In 2009, France set up two programmes for receiving vulnerable populations: one for people from vulnerable minorities in Iraq and the other for the beneficiaries of international protection obtained in Malta. These two operations are in addition to the refugee resettlement programme conducted with the HCR in application of a framework agreement signed with France in February 2008. These populations, each with a different legal status, signed the Reception and Integration Contract in France following a long and complex migration procedure. Following an initial period in France, they are experiencing problems with integration. In spite of this, they remain confident about the future and all wish to settle permanently in France.

Reception of beneficiaries of the « Iraq » and « Malta » programmes

The population arriving in France via the “Iraq” programme differs greatly from the one arriving via the “Malta” operation (see boxed text). The Iraqis most often arrived in families of an average of four people. There are as many nuclear families (couples with children) as people who have come with other members of their family (parents and siblings). A third of the adults in fact came with their parents, which is rare in terms of migration. Just as rare, 21% of the Iraqis surveyed live in households made up of several families 56% of the Iraqis surveyed are aged over 40. By way of contrast, the “Maltese” are mostly younger men (44% under the age of 30), mainly arriving on their own.

The “Maltese” are three times less likely to have been in higher education than all of the new arrivals in 2009. Mainly workers and employees in their country of origin, 73% had left school before the age of 18. By way of contrast, the Iraqis come from more comfortable backgrounds. The education system before the Second Gulf War offered a wide range of opportunities to both men and women: 48% of those surveyed have a University degree (and only 28% do not). In their country of origin, the Iraqis surveyed were mainly in executive jobs (24% of cases), middle management (22%) or employees (20%), but a quarter of them were already unemployed.

Easier procedures and training considered to be more useful

The migration process for those interviewed was very long. Half of the “Maltese” left their country of origin before 2004 and 81% of the Iraqis did so between 2005 and 2008. Most often, the Iraqis fled Iraq via bordering countries (Syria and Jordan), where they were settled in camps managed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 60% of the Iraqis had only one country of residence before France, the remainder having lived in two or three countries. The process for the “Maltese” was even more complex. Mainly originating in the Horn Of Africa (Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia), 81% lived for a long time in another African country before going to Malta.

An easier administrative procedure for these populations after such a complex migration procedure

Almost all of these people left their country of origin at least two years ago

The majority of these people had to go through fewer processes to obtain a residence permit because some of them already had international protection (the “Maltese” and some Iraqis under UNHCR mandate). 82% of these people say that they were received well in the Prefecture - 20 points more than all new arrivals. 31% of them thought that they had to wait too long to get into the Prefecture, but here too the proportion was 20 points below the whole sample. The process for obtaining a residence permit therefore went smoothly for these populations, especially the “Maltese”. In fact, whilst the Iraqis were placed with other statutory populations (asylum applicants and refugees) in reception centres for asylum applicants (CADA) or temporary accommodation centres (PH), the “Maltese” lived in make-shift structures created specially for them. As a consequence, they were cared for in a more specific way than the Iraqis (the team only looked
After going to the French Office for Immigration and Integration, these people went through three other types of training.

"Maltese" and 77% of the Iraqis also had a skills assessment, compared to only 57% of all new arrivals. The "Maltese" have a skills assessment for finding a job. This is a little less than all new arrivals (80%). By way of contrast, 63% of them consider that signing the Reception and Integration Contract is useful for finding a job, whilst 65% of new arrivals thought the same. All of the "Maltese" and 77% of the Iraqis also had a skills assessment, compared to only 57% of all new arrivals. The "Maltese" have a more positive opinion than the Iraqis of the benefit of the assessment. The opinion of the latter mirrors the overall view. Supported to a greater degree at their reception centre, the beneficiaries of the Malta operation in fact considered the advice from the assessment to be more useful, especially in order to gain access to professional re-training or training. In spite of this, when looking for a job in the true sense of the word, which they see as a priority, these people consider the skills assessment to be less useful than all the new arrivals did (58 % compared to 63%, see Table 1).

### Table 1: Percentage of beneficiaries of these programmes and new arrivals considering the benefit of the Reception and Integration Contract and its main modules in terms of each reception programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usefulness of the Reception and Integration Contract for</th>
<th>Iraq</th>
<th>Malta</th>
<th>All new arrivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking for work</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for accommodation</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning French</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness of the &quot;Living in France&quot; training for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for work</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for accommodation</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily life</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness of the Skills Assessment for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for work</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training guidance</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Elipa wave 1 (DSED). Field: new arrivals having signed the Reception and Integration Agreement between September 2009 and February 2010

Interpretation: The Reception and Integration Agreement is considered to be useful for finding a job by 65% of the Iraqis, 42% of the "Maltese" and 52% of all new arrivals.

Ultimately, these people consider that signing the Reception and Integration Contract is mainly useful for learning French (71% of cases). This is a little less than all new arrivals (80%). By way of contrast, 63% of them consider that signing the Reception and Integration Contract is useful for finding accommodation, whilst the other foreigners put more faith in their own network. Finally, whereas 65% of Iraqis also find the Reception and Integration Contract useful for finding a job, only 42% of the "Maltese" think the same (see Table1).

After going to the French Office for Immigration and Integration, these people went through three other types of training. Civic training focuses on the values of the Republic, which half of the beneficiaries of the two operations are unaware of. The Iraqis found theses values of more benefit than did the "Maltese". Often having left their own country to escape sectarian violence, they are in fact in particular agreement with the principles of a secular Republic. All beneficiaries consider the "Living in France" training to be useful, and they are less critical than all signatories of the Reception and Integration Contract. Above all, they find it useful for finding accommodation and daily life (20 points more, see Table 1). Access to employment is a major issue for these people, 69% finding "Living in France” training useful. They find this training more useful than the skills assessment for finding a job.

Before obtaining a residence permit, all foreigners spend half a day at the French Office for Immigration and Integration, where they have a medical examination and sign the Reception and Integration Contract (CAI). The half day went well for most of these people, who had more orientation interviews than all signatories of the Reception and Integration Contract, especially those from Malta. 78% of the "Maltese" saw a social worker there, compared to only 21% of the Iraqis (and 14% of all new arrivals – see graph 1). Most of these people found this useful, whilst 75% of new arrivals thought the same. All of the "Maltese" and 77% of the Iraqis also had a skills assessment, compared to only 57% of all new arrivals. The "Maltese" have a more positive opinion than the Iraqis of the benefit of the assessment. The opinion of the latter mirrors the overall view. Supported to a greater degree at their reception centre, the beneficiaries of the Malta operation in fact considered the advice from the assessment to be more useful, especially in order to gain access to professional re-training or training. In spite of this, when looking for a job in the true sense of the word, which they see as a priority, these people consider the skills assessment to be less useful than all the new arrivals did (58 % compared to 63%, see Table 1).

### Box 1: The Malta operation

The European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, adopted on the 16th of October 2008 by European Union heads of state and governments, provides for strengthening solidarity between Member States to benefit those “whose national asylum system is subject to specific and disproportionate pressure due to their geographical or demographic situation”. In this context, at the “Justice and Internal Affairs” Council on the 27th of November 2008, the Minister for Immigration declared that France was available to receive 80 beneficiaries of international protection (refugee or subsidiary protection status) from Malta on its territory in July 2009. In the end, 95 beneficiaries were received in France in this way. The Minister chose to repeat the operation in 2010, nine other European Union Member States having committed to a similar procedure: 95 beneficiaries were again received in France.

Most of the beneficiaries under the first operation, which is the subject of the research, were of Somali nationality (62%). The others were Eritreans, Sudanese, Ethiopians, Sri Lankans and Ivoirians. They were looked after for a maximum period of one year in three accommodation centres located in Nanterre (92), Oissel (76) and Poitiers (86). Centre teams supported them during the integration process, and they also had rapid access to social rights (Active Solidarity Income (RSA) or Temporary Waiting Allowance (ATA)) and medical cover.
Info migrations

Graph 1: Percentage of beneficiaries of the two operations and new arrivals who have had different types of training under the Reception and Integration Contract

Seeing a social worker  Language training  « Living in France » training  Skills assessment

Source: Elipa wave 1 (DSED). Field: new arrivals having signed the Reception and Integration Agreement between September 2009 and February 2010

Interpretation: The Reception and Integration Agreement is considered to be useful for finding a job by 65% of the Iraqis, 42% of the "Maltese" and 52% of all new arrivals.

A massive requirement for language training for all beneficiaries of these operations

Learning to speak French remains a central issue in terms of integration. The people in question do not speak French, which has caused problems of comprehension during their time at the French Office for Immigration and Integration, over half of them having not understood all of the training (in French). Made aware by the State of the greater need for language training for the Iraqi beneficiaries, the French Office for Immigration and Integration ordered training for 76% of them (half of which for a maximum period of 400 hours). It has also organised 400 hours of training just for the "Maltese", 93% of whom have benefited (see Graph 1). This specific initiative has provided a better understanding of the language requirements of these people: 11% of them stating that they cannot speak French have not received language training, compared to 64% of all non-speakers of French who have signed the Reception and Integration Contract.

Progress made through such training remains unclear, especially where the "Maltese" are concerned, but 32% of the Iraqis spoke French quite well at the time of the research. Within their family circle, half of the Iraqis say that they speak French and their native language, compared to 33% of the "Maltese". Generally speaking, most of the beneficiaries of the two operations say that they still have problems making a phone call. Apart from a minority of Iraqis, none of them can write in French without difficulty.

Box 2: The reception programme for receiving Iraqi nationals in France

The principal of receiving Iraqi nationals in France who are under threat because they belong to a religious minority was determined by the President of the Republic in 2007. This programme is part of a wider context, as the European Council of the 27th of November 2008 adopted conclusions setting the objective of receiving around 10,000 Iraqi refugees in European Union territory by voluntary agreement of Member States. Such people may be on Iraqi soil or in a neighbouring state (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon or Turkey). Applications were submitted by the Association to help Minorities of the East and the UNHCR.

On arriving in France, the Iraqis are received either by their family if possible or, in the great majority of cases, at one of the centres in the national system for receiving asylum applicants. Initially set at 500, the number of people who might benefit from this programme was settled at 1,215 between 2008 and 2011. The programme has now been completed.
Reasonably satisfied populations, in spite of problems with professional integration and access to housing

Low rates of access to jobs

The great majority of the beneficiaries of the two operations surveyed and their partners wishing to work are looking for a job, whatever programme they are on. It is mainly because of their lack of language skills and ignorance of the French system that they have difficulty accessing the employment market. We counted a person in employment in only one out of ten households. Iraqis with degrees are affected by the same problems, especially because only a quarter of them applied for their degree to be made equivalent to a French one, and only half of them had achieved this at the time of the survey. Beneficiaries of the two operations mainly look for work through national employment agency vacancies (51% of Iraqis and 64% of “Maltese”, see Graph 2) and via other means to a lesser extent: adverts, speculative applications, relations or recommendations. Specifically supported by centre teams, 57% of those from Malta also try to find a job through temporary work. Facing such problems with professional integration, 18% of them wait until they have improved their French before looking for work.

Graph 2: Method of looking for work depending on reception programme

Given the high level of unemployment among the beneficiaries of the two operations, the latter have very low incomes compared to other new arrivals. Whilst the poverty threshold is €954 per month in France, the average income of the “Maltese” is €460 per unit of consumption (UC) and the Iraqis’ is €416. Almost all live on less than €750 per UC, compared to 33% of new arrivals. Even though this situation does not lead to a greater number of unpaid debt situations, these populations are still amongst the poorest groups of refugees. Having experienced a higher standard of living before migration, 46% of the Iraqis complain that their financial situation is worse than in Iraq. On the other hand, 78% of the “Maltese”, who come from some of the poorest regions in the world, consider that their financial situation has improved.

Two thirds of the Iraqis have their own accommodation, often in public housing

The “Maltese” still live in the centres created for them, even though the reception period (12 months) is coming to an end. Like all statutory refugees, the Iraqis must leave the CADA within 6 months after obtaining refugee status. (Geneva Convention). The process of finding accommodation had already begun at the time of the survey. It is complex, 79% of them having lived in several places before arriving at their current destination. At the time of the survey, 17% of them were still living in a “temporary” facility (CADA, temporary accommodation centre, emergency housing or other type of housing supported by an association). But 66% are renting their accommodation, most often in social housing, which most of them found easily thanks to support from associations. Twice the number of Iraqis, who often know hardly anybody in France, are in social housing than other signatories of the Reception and Integration Contract, who are housed by a third party.

2. ELIPA data for new arrivals, INSEE data (tax sources) for the whole population. The data is not exactly comparable, INSEE data including social transfers, whilst, for example, the needs covered by the centre where the beneficiaries of the two operations live are not included in income figures.
The Iraqis who are not living in temporary accommodation live in housing that is in good condition and larger than the other holders of an initial residence document (3.1 rooms compared to 2.6), even taking account of the size of the household. 40% of them have more than one room per person. Apart from a minority of 20% who are very unhappy with their accommodation, overall, the Iraqis are happier with their accommodation than all signatories of the Reception and Integration Contract. 19% find their accommodation too expensive to heat and 40% complain that it is too small, but these proportions are lower than the whole by 10 points.

Few Iraqi tenants were able to choose where they lived, only those with family in France or needing hospital care being able to choose their ultimate accommodation. However, only 42% wish to move within the next 12 months, compared to 52% of all new arrivals. Iraqis still living in temporary accommodation have a strong desire to leave it, unlike the “Maltese”. For them, leaving the reception facility would be a major break, as they have been used to temporary accommodation, having remained for a long time in Malta. Having been in public authority care for a long time, they find it harder to become independent, whereas the Iraqis want to find their own accommodation that is similar to what they had in their home country as quickly as possible. Whether tenants or in temporary accommodation, most the beneficiaries of these two operations who wish to leave are hoping to find social housing.

**A need to develop a social and family network**

The chosen country of destination for migration flows is greatly influenced by the presence or otherwise of an existing network in the reception country: many signatories of the Reception and Integration Contract already have a network of family and acquaintances when they obtain their initial document. The beneficiaries of these two operations did not choose their reception country. Coming from a country with no historical connections with France, 56% of the Iraqis and 70% of the “Maltese” do not know anyone in France when they arrive, compared to 16% of all new arrivals. However, State departments have taken account of the presence of families in France when considering applications, which is why 40% of Iraqis have family in the country. Most of the beneficiaries of these two operations considered the existence of networks to be useful, but to a lesser extent than for all new arrivals (64% compared to 79%).

**Graph 3 : Ways of meeting new friends for the beneficiaries of the two operations ans all new arrivals**

The beneficiaries of these two operations found it more difficult to meet new friends than the other new arrivals. This may be explained by the more limited presence of family and friends already in the area, lack of employment, given that work is the place to meet people. These people most often meet other people of various origins, through language lessons (80% of the Iraqis and 90% of the “Maltese”), the neighbourhood (56% and 85%) or by chance in public places (42% and 55%, see Graph 3). The Iraqis also often receive support from their religious and ethnic community, and two thirds of the parents often meet new people through their children’s school.

Often having left their close family in their country of origin, the “Maltese” are in more frequent contact with them than are the Iraqis. Funds are also transferred more frequently: 55% of the “Maltese” send money abroad to their families, whilst hardly any Iraqis do this. On average, the “Maltese” send €140 abroad – a not inconsiderable proportion of their income.
In spite of the difficulties, all populations received wish to remain permanently in France

The biggest problems encountered by the beneficiaries of the two operations since their arrival are primarily problems with language and access to employment. 69% of the “Maltese” and 47% of the Iraqis consider that the language problem is a major barrier in terms of their integration in France. Finding work is also cited as a problem by 50% of those coming from Malta, compared to 22% of those coming from Iraq, a relatively low proportion in terms of their unemployment rate. 33% of the Iraqis also complain about problems finding somewhere to live.

In spite of the problems encountered, only a minority of beneficiaries consider that their life in France is not satisfactory. 16% consider that their experience so far has been worse than expected, but 62% say it was better, 10 points higher than all signatories of the Reception and Integration Contract.

According to the people interviewed, the influence of the public authorities has been positive in terms of the integration process, especially for the “Maltese”. In fact, 88% of the people from Malta consider that their integration was directly assisted by the public authorities (State and social bodies), compared to 30% of the Iraqis. The latter considered that their integration was supported more by the living conditions in France (36%), and they particularly felt safe, which they no longer did in their country of origin. 33% also give praise for the support given by their family and friends. Note that 15% of the beneficiaries of the two operations, regardless of the programme, consider that having papers makes integration easier.

Ultimately, 87% of these people would encourage others to come to France – 25 points more than all first arrivals. They all wish to remain in the country permanently, the majority wishing to have the rest of their family join them and saying that they would ultimately like to acquire citizenship.

Box 3 : The special sample of populations received from Iraq et Malta in the ELIPA survey

The principal objectives of the longitudinal survey into the integration of first arrivals (ELIPA) are gaining an understanding of the integration process in the years immediately after obtaining a permanent residence document and evaluating the reception system. Implemented by the French Office for Immigration and Integration Office, the system consists of supporting migrants by offering them a range of training or personal services (free language training of up to 400 hours, training in the values of the Republic, skills assessment, meeting with a social worker and “Living in France” training).

The survey was carried out on a representative sample of 6,107 migrants aged 18 and over who are third country nationals from European and Economic Area and Switzerland, who have just obtained permanent residence in France and been received by the OFII between September 2009 and February 2010. SOFRES conducted the interviews between March and June 2010 in 4 regions (Île de France, PACA, Rhône Alpes and Alsace) in 14 languages (French, Albanian, English, Arabic Berber, Bengali, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, Serbian, Soninke, Tamil, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese).

In addition to the main sample, a special sample was taken from the 536 beneficiaries received under the Malta and Iraq operations who obtained their residence documents between September 2009 and February 2010. 97 people (70 Iraqis and 27 “Maltese”) ultimately responded to the ELIPA questionnaire, a small number of questions specific to these populations having been added. The number of people surveyed is very low. The study therefore relates to a sample of 97 people, plus 12 Iraqi refugees included in the main sample (who therefore did not answer the small number of specific questions). Also, any beneficiaries of the Malta operation speaking only Somali or Tigrinya could not be surveyed. The representative nature of the people surveyed is therefore indicative. In particular, only differences greater than 10 points need to be considered as truly significant (see Table 1). Given the low number of people surveyed, the results presented in this edition of Infos Migrations have not been weighted. For reasons of coherence, the results concerning all first arrivals are not weighted either. They therefore differ from those given in other ELIPA publications.

The people within the scope of this survey are designated as “new arrivals” or “signatories of the Reception and Integration Contract”. The main sample and the sample of beneficiaries of the two operations were surveyed in a second wave in 2011 and will be so again in the third and final wave in 2013.

The survey has the financial support of the European Commission, the FEI for the 6,107 new arrivals in the ELIPA survey and the FER for the 97 refugees being beneficiaries of the two operations.

Further information :

- Observatoire de l’Intégration des réfugiés : « Quel avenir pour les réfugiés irakiens en France », Les cahiers du social n°25, February 2010
- Infos migrations, n°24 - September 2011