

GATWICK DETAINEES WELFARE GROUP



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INFORMATION PACK ABOUT FRANCE

We are sorry to hear about what has happened, and wish you luck when you arrive in France.

This is to help you when you arrive there. Keep this document with you when you travel, as it contains some useful information, such as:

- 1. Why you are being sent to France**
- 2. The French Asylum System**
- 3. Arriving in France**
- 4. Some useful words and sentences in French**
- 5. Organisations in France that can help you**

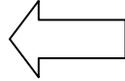
The information contained within this pack was, to the best of GDWG's knowledge, correct in July 2003.

1. WHY YOU ARE BEING SENT TO FRANCE

You are being sent to France because of something called the **DUBLIN CONVENTION**. This is an agreement made by the countries in the European Union in the year 1990. Since February 2003, The Dublin Convention is also called “**DUBLIN II**”.

The European countries that belong to the **EUROPEAN UNION** are:

- Great Britain
- The Republic of Ireland
- France
- Netherlands
- Belgium
- Luxembourg
- Germany
- Spain
- Portugal
- Italy
- Greece
- Denmark
- Sweden
- Finland
- Austria



Before, all these countries were very different from each other, and each country had its own separate laws. Now, because all these countries belong to the European Union, they share many laws. For example, they all share the law called the ‘Dublin Convention’.

10 New EU Countries

There are 10 more countries that are now joining the European Union. These are: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

- **The Dublin Convention says that only one country in the European Union should be responsible for your asylum application.**
This means that you cannot ask for asylum in Greece *and* in Italy, for example. You can only ask for asylum in one of those two countries: Greece *or* Italy.
- **The Dublin Convention also says that you should ask for asylum in the first European Union country that you enter.**
This means that you cannot choose which country in Europe to ask for asylum in. This is because the Dublin Convention says that all the countries in the European Union are safe. Therefore, it says that you should ask for asylum in the first European Union country you arrive in. (Often, this is not really the first European Union country you arrived in, but the first country where you came into contact with immigration officials.)
- **According to the Dublin Convention, when you ask for asylum in a European Union country, that country must find out if you were in *another* European Union country before arriving.**
So, when you asked for asylum in Great Britain, the Home Office (who deals with your asylum application) saw that you were in France before arriving. Because France is a European Union country, the Dublin Convention says that your asylum case should be looked at there, because it is a safe country.

REMEMBER: Cases like yours, where you are sent to another European Union country because of the Dublin Convention, are called **THIRD COUNTRY CASES**. So, the Home Office has decided that your claim for asylum in Great Britain is a ‘Third Country Case’.

2. FRANCE'S ASYLUM SYSTEM

France's asylum system is similar to the British one, because it recognises the **1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees**. That means that asylum is given to someone when it is proved that he or she is "in danger of persecution" in the country of origin.

In Britain, the 'Immigration and Nationality Directorate' – which is part of the 'Home Office' - deals with your asylum case. In France, it is the '**French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons**' that makes the first decision about your asylum application. Its name in French is '**Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides**' ('**OFPRA**'). OFPRA is part of the 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs' – in French: '*Ministère des Affaires Etrangère*'.

When you arrive at the airport, tell an **immigration officer as soon as possible** that you want to ask for asylum. If the immigration officer does not understand you, you can **show page 4 of this Information Pack**, which has the French words for "I would like to ask for asylum".

The normal way to apply for asylum is to go to the nearest '**préfecture**'. The 'préfecture' is the local office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and there is one in each town. They will ask you some **questions about your identity** and take your **fingerprints**. They will then give you an **appointment date** to come back for a **first interview**. While you are waiting for this next appointment date, you usually do not receive any help with accommodation or money.

It is important to remember that there are **organisations in France that can try to help you, by giving you support and legal advice**. You can contact them **as soon as you arrive in France**: the telephone numbers are on **page 5**. **Don't worry if you don't speak French, because someone there will be able to speak English**.

At the first interview, you will be given a **piece of paper to say you have officially asked for asylum** – in French, this is called a '**récépissé**'. This allows you to live in France legally for the next **3 months**. After every 3 months, you will have to get a new 'récépissé' from the préfecture.

While you are waiting for a decision on your asylum application, you are **not allowed to work**. For the first year, you will receive some money to help you: **300 Euros at your first interview** (in French: '**allocation d'attente**'), and then **280 Euros each month** (in French: '**allocation d'insertion**'). You also have the right to receive **free medical treatment**.

It is **not always easy to find accommodation** while you are waiting for a decision on your asylum claim. You may be able to stay for free in a reception centre for asylum seekers, called '**Centre d'Accueil pour Demandeurs D'Asile (CADA)**', or in a hotel. **If you do not have anywhere to sleep, contact one of the organisations on page 5**.

It **can take some time** for OFPRA to consider your application for asylum. If OFPRA decides to **refuse** your asylum application, you usually have the **right to appeal** against this. The name of the organisation that makes a decision on your appeal **is 'Commission des Recours des Réfugiés'**. If you do not have a solicitor, ask **one of the organisations on page 5** for help.

Please note that OFPRA can decide to detain you at any time, if they do not think you should be allowed to ask for asylum in France, or if your asylum claim is refused. If you are detained at the airport, it is very important to contact one of the organisations on page 5 (especially the organisation called Anafé).

3. ARRIVING IN FRANCE

- France is a country in Western Europe.
- The capital of France is **PARIS**, which is in the North of the country.
- There are two main airports in Paris that you can arrive at: “Paris Orly” or “Charles de Gaulle”. Information on the Religious Services team at each airport is on page 5.
- In France, the currency (the kind of money you pay with) is the **EURO** (about 1 and a half Euros for 1 British Pound).
- The official language is **FRENCH**.

A lot of French people speak some English, but not everyone. There are some **useful French words and sentences on page 4**.

Map of France:



France has borders with **6 other countries:**

Luxemburg and **Belgium** to the North,

Switzerland to the East,

Germany to the North-East,

Italy to the South-East,

and **Spain** to the South-West.

The **North Sea** is to the West and North-West of the country, and the **Mediterranean Sea** is to the South.

France has an area size of **551,500 square kilometres**.

4. SOME USEFUL WORDS AND SENTENCES IN FRENCH

Aéroport = Airport

La France = France

Bonjour = Hello / *Au revoir* = Goodbye

S'il vous plaît = Please / *Merci* = Thank You

Oui = Yes / *Non* = No

Quoi? = what?

Pardon = sorry

Je ne parle pas le français.
I don't speak any French.

Je ne comprends pas.
I don't understand.

Je suis un demandeur d'asile.
I am an asylum seeker.

Je voudrais demander l'asile.
I would like to ask for asylum.

Je suis arrivé de l'Angleterre.
I have come from England.

Je ne connais personne en France.
I don't know anyone in Germany.

Pourriez-vous m'aider s'il vous plaît?
Can you help me please?

Je n'ai pas d'argent.
I don't have any money.

J'ai besoin d'un avocat.
I need a solicitor.

Je n'ai nulle part où dormir.
I don't have anywhere to sleep.

Merci pour votre aide.
Thank you for your help.

5. ORGANISATIONS IN FRANCE THAT CAN HELP YOU

If you are calling from another country, the international code for France is: 0033

Anafé (Association Nationale d'Assistance aux Frontières pour les Etrangers)

This is a group of different refugee organisations that work together to provide legal advice and assistance to asylum seekers who are detained at the airport.

Address: 21 ter rue Voltaire
75011 Paris
Telephone /Fax: (+33) 1 43 67 27 52

Religious Services at the airport

Provides religious guidance and support to people at the airport.

Paris Orly International Airport

Telephone: (+33) 1 49 75 03 59
Fax: (+33) 1 49 75 79 42

Charles de Gaulle International Airport

Telephone: (+33) 1 48 62 47 97 / 12 84
Fax: (+33) 1 48 62 63 89

Cimade

*Member of **Anafé** (the organisation above). Provides legal advice and helps asylum seekers to find accommodation. The main office is in Paris, but there are offices all over France.*

Address: 176 rue de Grenelle
75007 Paris
Telephone: (+33) 1 4418 6050
Fax: (+33) 1 4556 0859
E-mail: cimade.sg@wanadoo.fr
Website: <http://www.cimade.org/>

Commission de Sauvegarde du Droit d'Asile (CSDA)

Organisation to protect asylum seekers' rights.

Address: 25 rue Ganneron
75018 Paris
Telephone: (+33) 1 53 04 39 99
Fax: (+33) 1 53 04 02 40

Forum Réfugiés

Organisation for refugees and asylum seekers based in Lyon. Provides legal assistance, help with accommodation, and information about living in France.

Address: B.P. 1054
69612 Villeurbanne (Lyon)
Telephone: (+33) 4 78 03 74 45
Fax: (+33) 4 78 03 28 74
E-mail: direction@forumrefugies.org
Website: <http://www.forumrefugies.org/>

France Terre d'Asile

Provide practical and moral support to asylum seekers, and information about living in France, including French classes.

Address: 25 rue Ganneron
75018 Paris
Telephone: (+33) 1 53 04 39 99
Fax: (+33) 1 53 04 02 40
E-mail: ftdparis@aol.com
Website: <http://www.france-terre-asile.org>

Secours Catholique

Catholic organisation that provides practical and moral support to all asylum seekers (you do not have to be Catholic or a Christian!).

Address: 106 rue du Bac
75341 Paris
Telephone: (+33) 1 45 49 73 00
Fax: (+33) 1 45 49 94 50
Website: <http://www.secours-catholique.asso.fr/>

International Committee of the Red Cross - France

International humanitarian organisation. May not be able to help you directly, but can maybe give you information about other organisations that can.

Address: 9 rue de Berri
75008 Paris
Telephone: (+33) 1 53 53 00 48
Fax: (+33) 1 53 53 00 49
E-Mail: paris.par@icrc.org

Amnesty International - France

Human rights organisation, that also campaigns for the rights of asylum seekers and refugees. Probably cannot help you directly, but may be able to give you useful contacts relating to your human rights.

Address: 76 Boulevard de la Villette
75019 Paris
Telephone: (+33) 1 53 38 65 65
Fax: (+33) 1 53 38 55 00

Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations

International organisation that provides advice and help to people who want to return to their country of origin, or who want to move to another country.

Address: 6 Passage Tenaille
75014 Paris
Telephone: (+33) 1 40 44 06 91
Fax: (+33) 1 40 44 04 85
E-mail: iomparis@iom.int