation of the Belgian reception network.

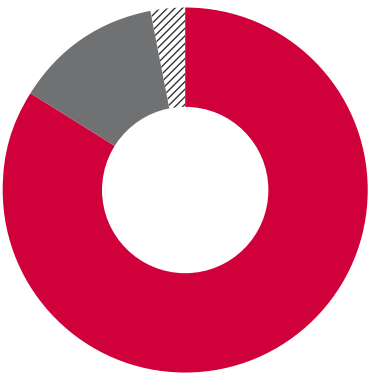
Number of refugees arrived in Belgium in the framework of resettlement



Profile of the refugees resettled in 2024



| COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF THE REFUGEES | FIRST COUNTRY OF RECEPTION | PERSONS |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| DR Congo                          | Rwanda                     | 210     |
| Syria                             | Turkey, Lebanon            | 178     |
| Eritrea                           | Rwanda, Tunisia, Niger     | 43      |
| Sudan                             | Rwanda, Tunisia            | 28      |
| Somalia                           | Rwanda, Tunisia            | 12      |
| Cameroon                          | Tunisia                    | 6       |
| Afghanistan                       | Pakistan                   | 5       |
| Ivory Coast                       | Tunisia                    | 3       |
| Burkina Faso                      | Tunisia                    | 2       |
| Total                             |                            | 487     |



|              | PERSONS |
|--------------|---------|
| Families     | 409     |
| Single men   | 64      |
| Single women | 14      |
| Total        | 487     |

# VOLUNTARY RETURN

The number of voluntary returns from Belgium is rising. Around half of returnees in 2024 were migrants without a residence permit.

In 2024, Fedasil assisted 3,267 people who decided to return to their country of origin. Fedasil has taken on the task of providing migrants with tailor-made support, in collaboration with its partners IOM and Caritas International.

2024 is firmly in line with the upward trend of recent years: the number of returnees increased by around 11% compared with 2023 and 22% compared with 2022.

## Profile of the returnees

The destination countries are virtually unchanged: it was mainly Brazilians, Moldovans, Georgians, Turks and Mongolians who returned to their countries of origin in 2024. It should be noted that returns to Turkey and Moldova doubled compared with 2023, which is mainly due to the large number of arrivals and the low recognition rate for applicants for international protection from these two countries.

Around half of returnees were migrants without a residence permit, 23% were applicants for international protection and the remaining 28% were people at the end of the asylum procedure.

## Reintegration after return

Depending on the migrants’ personal situation, the voluntary return programme also offers reintegration assistance in the country of origin. Last year, 76% of returnees received reintegration assistance.

Before their departure, these people work with a counsellor to draw up a realistic plan that, once they are back in their country, meets their needs and takes account of their strengths: set up a business, rent or renovate a house, help with finding a job or with the reimbursement of medical expenses. To achieve this, Fedasil can count on the worldwide network of partners of IOM and Caritas International.

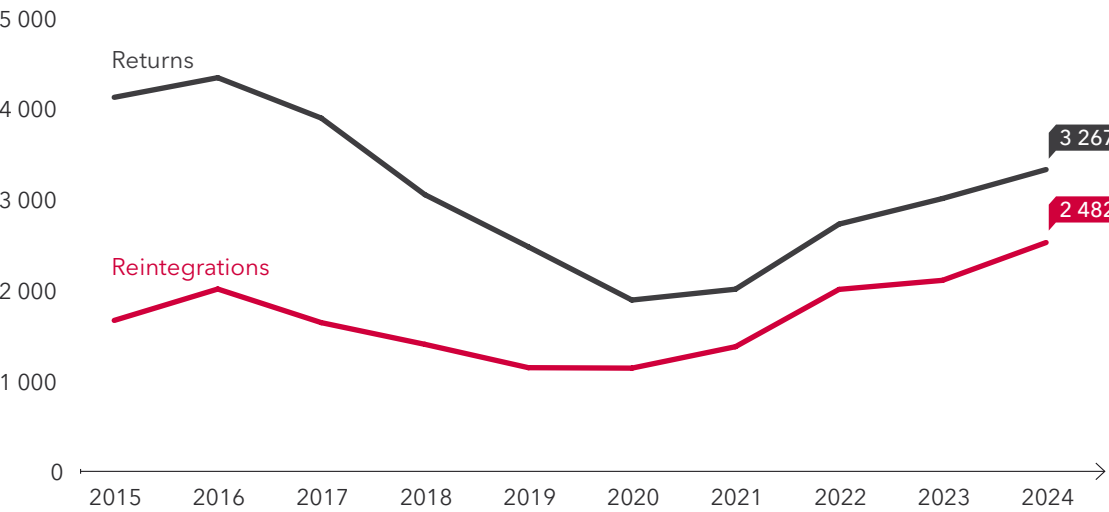
## European tools

Regarding voluntary return, Fedasil is making increasing use of European tools and programmes, such as the FAR (Frontex Application for Return) booking tool and the EURP (European Reintegration Programme).

Return projects from Belgium benefit from European support (AMIF fund).

Further information 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 country of origin organised by the Immigration Office (43 persons in 2024). However, these figures do not include voluntary returns carried out within the framework of the Dublin Convention (organised by the Immigration Office to the EU countries where migrants have already applied for asylum).

Countries of destination in 2024

| RETURNEES<br>(WITH OR WITHOUT REINTEGRATION) |       | RETURNEES WITH<br>REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE |       |
|----------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------------|-------|
| Brazil                                       | 1000  | Brazil                                     | 690   |
| Molova                                       | 422   | Moldova                                    | 405   |
| Georgia                                      | 191   | Georgia                                    | 165   |
| Turkey                                       | 151   | Turkey                                     | 130   |
| Mongolia                                     | 134   | Colombia                                   | 115   |
| Colombia                                     | 122   | Russia                                     | 78    |
| Pakistan                                     | 90    | Pakistan                                   | 76    |
| Romania                                      | 90    | Mongolia                                   | 76    |
| Russia                                       | 85    | Iraq                                       | 72    |
| Iraq                                         | 67    | Armenia                                    | 59    |
| Others                                       | 915   | Others                                     | 616   |
| Total                                        | 3 267 | Total                                      | 2 482 |

Profile of the returnees in 2024



**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 2024 regarding 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).

Information for applicants for international protection can be found (in 14 languages) on our website [www.fedasilinfo.be](http://www.fedasilinfo.be).