

Reception in Belgium

Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers



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Reception in Belgium

► Fedasil: core business

- Reception of asylum seekers
- Reception policy
- Voluntary return
- **Observation and orientation of unaccompanied minors**



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Reception in Belgium

▶ Fedasil: key figures

- ▶ Agency created in May 2002
- ▶ 1,200 workers
- ▶ Expenditure in 2012 = 370 Mi €
- ▶ 23,800 reception places in 2012

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Reception in Belgium

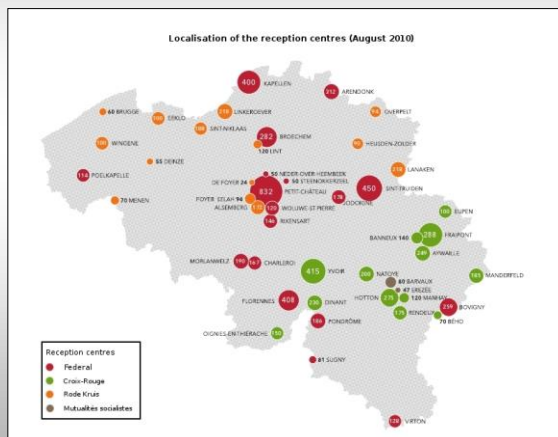
▶ Reception in three steps

- ▶ First step: stay in collective reception centre (during 4 months)
- ▶ Second step: stay in individual reception facilities
- ▶ Third **new** step: stay in a reception centre for voluntary return (during 30 days)

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Reception in Belgium

► 48 reception centres: locations in Belgium



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Reception in Belgium

► Individual housing

- Furnished private lodging
- Material aid
- Providing assistance



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The reception crisis



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The reception crisis

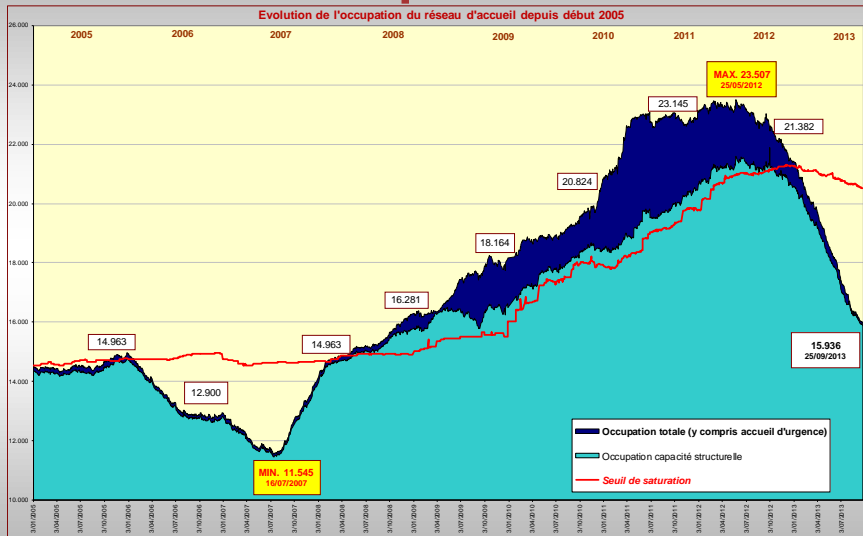
2008 - 2011

- ▶ Increase of asylum applications
- ▶ Opening of emergency facilities
- ▶ Reception in hotels (short-term solution)
 - ⇒ *From May 2009 till December 2012*
 - ⇒ *Around 1,000 (max 1,200) people have been accommodated in hotels in Brussels*
- ▶ Enlarging the reception capacity till 24,500
- ▶ Finally, additional staff for the asylum agencies to bring down their backlog



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The reception crisis



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Out of the crisis

► Integrated asylum and reception policy

1 State secretary for Asylum, Migration and Social Integration (since December 2011)

► Increase of reception capacity

► Restricting the inflow into the reception network

No reception for:

- multiple asylum applications

List of 'safe countries': accelerated asylum procedure

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Out of the crisis

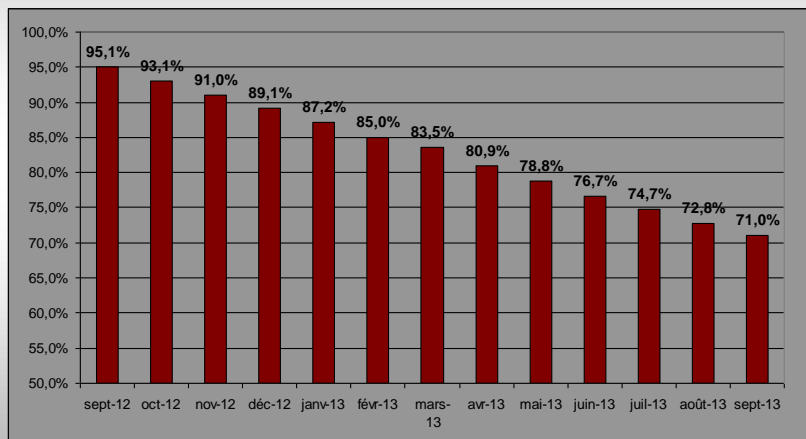
► Investing in a broader and better assistance for voluntary return

- ▶ Third new step in the reception model: a 30 days stay in a reception centre for voluntary return
- ▶ Staff member for voluntary return in each reception centre
- ▶ Voluntary return counter at dispatching service (from the beginning of their stay)

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Today

► occupancy rate: 71%



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The reception of unaccompanied minors in Belgium

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3 concerned actors

- ▶ **The Guardianship Service** – Federal administration of the Ministry of Justice
- ▶ The authorities in charge of residence permits
Asylum authority – Minister in charge of Asylum, Migration and Social Integration
- ▶ **Fedasil** – Minister in charge of Asylum, Migration and Social Intergration

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History

- ▶ March 2004: creation of the **Guardianship Service** (Ministry of Justice)
- ▶ August 2004: opening of the 1st **Observation and Orientation Centre (OOC)**
- ▶ June 2005: opening of the 2nd **OOC**
- ▶ 2011: new working method between Fedasil and the Guardianship service to **accelerate the age tests**
- ▶ January 2013: special cooperation between Fedasil, the Guardianship service and the Asylum authorities for the **registration of UM non-Asylum seekers**

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Definition

▶ According to the reception law :

UMA = is an unaccompanied person younger than 18 years old and must be in one of the following situations:

- Either having introduced an asylum application
- Or not meeting the conditions for access to the territory.

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Reception model

► A three-step reception



1. Observation and orientation centre (OOC)

2. Asylum seeker: collective facilities (Fedasil)

No asylum seeker: fitted reception (reception facilities for minors, foster home, etc.)

3. Individual housing, supervised autonomy (Fedasil)

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'Pre-reception' step

► Any authority (Police, Immigration office, ...non-profit association) reports the presence of a UMA on the Belgian territory or border to the **Guardianship Service**

► The Guardianship Service checks whether the UMA is known to them and whether he **needs or not accommodation**

► If he needs accommodation the Guardianship Service contacts **Fedasil**

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Step 1 : reception in an OOC

► Observation and Orientation centre:

2 x 50 places (Steenokkerzeel and NOH)

► 'Green' Observation and Orientation centre :

30 places (Sugny)



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COO: mission and objectives

► Open centre

► Reception for all UMA:

- provides the 1st reception,
- offers an adaptation period
- permits to make a psychosocial analysis - orientation
- permits the Guardianship Service to identify the minor and to assign a guardian.

► Period of 15 days renewable only once (max 1 month)

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Step 2 : collective reception

- ▶ The UM Asylum seeker is accommodated in the Fedasil network
- ▶ The UM non-Asylum seeker is accommodated by the Communities (not enough facilities actually)

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Mission and objectives

- ▶ Open collective reception centre
- ▶ Supervision of the UMA 24/7
- ▶ Social and medical assistance,...
- ▶ Individual follow-up, individual evaluation
- ▶ Schooling
- ▶ Together with the minor and the help of his guardian his autonomy is prepared
- ▶ Period : 4 months to 1 year

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Specializations in collective centres = good practices

- ▶ Unaccompanied minors: young mothers or pregnant girls (30 places)
- ▶ Time Out facilities (10 places)
- ▶ Minors with mental disorders (15 places)
- ▶ Very young children from 8-9 years to 14 years old (15 places)

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Step 3: individual reception

- ▶ If the UMA is still entitled to benefit material assistance : local reception facilities with supervised **autonomy**

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Where?

- ▶ Flat, rooms
- ▶ Easy access via public transport
- ▶ In the neighbourhood of collective reception centres

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Mission and objectives

- ▶ Offers more individual help and supervision
- ▶ This stay is a transition towards greater autonomy and responsibility
- ▶ Offers the necessary tools to acquire full autonomy

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Conditions for individual housing

- ▶ From his 16th birthday
- ▶ Has stayed previously in a OOC and at least 4 months in a collective reception centre
- ▶ Is still entitled to benefit material assistance
- ▶ Meets the schooling obligations and is a regular pupil
- ▶ His autonomy is sufficient to make the step.

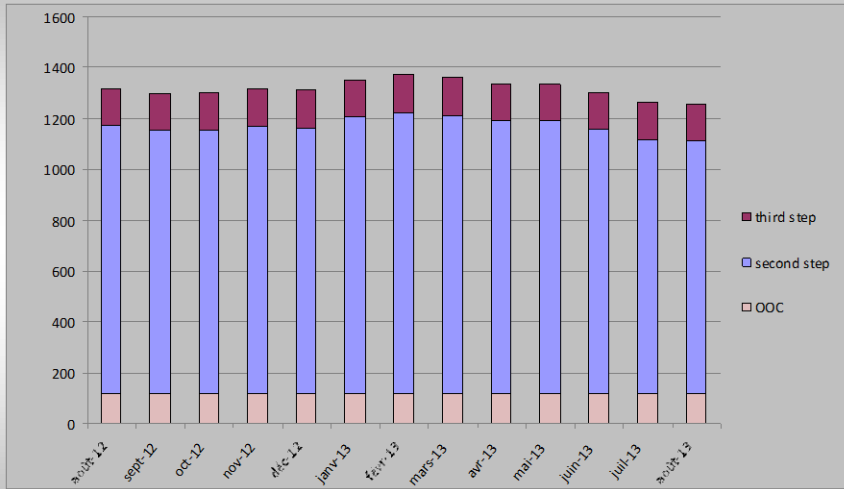
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In need of facilities for individual housing

- ▶ Registration on the candidates list
- ▶ 'Matching' between supply and demand
- ▶ Acceptance (or refusal)
- ▶ First meeting and reception

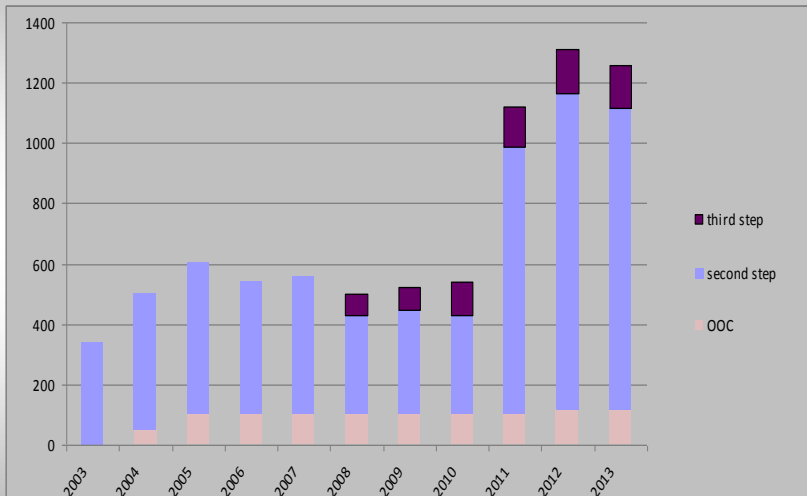
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Actual number of facilities for UMA



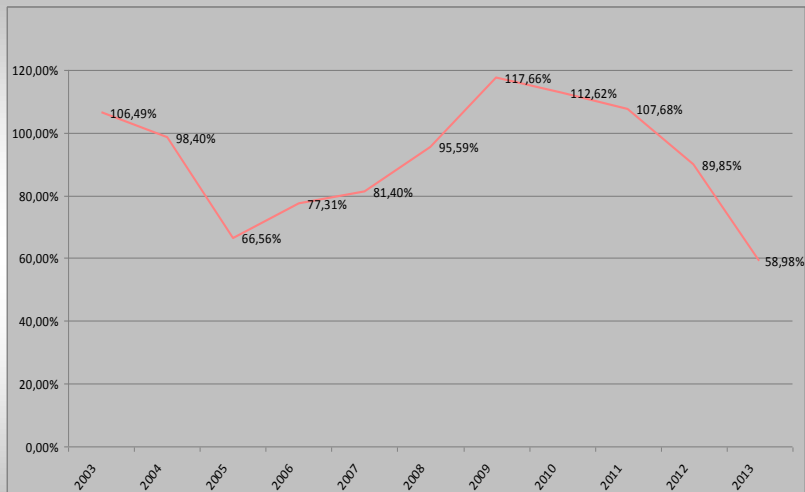
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Number of facilities UMA 2003 - 2013



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Occupancy rate UMA facilities 2003 -2013



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Who?

- ▶ Mainly asylum seekers (70%)
- ▶ Mostly boys (nearly 80%)

- ▶ Top 5 nationalities:
 - Afghanistan (40%)
 - Guinea (25%)
 - DR of Congo
 - Iraq
 - Somalia

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Challenges

- ▶ Convert collective reception facilities into individual housing (third step)
- ▶ More resources to organise new specialised facilities for UMA
- ▶ More resources to the Guardianship service to recruit new guardian-candidates
- ▶ ...

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Thank you for your attention !



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