

HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION IN FRANCE

At the end of the 19th century, France becomes a country of immigration.

1850-1900

From 1850 to 1900, while the rest of Europe almost triples its population, the population in France does not increase any more. The neighbouring countries are the main suppliers of workforce: Italy, Belgium, Spain et Switzerland mostly, Poland for miners in the North.



De 1914 à 1944

The state is now intervening in a field that was, till then, devoted to private enterprises: recruiting the foreign workforce. It signs agreements with the governments of the countries that are concerned (Poland, Italy, Czechoslovakia). France is also becoming the principal land of asylum for political exiles. Whether they are Arménians having escaped the Turkish genocide, antifascists Italians, Russians chased by bolshevism, Germans against nazism or Spanish against francoism, many find refuge in France. In 1931, these nearly three million foreigners constitute 7% of the total population.



1946-1975

In 1946, the census reports a noticeable decrease of the numbers of foreigners who return to their countries after the war. Many of them have been naturalized too: they have got the French nationality.

A new cycle of arrivals is starting, stimulated by the needs of workforce. During the Cold War, some refugees coming either from communist countries or countries with military dictatorship find asylum in France. These new emigrants enter France in the most diverse conditions, some legally recruited, some arriving clandestinely.



1975-2015

From the mid 1970s, the migratory flows considerably decrease. Only foreigners concerned by family reunification and asylum seekers who have obtained the status of refugees are allowed to settle in France.



2015

After the attacks that made hundreds of victims in Paris, France re-establishes border controls.



Proportion d'immigration en France

- During the second half of the 19th century, while European countries such as Germany, Great Britain or Italy are affected by a massive emigration, especially to the USA, France becomes a big country of immigration.
- The proportion of immigrants in the French population is about 8,5%, which has not changed much since 1970. It represents about 5 million people.
- For 10 years, France has been welcoming about 200,000 immigrants a year, that is the smallest proportion in Europe.
- It is in virtue of this principle that France has opened its borders to those who were seeking a better life. Through their work, talent, commitment, immigrants have contributed to the enrichment of our culture, to our democracy and economic development.

In our region (Nord - Pas de Calais)

In 2007, 182 900 immigrants, that is 4.5 % of the population, live in our region. More than 60 % of them are foreigners, the others have got the French nationality.

72 % of them came from Algeria, Morocco, Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Poland.

