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Attracting and retaining international students in France

French Contact Point of the European Migration Network

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ATTRACTING AND RETAINING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN FRANCE

*Study carried out by the French National Contact Point
for the European Migration Network (EMN)*

February 2019

Disclaimer:

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

- APS: Temporary residence authorisation (*Autorisation provisoire de séjour*)
- APT: Provisional work permit (*Autorisation provisoire de travail*)
- CAF: Family Benefit Fund (*Caisse d'allocations familiales*)
- CDEFI: Conference of Directors of French Engineering Schools (*Conférence des Directeurs des Écoles Françaises d'Ingénieurs*)
- CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
- CESEDA: Code on Entry and Residence of Foreign nationals and Right of Asylum (*Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile*)
- CGE: Conference of grandes écoles [prestigious higher education institutions with a competitive entrance examination]
- ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education
- CiuP: Cité internationale universitaire of Paris
- CROUS: Centre régional des œuvres universitaires et scolaires [regional centres for student social services]
- DALF: Diploma of Proficiency in French (*Diplôme approfondi de langue française*)
- DELF: Diploma of French Language Studies (*Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française*) [*first certificate*]
- DGEF: General Directorate for Foreign Nationals in France (*Direction générale des étrangers en France*)
- DIRECCTE: Regional Office for companies, competition, consumption, work and employment (*Direction régionale des entreprises, de la concurrence, de la consommation, du travail et de l'emploi*)
- DSED : Department for Statistics, Studies and Documentation (*Département des statistiques, des études et de la documentation*)
- FLE : French as a foreign language (*Français langue étrangère*)
- OFII: French Office for Immigration and Integration (*Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration*)
- MESRI: Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation
- UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
- VLS-TS: Long-stay visa equivalent to a residence permit (*visa de long séjour valant titre de séjour*)

SUMMARY

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Executive Summary

France is the **fourth ranked receiving country for international students** worldwide, behind the USA, UK and Australia, and in front of Germany and Russia. It is the **first non-English language speaking country**.

In France, 80,339 first "student" residence permits were issued in 2017¹ and 82,580 in 2018², which is the highest historical level.

In a context of strong international competition, the policies that aim to attract and retain international students have seen significant changes, involving numerous players at different levels. Higher education represents a strategic influence challenge on an international level, marked by the emergence of new players, such as Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands and Turkey. Despite its numerous strengths, linked to its cultural and artistic outreach, the reputation of its institutions, the quality of education, and scientific excellence, the number of international students in France has increased at a much slower rate than in other countries that have developed more offensive attractiveness strategies.

As part of the *Rencontres Universitaires de la Francophonie* which took place on **19 November 2018** in Paris, the French Prime Minister, Edouard Philippe, presented the **new attractiveness strategy for international students³**. The target is to welcome 500,000 international students by 2027. From the start of the 2019 university year, a strategy will be launched to simplify visa policy in association with the Ministry of the Interior, multiply courses in French as a foreign language and English, along with a labelling approach for the reception of foreign students to France and a global communication campaign, under the leadership of Campus France. The creation of a **Support Fund entitled *Bienvenue en France (Welcome to France)*, endowed with ten million euros**, will enable **these actions to be launched in 2019**.

Over the last few years, a number of studies have been conducted within the EMN on the topic of attracting international students⁴. The study published in 2012 on the "Immigration of international students in France" and the one conducted in 2013 on "Attracting Foreign Talents to France" aimed to analyse policies on immigration and the measures implemented in order to attract highly qualified third-country nationals. This study aims to update this information, whilst providing additional analysis on the measures taken to retain international students.

The European Migration Network's study aims to **provide an overview of the policies and practices in place to attract and retain international students (third-country nationals) in France**, by identifying the main challenges and examples of best practice. More specifically, the study will analyse the incentives in place to attract and retain international students, describe the admission criteria of Higher Education Institutions, language requirements and the process for the recognition of diplomas, provide an overview of the bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements with third countries, and present the main challenges and good practices. It will also provide statistical data on the number of third-country national students present in France from 2012 to 2017.

¹ Source: Department for Statistics, Studies and Documentation (*DSED - Département des statistiques, des études et de la documentation*), General Directorate for Foreign Nationals in France (*DGEF - Direction générale des étrangers en France*), Ministry of the Interior.

² Estimated data.

³ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

⁴ The latest EMN studies on international students and foreign talents were published in 2012 and 2013. They are available here:

- French Contact Point for the European Migration Network, Immigration of international students in France, September 2012

<https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Europe-et-International/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM3/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM/Etudes2/L-immigration-des-etudiants-etrangers-en-France>

- French Contact Point for the European Migration Network, Attracting Foreign Talents to France, July 2013
<https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Europe-et-International/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM3/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM/Etudes2/Attirer-les-talents-etrangers-en-France>

This study is based on a **series of interviews and questionnaires conducted with the different players** concerned by policies to attract and retain international students, such as Ministry representatives, the Campus France agency, universities and *grandes écoles*, and the private sector. It is also based on **several recent studies and reports**.

The study will start by presenting the **legal and policy framework**, whilst providing an overview of the practices relating to the entry and residence of third-country nationals as students. It will specifically describe the changes introduced since 2012. Recently, the law of 10 September 2018⁵ for managed migration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration improved the provisions to **retain international students in France** and provided several changes, by facilitating access to the job market for foreign students through the **creation of a "job seeker or company creation" residence permit**, by **facilitating circular migration for students**, and by transposing the "Students and Researchers" Directive 2016/801. Moreover, a **new attractiveness strategy for international students** was presented by the French Prime Minister on 19 November 2018⁶, based on **six main focuses**: simplifying visa policy, doubling **lessons in French as a foreign language (FLE) and programmes taught in English**, creating a label to improve the quality of reception, applying differentiated tuition fees and tripling student grants, increasing France's presence abroad and launching a global campaign.

The study will then examine the **measures to attract international students, in terms of admission and reception conditions for international students**. It will also study **the incentive measures, as well as external factors with an impact on attractiveness**. The French education system is based on a network of over 3,500 public and private institutions, which operate according to different rationales in terms of attractiveness, hosting and support of international students. Several **challenges and examples of good practice** in attracting international students have been identified based on the reports and interviews and questionnaires carried out with different players. The search for accommodation and the complexity of administrative procedures are the main obstacles faced by international students. We can also sometimes add the feeling of isolation and the difficulty in creating social ties. Several institutions highlight the importance of the reception conditions, including quality administrative services for an international public. Amongst examples of good practices, we can note the focus on the constitution of one-stop shops, as well as the initiatives developed by a number of institutions in terms of the hosting, support and integration for international students.

The third section will look at **the measures and incentives implemented in France to retain international graduates after their studies**. The law of 10 September 2018 for managed migration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration⁷ **improves the measures to retain international students in France** and provides several changes. Alumni, as ambassadors for their former country of study, can play a significant role. The France Alumni network, steered and coordinated by Campus France along with the diplomatic posts, currently brings together 265,000 former students in 105 countries. The Higher Education Institutes, particularly the *grandes écoles*, have also developed their alumni networks. These networks not only play a role in terms of job-seeking support and development of professional networks, but also in the outreach of the French institutions abroad. Whilst the number of international students welcomed to France has increased, they are often **faced with various difficulties in remaining in the country after their studies**. The main challenges identified by private sector representatives concern difficulties due to change of status procedures, file processing times, and difficulties due to non-standardised procedures (in terms of filing modalities, documents requested and processing times) depending on the administrations.

Lastly, the study will present **an overview of the bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements** signed between France and third countries. Amongst the measures announced in the attractiveness plan of 19 November 2018, the Government wants to increase the presence and outreach of France abroad,

⁵ Law no. 2018-778 of 10 September 2018 for managed migration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2018/9/10/INTX1801788L/jo/texte>

⁶ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

⁷ Law no. 2018-778 of 10 September 2018 for managed migration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2018/9/10/INTX1801788L/jo/texte>

by **promoting the installation of French campuses abroad** and by placing higher education at the heart of **French development aid policy**. The establishment of French Higher Education Institutions abroad, and the numerous initiatives developed by the universities and *grandes écoles* in the different regions worldwide, are considered to be good practices, as they promote the institution abroad, meet the needs of de-localised French companies, and meet the education needs of the host country whilst avoiding brain drain and developing the country's attractiveness. The main challenge identified by Higher Education Institutions is due to the **context of global competition, marked by the emergence of new competitors**, whose strategies are notably based on an attractive grants policy for international students.

The **Synthesis report**, carried out at a European level from studies by the National EMN Contact Points, presents an overview of the policies implemented in Member States and Norway, for the purpose of attracting and retaining international students, whilst identifying the main challenges and examples of good practice.

- **Methodology and scope of the study**

The study focuses on third-country nationals who have obtained a **residence permit or long-stay visa for reasons of studies**, and/or are undertaking a **higher education course** (Bachelors, Master or PhD level⁸). The study only focuses on full-time students. It covers the period from 2013-2017 for statistics and 2012-2018 for legislative and policy developments, to take into account changes made as a result of the transposition deadline of the Students and Researchers Directive. For the purposes of this study, the term "**international students**" is used in the meaning of third-country national students from non-EU/EEA countries.

The following categories are excluded from the scope of the study: researchers, part-time students, third-country national family members of EU citizens, vocational post-secondary education students, trainees and apprentices, au pairs and beneficiaries of international protection.

In order to present comparable data between Member States, this study is based on the **International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011)**⁹ from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The ISCED is the **benchmark classification for education systems**, enabling the organisation of educational programmes and corresponding certifications by level of education and area of studies. ISCED 2011 is the second major update to this classification (originally prepared in the 1970s and updated in 1997). It was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in November 2011.

For the purpose of this study, higher education comprises the **levels 5 to 8** of the ISCED, which correspond to the following levels of education:

- Level 5: Short cycle tertiary education;
- Level 6: Bachelor or equivalent;
- Level 7: Master or equivalent;
- Level 8: Doctoral or equivalent.

- **Statistical data on international students in higher education**¹⁰

⁸ It is important to note that the inclusion of PhD students in this study depends on whether they fall within the realm of students at national level.

⁹ UNESCO Statistics Institute, International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED 2011, 2013.
<http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-fr.pdf>

¹⁰ Source: Campus France, Key Figures, August 2018.
http://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/etude_prospect/chiffres_cles/fr/chiffres_cles_fr.pdf

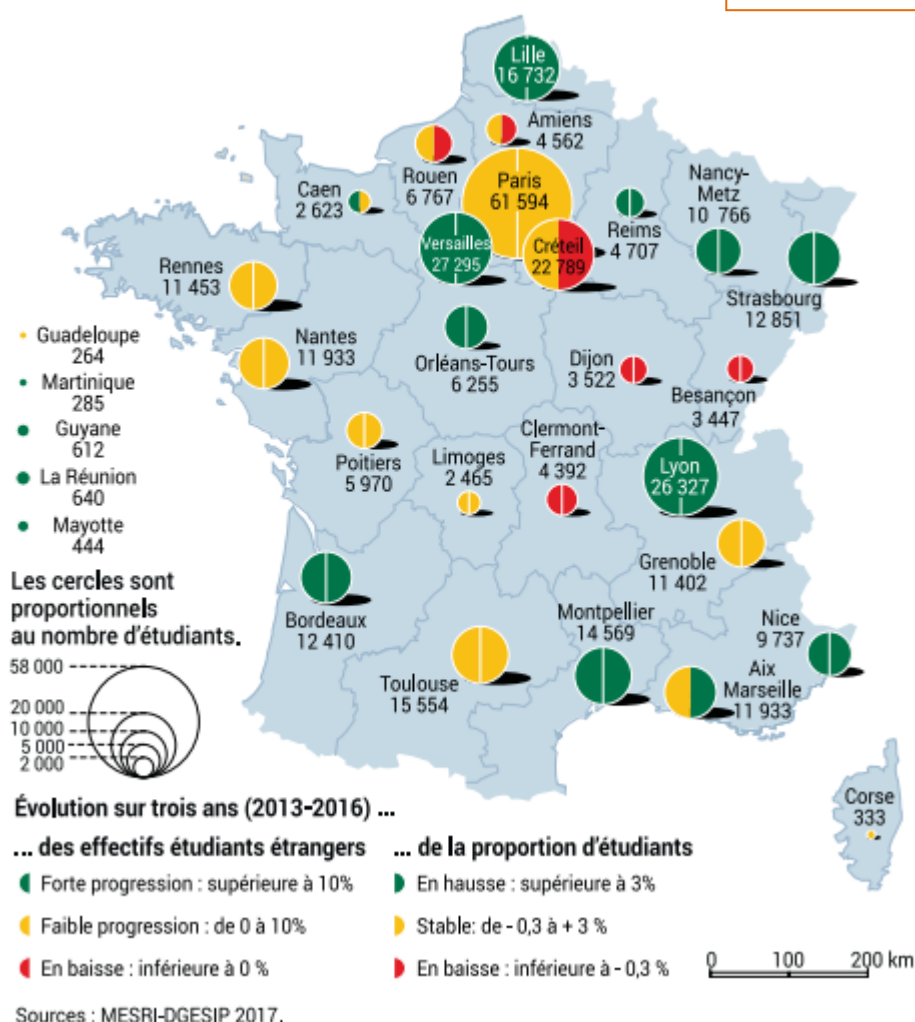
In French higher education for 2016-2017, **324,000 students were of foreign nationality**¹¹, or one in eight. Since 2000, the share of foreign nationals in the student population has gone from 8% to 12%. Three quarters of foreign students study at universities. After a period of stability in the 1990s, the number of foreign students in French higher education increased by 86% from 2000 to 2016, going from 174,600 to 323,900. The very high average annual growth rate between 2000 and 2005 (8.8%) has since become more moderate. It remains higher than that of French students (1.8% compared to 1.2%) between 2005 and 2016¹².

The number of foreign students in France increased by 12.2% over five years (from 2011 to 2016). Almost half (45%) of the students welcomed to France come from the African continent. These are followed by students from the European Union (19%), Asia-Oceania (16%) and the Americas (9%).

For 2016-2017, **three French regions shared 57% of incoming mobility**: Ile-de-France (35%), Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (13%), and Occitanie (9%).

RÉPARTITION DES ÉTUDIANTS ÉTRANGERS PAR ACADÉMIE

BREAKDOWN OF FOREIGN STUDENTS BY ACADEMY



¹¹ The data from the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation concerns all foreign students, without distinguishing between students from the European Union and students from third countries.

¹² Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, The state of Higher Education and Research in France (*L'état de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche en France*), no. 11 - July 2018.

<https://publication.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/eesr/FR/EESR-FR.pdf>

Graph legend:

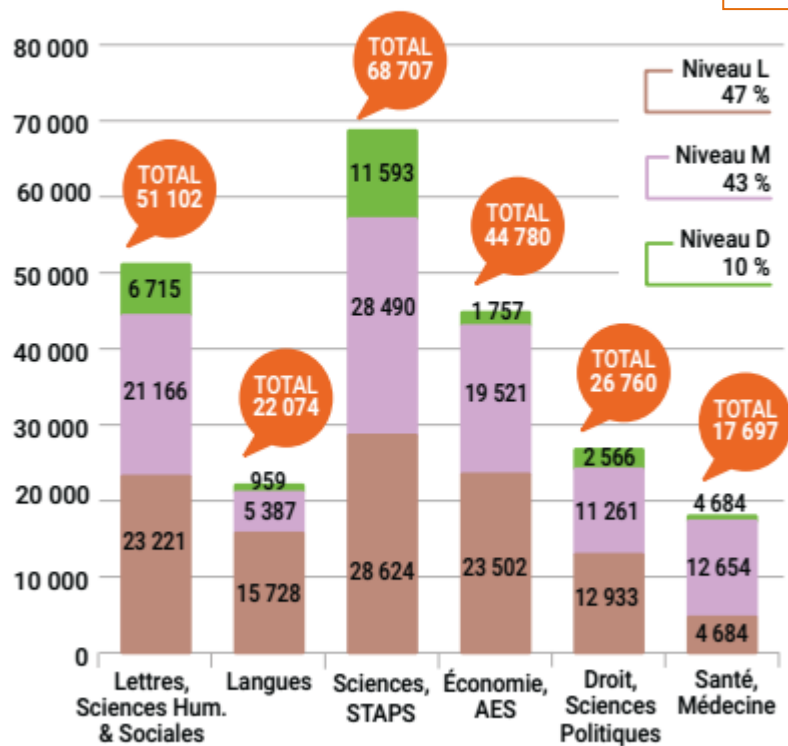
- Les cercles sont proportionnels au nombre d'étudiants: *The circles are proportionate to the number of students.*
- Évolution sur trois ans (2013-2016): *Change over three years (2013-2016)...*
- ... des effectifs étudiants étrangers: *...of the number of foreign students*
- ... de la proportion d'étudiants: *...of the proportion of students*
- Forte progression : supérieure à 10 %: *Strong increase: over 10%*
- En hausse : supérieure à 3 %: *Increase: over 3%*
- Faible progression : de 0 à 10 %: *weak increase: from 0 to 10%*
- Stable : de -0,3 % à +3 %: *Stable: from -0.3 to +3%*

The universities hosted 71% of the foreign students (compared to 76.2% in 2011) but the growth in the number of foreign students in France mainly benefits education courses outside of universities, and particularly *écoles de commerce* (business schools) (+46% in five years) and *écoles d'ingénieurs* (engineering schools) (+30%). The **concentration of enrolments in universities** is particularly strong for students from the **Middle East** and **Sub-Saharan Africa** (respectively 80% and 78.5% of them register there). Students from **Asia-Oceania** (16%) and **South America** (14%) are those that opt the most for courses in **business schools and engineering schools**. In universities, students are firstly enrolled at **Bachelor** (47%), then **Master** (43%) level. 32% chose to follow a course in humanities, languages or human sciences and 30% in so-called "exact" sciences and STAPS (science and technique of physical and sports activities).

41% of PhD level students in France are foreign, which positions France in fourth place behind Switzerland (52%), New Zealand (43%), and the UK (42%).

RÉPARTITION DES ÉTUDIANTS ÉTRANGERS À L'UNIVERSITÉ PAR DISCIPLINE ET PAR NIVEAU (2016-17)

BREAKDOWN OF FOREIGN STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY BY FIELD AND LEVEL (2016-2017)



Graph legend:

- Niveau L: *Bachelor Level*
- Niveau M: *Master Level*
- Niveau D: *Doctorate Level*
- Lettres, sciences humaines et sociales : *Humanities*
- Langues : *Languages*
- Sciences, STAPS : *Science, sports sciences*
- Economie, AES : *Economics, Economic and social administration*
- Droit, sciences politiques : *Law, political sciences*
- Santé, médecine : *Health, Medicine*

Source : MESRI-DGESIP 2017.

Section 1: Presentation of the national legal and policy framework

This section aims to provide an overview of the practices relating to the entry and residence of third-country nationals as students. The focus is on recent changes that have been introduced since 2012¹³.

Q1a. What is the **transposition status** of Directive (EU) 2016/801 in your national law?

- Transposition completed.
- In process: completion of transposition expected by: 1 March 2019

The law no. 2018-778 of 10 September 2018 for managed migration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration¹⁴ transposes the (EU) Directive "Students and Researchers"¹⁵. The provisions of the concerned laws and the application decrees will enter into force on 1st March 2019.

France has made a certain number of transposition choices with regard to international students:

- **On intra-European mobility and the possibility of carrying out part of the studies (or research work) in a second Member State (for a maximum of one year) without having to file a residence permit application**, France has opted to implement a procedure of notification by the hosting entity: there is no provision for the exchange of the residence permit issued by the first Member State, instead the French authorities are informed in advance.
- **With regard to the "job seeker or company creation" residence permit**, its duration has been extended to 12 months (i.e. longer than the minimum imposed by the directive) and access to the job market is simplified if the employment is consistent with the education course and the associated remuneration exceeds 1.5 times the SMIC (minimum wage).
- **With regard to students registered in a course containing mobility measures within another EU Member State, France has provided for the possibility of issuing, as a first issue, a multiannual residence permit for a maximum duration of four years.**

Q1b. Are **doctoral candidates** (PhD students) treated as students or researchers under national law?

- PhD students are treated as students.**
- PhD students are treated as researchers.**

From a regulatory point of view, postgraduates are considered as researchers, once they have obtained a **hosting agreement (*convention d'accueil*)**. **This administrative document stipulates the type and duration of the work entrusted to the researcher or postgraduate.** The beneficiary's resources, accommodation conditions and medical coverage are also stipulated.

After approval from the prefectural authorities, **the hosting agreement must be sent by the hosting institution to the beneficiary.** The researcher or postgraduate must then get it approved by the consular authorities of his/her country of residence at the time of his/her visa request. This procedure

¹³ The latest EMN studies on international students and foreign talents were published in 2012 and 2013. They are available here:

- French Contact Point for the European Migration Network, Immigration of international students in France, September 2012

<https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Europe-et-International/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM3/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM/Etudes2/L-immigration-des-etudiants-etrangers-en-France>

- French Contact Point for the European Migration Network, Attracting Foreign Talents to France, July 2013

<https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/Europe-et-International/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM3/Le-reseau-europeen-des-migrations-REM/Etudes2/Attirer-les-talents-etrangers-en-France>

¹⁴ Law no. 2018-778 of 10 September 2018 for managed migration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2018/9/10/INTX1801788L/jo/texte>

¹⁵ European Parliament and Council Directive (EU) 2016/801 of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (update).

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32016L0801&from=en>

applies if the researcher or postgraduate is employed to conduct research work or give lessons, whatever the type of employment contract: doctoral contract, industrial convention of training by research (CIFRE) or other.

The "**researcher - talent passport**" **long stay visa (VLS)** (*passeport talent - chercheur*) is issued to allow the person to obtain a multiannual "researcher - talent passport" residence permit, valid for an identical duration to the hosting agreement, up to a maximum of four years.

If the foreign national comes to France to follow a postgraduate course within a French university **without financing or with a grant but without a doctoral contract or without an employment contract**, the hosting institution may refuse to issue a hosting agreement. The person must then request a "**student**" long stay visa.

Q1c. What are the **main changes** to: (a) law, (b) policy and (c) practice since 2012 with regard to international students?

- **Law of 7 March 2016 on the rights of foreign nationals in France**¹⁶

The law no. 2016-274 of 7 March 2016 enabled the **generalisation of the multiannual residence permit for the duration of the studies and the issue of the "talent passport" (*passeport talent*) residence permit.**

A debate on professional and student immigration took place on 24 April in the Senate and 13 June in the National Assembly, after prior rich, in-depth consultations with the social partners. Following this debate, and in view of the conclusions of the report of 7 May 2013, it was envisaged to create a new multiannual residence permit designed for foreign talents and issued as a first permit. Similarly, during the High Council on Attractiveness (*Conseil supérieur de l'attractivité*) of 17 February 2014, the initiative to create a "talent passport" was announced by the French President as one of the measures designed to promote France's attractiveness.

The law of 7 March 2016 also **simplified the student path with the creation of the multi-year residence permit.** The foreign national arrives in France with a long stay visa equivalent to a residence permit (VLS-TS). After his/her first year of residence in France, he/she can request the renewal of his/her right to stay and may then benefit from a multiannual residence permit for a duration equivalent to the remaining study cycle, up to a maximum of four years (article L. 313-18 of the Ce on Entry and Residence of Foreign nationals and Right of Asylum (CESEDA)).

• **Access to the employment market facilitated:**

The law of 24 July 2006 on immigration and integration¹⁷ created a temporary residence authorisation (APS) allowing foreign students that have obtained a diploma equivalent to a Master to benefit from a right to stay of six months to look for work as part of a first professional experience. The duration of this APS was extended to one year by the law of 22 July 2013 on higher education and research¹⁸.

Since 1st November 2016, pursuant to the law no. 2016-274 of 7 March 2016 and its application decrees, the issue of a one-year APS was confirmed and now concerns foreign students that hold a diploma of bac + 5 level (Master or level I diploma from the *Conférence des grandes écoles*), a PhD or a Professional Bachelor degree who, following their studies, remain in France to look for employment or create a company, and who are issued with a non-renewable one-year temporary residence authorisation (APS). Consistency with the education course remains necessary to avoid procedural abuse.

¹⁶ Law no. 2016-274 of 7 March 2016 on the rights of foreign nationals in France.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000032164264&categorieLien=id>

¹⁷ Law no. 2006-911 of 24 July 2006 on immigration and integration

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT00000266495>

¹⁸ Law no. 2013-660 of 22 July 2013 on higher education and research

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000027735009&categorieLien=id>

The administrative situation of graduate students who find work at the end of their studies is aligned with that of students who benefit from an APS to look for their first job. In both cases, the employment situation is only valid if there is consistency between the diploma and employment with remuneration at a level set by Council of State decree.

- **A simplification of administrative procedures:**

Since 1st January 2017, pursuant to the law of 7 March 2016 which entrusts to higher education institutions the responsibility of carrying out the preventive health monitoring of foreign students from outside of the European Union, **the students are exempt from the obligation to present a medical certificate to obtain their residence permit and no longer have a medical check-up at the French Office for Immigration and Integration (*Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration - OFII*)**. This simplification avoids travel to the prefecture, as a medical check-up is no longer required to complete the application.

Since the start of the 2015 university year, **one-stop shops for foreign students residing in France have been multiplied in the universities, in connection with the prefectures**. Only a few universities previously offered this type of welcome, which centralises the services required for successful installation and integration: CROUS, prefecture, student mutual health insurance, university healthcare services, *Caisse d'allocations familiales* (family benefit fund - CAF), etc.

A circular of September 2015 implemented cooperation between the prefectures and higher education institutions to organise the filing and processing of applications for "student" residence permits for foreign nationals. This operation led to the signing of conventions to create "remote one-stop shops" with a number of advantages, notably the facilitation of the administrative procedures to issue residence permits for foreign students, and the possibility for the higher education institutions and students to benefit from a quality, targeted service, promoting attractiveness and reputation.

The aim is to improve the welcome conditions of foreign students: the generalisation of these one-stop shops enables foreign students to be directed as soon as they arrive in France. Numerous procedures are now facilitated by the centralisation of information designed to simplify their installation in their host city.

- **The law of 8 March 2018 on orientation and success for students**¹⁹

The law aims to **reform access to the first cycle of higher education and promote student success**. Whilst not directly targeting international students, it involves several changes for all students:

- The law implemented **a new procedure (Parcoursup) for registration in higher education courses**, notably those whose welcome capacities are lower than the number of applications received.
- It also provides for the **attachment of students to the general regime of the Social Security** from the start of the 2018 university year for new students and the start of the 2019 university year for all students. The contribution to the student social security system is cancelled for all students from the start of the 2018 university year.
- The law creates a **single contribution for student life** that merges all contributions related to student life from the start of the 2018 university year (right to preventive medicine, fraction of the rights allocated to the fund for solidarity and the development of student initiatives, optional contribution for sports and cultural activities). Students that receive grants are exempt from the payment of this contribution.

- **The law of 10 September 2018**²⁰ **for managed migration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration**

¹⁹ Law no. 2018-166 of 8 March 2018 on orientation and success for students.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2018/3/8/ESRX1730554L/jo/texte>

²⁰ Law no. 2018-778 of 10 September 2018 for managed migration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration.

The law of 10 September 2018 improves the measures that retain international students in France and provides several changes:

- Facilitated access to the job market for foreign students is reinforced by **the creation of a "job seeker or company creation" residence permit**. It allows students to remain in France for one year after the end of their studies to begin their careers.
 - This new residence permit also aims to **facilitate circular migration for students** by allowing them to return to work in France after their studies for a maximum of four years. Thus, the foreign student that has graduated in France and who has returned to his/her country of origin (or another country) after his/her studies in France, and who then wishes to return to work, has the possibility of benefiting from this deferred right, up to a maximum of four years after obtaining his/her diploma.
 - The law transposes the "Students and Researchers" Directive 2016/801 and enables students under a mobility programme or convention between institutions and researchers **to carry out mobility in France covered by the residence permit from the first EU Member State**.
- **The attractiveness strategy for international students, announced by the Prime Minister on 19 November 2018**

As part of the *Rencontres Universitaires de la Francophonie*, on 19 November in Paris, the French Prime Minister, Edouard Philippe, presented the attractiveness strategy for international students²¹. The new strategy, "**Choose France**", is based on six main focuses:

- **Simplifying visa policy;**
- **Doubling lessons in French as a foreign language (FLE) and in English;**
- **Creating a label to improve the quality of welcome;**
- **Applying differentiated tuition fees and tripling study grants;**
- **Increasing France's presence abroad;**
- **Launching a global campaign.**

The new attractiveness strategy for international students is presented in detail below (see Q1f).

Q1d. Are any changes planned to law/ policy/ practice regarding international students in your Member State?

Regarding the provisions of the directive on a regulatory level, the draft texts carried by the Ministry of the Interior are currently being finalised, in connection with the other ministries concerned. All the measures will enter into force by 1 March 2019 at the latest. Moreover, as new attractiveness drivers were announced recently, legislative and regulatory amendments may be envisaged over the coming months.

Q1e. Is attracting and retaining international students a national policy priority, either within the national migration policies or compared to other national policies?

Yes, this is a policy priority in France.

The policy to attract and retain international students is a priority for France. As part of the *Rencontres Universitaires de la Francophonie*, on 19 November in Paris, the French Prime Minister, Edouard Philippe, presented the **attractiveness strategy for international students**. The Prime Minister recalled the objective pursued by the Government to increase the number of foreign students in France and reinforce the outreach of French higher education abroad. *See Q1c above*.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2018/9/10/INTX1801788L/jo/texte>

²¹ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

Q1f. Does your Member State have a **national strategy**, or a **lower level (e.g. ministerial, regional) strategy**, for attracting and/or retaining international students?

Yes, a national strategy is in place.

France is currently the **fourth host country for international students worldwide**, and the **first non-English speaking host country**²². Its attractiveness is challenged by neighbouring countries (Germany, Russia), by powerful attractiveness hubs (China, Canada) and by new players (Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Netherlands). The number of international students is increasing much faster in these countries than in France. They have developed offensive attractiveness strategies to attract more students, particularly those from Asia and, increasingly, from the African continent²³.

As part of the *Rencontres Universitaires de la Francophonie* which took place on **19 November 2018** in Paris, the French Prime Minister, Edouard Philippe, presented the **new attractiveness strategy for international students**²⁴. The target is to welcome 500,000 international students by 2027. From the start of the 2019 university year, a strategy will be launched to simplify visa policy in association with the Ministry of the Interior, multiply courses in French as a foreign language and English, along with a labelling approach for welcoming foreign students to France and a global communication campaign, under the leadership of Campus France. The creation of a **Support Fund entitled *Bienvenue en France (Welcome to France)*, endowed with ten million euros**, will enable **these actions to be launched in 2019**.

The new **strategy, "Choose France"**, is based on six main focuses:

- **Simplifying visa policy:**

The issue of visas in the students' countries of origin will be simplified, thanks to the **priority given** to students in the processing of visa applications by the consulates, the **recent implementation of the digital portal, France-Visas**²⁵ which improves access to information on the documents required and a better interface with university registrations, and lastly **the externalisation to external service providers** in order to facilitate application collection.

The first year, the foreign students benefit from a **long-stay visa equivalent to a residence permit (VLS-TS)**. From mid-2019, the visa validation could take place **in dematerialised form**, on an internet platform, avoiding the need for students to go to the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII). Students may then request a **student residence permit**, in the form of a multiannual residence permit for the entire remaining duration of their committed study cycle.

To facilitate the process of obtaining these permits, students can go to delocalised one-stop shops set up in the universities, or dedicated one-stop shops in the prefectures.

From March 2019, foreign students that have obtained a Master-level diploma in France, and who returned to their country of origin, can benefit from a **residence permit to come back to France and look for work**. This measure, from the law of 10 September 2018, aims to **promote circular mobility**, in accordance with the commitment made by the French President in his speech in Ouagadougou on 28 November 2017.

- **Doubling lessons in French as a foreign language (FLE) and programmes taught in English:**

²² Campus France, Key Figures, August 2018.

http://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/etude_prospect/chiffres_cles/fr/chiffres_cles_fr.pdf

²³ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

²⁴ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

²⁵ <https://france-visas.gouv.fr/>

On the one hand, the aim is to **double the number of students benefiting from intensive education in French as a foreign language**. The targeted students come more precisely from **emerging, mainly non-French speaking countries**.

On the other hand, the aim is to double the number of students benefiting from programmes taught in English.

- **Creating a label to improve the quality of welcome:**

The quality of the welcome for international students is a fundamental challenge for internationalisation and the attractiveness of French higher education. To meet the need to improve and standardise the welcome conditions for international students across French higher education sites, the Government intends to launch a **label**, entitled "**Bienvenue en France**" (**Welcome to France**). It will be issued by Campus France to institutions wanting to make visible their efforts made to improve welcome measures and actions. The labelling campaign will start in January 2019. All Forum Campus France members are eligible and can apply to Campus France. The label will be issued according to **four levels of overall quality**, symbolised by a scale of 1 to 4 stars. A set of 20 indicators will be taken into account, to describe:

- The **quality and access to information**, the **quality and accessibility of welcome measures**;
- **Support and preparation for learning**;
- **Accommodation and quality of life on campus**;
- The **quality of socio-professional insertion** and **post-graduate monitoring**.

Institutions that have obtained the label can promote it on their communication supports.

Around one hundred higher education institutions have already applied for this label.

- **Applying differentiated tuition fees and tripling study grants:**

As part of the welcome and attractiveness strategy, international students that are not nationals of a country in the European Economic Area or Switzerland and who enrol for the first time in a higher education cycle in France will be required to pay **differentiated tuition fees, from the start of the 2019 university year**, for greater fairness. These fees will be **2,770 euros for a Bachelor and 3,770 euros for a Master and PhD**, or less than one-third of the real cost of the education. The real cost to the State for a student is estimated to be around 10,000 euros per year. [See Q4d](#)

In parallel, the strategic attractiveness plan provides for **numerous cases of exemption**, as well as the **tripling of the number of grants offered to international students**. In total, one international student in four could benefit from an exemption or a grant.

- **Increasing France's presence abroad:**

The aim is to **support the physical installation of French institutions abroad**. Today, there are around 140 installations abroad. In his speech of 20 March 2018 on French language and *francophonie*, the French President set **the target of doubling the number of students benefiting from the French educational offering abroad**. The policy aiming to **intensify the projection of French universities and schools abroad has two objectives: increase the outreach of French higher education**, by multiplying the education capacities of French institutions abroad; **and reinforce the development aid policy**, by offering young people in France's partner countries the possibility of following the courses offered by French institutions without having to leave their own country.

- **Launching a global campaign:**

To implement the **Choose France strategy**, the Government will be supported by a **global communication campaign from 2019**, with the aim of maintaining France's attractiveness with its current partners and developing awareness of studies in France in countries where it is less well-known. This communication campaign, that aims to diffuse the message **Choisissez la France / Choose France**, is conducted by Campus France with support from the diplomatic network. It will be based on a variety of supports and channels. This campaign will focus on:

- **A geographical target**, including **three main zones**: French-speaking zone, major emerging countries (notably in Asia), and English-speaking Africa;
- **Mobility at Master / PhD level**;
- **Digital tools**: to adapt to the targeted audience, the campaign will be supported by digital tools and the social networks.

Moreover, **the higher education institutions** (universities and *grandes écoles*) are developing their own international opening strategies, as part of the institutions' overall strategies. The law of 10 August 2007 on the freedoms and responsibilities of universities²⁶, known as the LRU law, which aimed to transfer the budgetary and financial management of their institutions to the universities (up to then carried out by the State) and to reform their governance, granted universities autonomy allowing them to develop a real international strategy.

Q1g. Does your Member State target **specific fields of studies/subject areas** (outside bilateral/multilateral cooperation) as regards the attraction and/or retention of international students? If so, please briefly elaborate on the reasons why these fields of studies/subject areas are targeted.

No specific fields of studies are targeted.

It is the **level of studies (Master and PhD)** that is targeted by the attractiveness strategy.

Q2. Is there a current or recent **public debate** (i.e. within the past year) with regard to international students in your Member State (e.g. in Parliament, media, etc.)?

Yes, there is a public debate at national level.

The new measures announced on 19 November 2018 by the French Prime Minister to increase France's attractiveness for foreign students includes the increase of tuition fees for students from third countries. This question has already been the subject of several debates over the last few years, mainly looking at the correlation between the amount of fees and the teaching quality²⁷. The Government aims to implement a "differentiated strategy" based on an increase in tuition fees for students from third countries, whilst increasing the offer of grants available and the cases of exemption. It plans to triple the number of grant programmes for international students.

This announcement provoked heated reactions from the student and high school student unions, concerned about a generalised increase in tuition fees in the long term. Foreign students, particularly from Africa, expressed concern over "selective immigration" that restricts access to the poorest foreign students. Lastly, several university representatives expressed their opposition to this measure, fearing a decline in the attractiveness of their institutions.

Given the recent announcement of these new measures, it would appear that the debates are likely to continue over the coming weeks and months, both on the question of tuition fees and on welcome conditions.

Q3. What is the **structure and governance of the national higher education system** in your Member State?

French higher education is characterised by the existence of two systems with very different access modalities: the universities and *grandes écoles*. These institutions may be public or private. Most of the public higher education institutions are under the authority of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI), with the exception of certain specialist institutions such as the art and architecture schools that come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, and education in agronomics, agriculture and the environment that are under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture.

²⁶ Law no. 2007-1199 of 10 August 2007 on the freedoms and responsibilities of universities.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT00000824315>

²⁷ See section 3.1.e) of the study by the French Contact Point for the EMN in 2012 on foreign students: French Contact Point for the EMN, Immigration of international students in France, September 2012

<https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/content/download/37108/280437/file/2-Etude-du-REM-immigration-etudiants-etranagers-France-publication.pdf>

France has over 3,500 public and private higher education institutions: 72 universities, 25 communities of universities and institutes, 271 post-graduate schools, 227 engineering schools authorised to issue the title of graduate engineer, 220 business and management schools, 45 public higher arts schools, 22 architecture schools and 3,000 private schools and institutes.

Q3a. Is there a specific **public entity(ies)** at national level which is responsible for international students in regards to their studies and what are they competent for? What is its role in the application process/supervision of these students?

The **Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI)** is responsible for missions relating to higher education, for all students in France. **The higher education institutions** (universities and *grandes écoles*) are responsible for assessing the applications and ensuring the monitoring of the international students.

Q3b. Do migration authorities cooperate with HEIs? If yes, in what ways do they cooperate? Is there an institutionalised cooperation mechanism?

Yes, migration authorities cooperate with the higher education institutions.

In order to improve the reception of foreign students, **conventions have been signed between the prefectures and the higher education institutions** to create **one-stop shops**. The instruction of 3 September 2015 on improving the welcome conditions for foreign students²⁸ underlines that the cooperation between the prefectures and higher education institutions to organise the filing and processing of applications for "student" residence permits for foreign nationals is a **way of improving the welcome for these populations**, whilst improving attractiveness. The regulatory section of the CESEDA was amended by decree no.2015-938 of 30 July 2015²⁹ to enable, from 1 September 2015, the foreign student who completes his/her administrative procedures for residence with the higher education institution, to be issued with the residence permit by the prefecture of the department in which the institution is located, wherever the place of residence of the person concerned may be. The instruction encourages the development of multi-service welcome platforms for foreign students, if the volume justifies it, as part of partnership conventions between the prefectures and the institutions.

Q3c. Is there an approval procedure³⁰ in place in your Member State for public/private HEIs for the purpose of hosting international students? If so, are international students only allowed to study in those HEIs?

No

There are no approval procedures in France.

Q3d. Is higher education for third-country nationals funded by the state (i.e. state-sponsored) in your Member State?

Yes, higher education is state-sponsored for third country nationals.

Higher education, research and innovation are priorities for the Government. During the start of 2018-2019 student year conference, which took place on 25 September 2018 at Paris-Sud University (Orsay), the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Frédérique Vidal, presented the budget allocated to higher education in 2019, confirming that the Ministry will have reinforced resources³¹. In 2019, the budget for the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI) will reach **€25.1**

²⁸ NOR Instruction: INTV1518417 of 3 September 2015 from the Government on improving the welcome conditions for foreign students.

²⁹ NOR decree: INTV1505488D no. 2015-938 of 30 July 2015 making different amendments to the right to stay for foreign nationals.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/decret/2015/7/30/INTV1505488D/jo>

³⁰ Article 15 of the Students and Researchers Directive

³¹ Speech by the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Frédérique Vidal, during the start of the 2018-2019 student year conference, on 25 September 2018 at Paris-Sud University (Orsay).

billion, up by €549 million compared to the initial 2018 budget. Since the start of the five-year electoral term, the MESRI's resources have increased by €1.3 billion, or 5.3%³².

In its report on the state of higher education and research³³, the MESRI conducted a comparative analysis of expenditure on higher education in the OECD countries. In 2014, expenditure per student in France is close to that of the OECD with 1.5% of GDP dedicated to higher education. It is in front of European countries such as Spain (1.3%), Germany (1.2%) or Italy (1.0%), but is distanced by the UK (1.8%), Finland (1.8%) and the Netherlands (1.7%). For all OECD countries, average expenditure per student grew by 6% between 2010 and 2014. In France, over the same period, it was slightly down, with education expenditure changing at a slightly slower pace than the number of students.

It is more **difficult to estimate the budget allocated specifically to international students**. In a study on the economic contribution of foreign students to life in the country, launched by Campus France and entrusted to BVA Institute, **the cost for France of educating foreign students was estimated in 2014 at €2.843 billion in annual costs for the 295,084 foreign students**³⁴. This amount is calculated based on the annual higher education budget, which is €23 billion for 2,387,000 students registered in all types of higher education institutions, or €9,635 allocated on average per student. The study clarifies, however, that "this figure is considerably higher than the real additional cost resulting from the presence of foreign students in French higher education, as the true cost is not the total cost but the marginal cost, which corresponds to the additional expenditure and not the current expenditure which is difficult to compress".

³² Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Press Kit, Start of 2018-2019 student year, September 2018. http://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/Rentree_universitaire_2018-2019/23/3/Rentree2018_DP_1005233.pdf

³³ Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, The state of Higher Education and Research in France (*L'état de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche en France*), no. 11 - July 2018. <https://publication.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/eesr/FR/EESR-FR.pdf>

³⁴ Campus France, Beyond the influence: the economic contribution of foreign students in France, Les notes no. 45, November 2014. http://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/agence_cf/notes/fr/note_45_fr.pdf

Section 2: Measures and incentives to attract international students

This section examines the measures and incentives to **attract** international students in terms of admission conditions, hosting and welcoming international students. It will also study the incentive measures, as well as external factors with an impact on attractiveness. Lastly, the main challenges and examples of good practices in attracting international students will be presented in detail, based on interviews carried out with the different players.

2.1 Admission conditions for international students

Q4a. Which are the common immigration **admission conditions** applicable for all international students determined by the immigration authorities for the purpose of residence in the territory of your Member State?

The **admission conditions** for international students in France are covered in the following questions (Q4b to Q4i).

Q4b. Is a proof of **acceptance** by HEI required in your Member State in order to obtain the visa/residence permit?

Yes

The **visa application**, filed with the French consulate of the country of residence, must notably contain **a certificate of enrolment or pre-enrolment in a public or private higher education or professional training institution** operating under conditions that comply with current legal and regulatory provisions. This certificate must indicate the level of studies. For enrolments in private institutions, the certificate must also indicate the number of lessons followed and certify that all the tuition fees for the school year have been paid.

To support his/her **application for a "student" residence permit**, the foreign national must present a registration, enrolment or pre-enrolment certificate in a public or private higher education or initial education institution, or a certificate of enrolment or pre-enrolment in a professional training organisation, or a certificate proving that he/she benefits from a European Union cooperation programme in the areas of education, training or young people (Article R. 313-7 of the CESEDA).

Q4c. How is the **academic recognition** of foreign academic degrees regulated in your Member State? Is this done in a centralised manner (e.g. by a specific organisation) or by each HEI?

Recognition of degrees is carried out centrally.

- **A certificate issued by the ENIC-NARIC France centre**

The **ENIC-NARIC France centre**, reporting to the *Centre international d'études pédagogiques*, is the national centre of expertise and information on the academic recognition of foreign diplomas.

Applications for the recognition of studies carried out abroad are individual and made **exclusively on-line**. The certificate issued by the ENIC-NARIC France centre is an aid for reading the academic paths carried out abroad, and may facilitate the administrative procedures of individuals who wish to continue their studies or enter the employment market in France (non-regulated professions). It is, however, important to underline that the institutions and employers in France remain independent in their recruitment or enrolment decisions. The certificate from the ENIC-NARIC France centre is **an official non-legally binding document**.

The **procedure is completely dematerialised**. The procedure is subject to a fee (€70 for the expertise of a maximum of two diplomas). The maximum processing time is four months. However, in 2017, 85% of requests were processed within one month.

- **Changes that have occurred since 2012**

Several major changes have taken place since 2012. The procedure for recognition requests has been **completely dematerialised since May 2014**. Requests by post are no longer accepted. Dematerialisation has enabled **greater efficiency and better capitalisation of the expertises carried out**. Since it was implemented, over 80% of requests are processed within less than one month. The remaining requests are processed within a maximum of four months. These are requests that require more research or for which the ENIC-NARIC France centre has not received replies from the competent authorities.

The dematerialised platform is a knowledge data base that promotes not only the capitalisation of answers, but also enables **more detailed statistical monitoring**.

Since 2013, the ENIC-NARIC France centre has also set up a **telephone platform** which enables the significant flow of calls to be dealt with (over 40,000 calls received in 2017).

- **Examples of good practices implemented**

The ENIC-NARIC France centre is constantly changing its practices and procedures. Whilst the implementation of dematerialisation was significant progress, it is now necessary to adapt in order to reinforce its efficiency and expertise. Over the last five years, we note an increase of over 20% on average in the number of requests. Within this increase, requests from refugees doubled since the end of 2015, going from 1,582 requests in 2015 to 3,117 in 2017.

The ENIC-NARIC France centre is also working on a new procedure for refugees and asylum seekers who do not have any documents certifying their academic level. This new procedure is based on the expertise of the "European Qualifications Passport for Refugees" (EQPR)³⁵ set up by the Council of Europe with the aim of helping refugees that had to leave their country without documents proving their academic path to continue their studies or work in the host country.

- **The main challenges encountered**

The main challenge faced by the ENIC-NARIC France centre is the **increase in the requests for the recognition of foreign diplomas**.

Q4d. What are the level of tuition fees for third-country nationals in your Member State?

The annual amount for tuition fees in public higher education institutions under the Ministry of Higher Education is **set by order**. **For 2018-2019, the tuition fees were €170 for a Bachelor (Licence), €243 for a Master and €380 for a PhD³⁶ for all students**.

University tuition fees in France are currently amongst the lowest noted on an international scale. As part of the welcome and attractiveness strategy announced on 19 November 2018 (*see Q1c*), **international students that are not nationals of a country in the European Economic Area or Switzerland** and who enrol for the first time in a higher education cycle in France will be required to pay **differentiated tuition fees, from the start of the 2019 school year**. These will be **€2,770 for a Bachelor and €3,770 for a Master and PhD**, or less than one-third of the real cost of the education.

The tuition fees for the *Grandes Écoles* and private institutions are **set by the institutions themselves**. They generally reach €3,000 to €10,000 per year.

- **Is evidence of payment of tuition fees an admission condition?**

The situation **differs according to the type of institution** (public or private institution). The visa application file must include a certificate of enrolment or pre-enrolment in a public or private higher education or professional training institution. For registrations in private institutions, the certificate must also certify that all the tuition fees for the school year have been paid.

- **Are the tuition fees capped? (with a higher/lower threshold)**

³⁵ <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/education/recognition-of-refugees-qualifications>

³⁶ NOR order: ESRS1820223A of 21 August 2018 setting the tuition fees for public higher education institutions under the Ministry of Higher Education.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000037359652>

Yes

Tuition fees are capped in the public higher education institutions that come under the Ministry of Higher Education.

- Are the fees for international students the same as those for French students? If no, what is the difference?

No

As part of the **new measures** announced on 19 November 2018, to **reinforce the attractiveness of France for international students**, international students that are not nationals of a country in the European Economic Area or Switzerland and who enrol for the first time in a higher education cycle in France will be required to pay **differentiated tuition fees, from the start of the 2019 university year**, for greater fairness. *See above.*

University tuition fees in France are currently **amongst the lowest noted on an international scale**. In France, the real cost to the State for a student is estimated to be around 10,000 euros per year. The new tuition fees announced (€2,770 in Bachelor and €3,770 in Master and PhD courses) correspond to **a third of the real cost of the education**. Despite this increase, the amount of tuition fees in France remains lower than the amounts charged by the most attractive countries on a global level³⁷.

This new strategy, combining an increase in tuition fees, an improvement of the welcome and the tripling of the grant programmes, aims to **attract more international students looking for quality teaching**. The new resources received by the higher education institutions can contribute to implementing attractiveness and outreach policies, as well as **to improving the welcome conditions for international students**³⁸.

Faced with the numerous debates raised by the announcement of the increase in tuition fees for foreign students from outside of the European Union, in January 2019, the Ministry of Higher Education instructed a working group to open discussions on the welcome of international students, which should conclude mid-February. The mission letter should result in ten commitments, covering notably the issue of visas and residence permits, access to accommodation, the place for teaching in foreign languages, and the implementation of a single, personalised contact for all international students. The current ceiling that sets the level of exemption from tuition fees at 10% of registered students (excluding grant students) could also be reviewed³⁹. The Ministry of Higher Education has assured that it is up to each university and school to affirm its attractiveness strategy and decide if an international student, due to his/her specific situation, is likely or not to pay differentiated tuition fees.

- Are specific groups of international students exempt from fees? Which ones and why?

Yes

Within the framework of bilateral agreements with foreign institutions, the universities and schools have the option of stipulating that the students welcomed pay the same level of tuition fees as European students, subject to reciprocal agreements. The cooperation agreements between French and foreign institutions are, therefore, particularly important, as they allow for the exemption from tuition fees on both sides, when this item is included in the agreement⁴⁰.

Students who are refugees or benefit from subsidiary protection are also exempt from these fees.

Q4e. What is the level of **administrative fees** for third-country nationals in your Member State? Please elaborate also on other types of fees (e.g. administrative fees at universities)

³⁷ Interviews carried out with representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI), November 2018 and with representatives of Campus France, December 2018

³⁸ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

³⁹ At the date of drafting of this study, the information about this discussion had not been clarified further.

⁴⁰ Interview with representatives of Campus France, December 2018.

All fees are included in the tuition fees. Since the start of the 2018-2019 university year, students must also pay a **student and campus life contribution (*cotisation vie étudiante et de campus - CVEC*)**, of €90. The CVEC concerns **French and foreign** students who follow an **initial education course in a public or private higher education institution**. Some students are exempt from the payment of the Student and Campus Life contribution, notably **students who are refugees or benefit from subsidiary protection** and who have registered as **asylum seekers**. **Foreign students conducting a mobility period as part of an agreement** between their original institution and their higher education institution in France are also exempt.

From the start of the 2018 university year, the annual right representing the contribution of students to **higher education preventive medicine is included in the CVEC amount**.

From the 2018-2019 university year, there **will no longer be a contribution to student social security**. (See Q4g).

Q4f. Are international students required to provide a proof of sufficient **knowledge of the language of the course**? If so, what is the required level? Does the student have to provide an attestation?

Yes, proof of sufficient knowledge of the language of the course is required in general.

Yes, an attestation is required for all courses. This obligation, however, depends on the level of studies and the language the course is taught in.

International students must prove they have **sufficient knowledge of French language**. The required level and modalities **depend on the level of studies and the language the course is taught in**.

- **First registration in the first year:**

In accordance with article D. 612-12 of the French Education Code, **third country nationals that apply for a first registration in the first year of a Bachelor degree** must prove that they have a level of understanding of French adapted to the envisaged course. This level is checked by an exam, the **test of knowledge of French for the prior admission application**, or TCF for the DAP (*test de connaissance du français pour la demande d'admission préalable*).

Several categories are **exempt from this obligation**, notably students that hold a French *baccalauréat*, foreign nationals with grants from the French Government, foreign nationals who have grants from international organisations or foreign governments for which the grants are managed by an approved French organisation, stateless persons, refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, children of diplomats in post in France and who live in the country themselves. The following are also exempt from the test of knowledge of understanding of French: nationals of countries where French is the exclusive official language; applicants living in a country where French is the exclusive official language and who hold a secondary end of studies diploma in a country where French is the exclusive official language; applicants who, although they live in a country where French is not the only official language, for whom the secondary education was conducted, for the most part, in French. The following are also exempt from this test: holders of one of the diplomas of knowledge of French from the Ministry of Higher Education of a level equal to or exceeding level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

- **Renewal of registration or registration in another study cycle:**

With regard to those students who wish to register in the second or third year of a Bachelor, in a Master in a PhD or in an institution that accepts admission based on an exam or qualifications, the institutions and universities are responsible for **deciding if their level of understanding of French is compatible with the envisaged course** (article D. 612-17 of the French Education Code).

In general, the higher education institutions require **at least level B2 for a Bachelor and a level B2 or C1 for a Master**, corresponding to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages⁴¹

⁴¹ *The Common European Framework of Reference: learning, teaching, assessment* was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and exhaustive basis for drafting language programmes, with guidelines for curricula, teaching and learning materials and to assess foreign language skills. It describes foreign language skills with six levels, from A1 to C2.

(CEFR). Some French higher education institutions may require a higher level, C1 or C2, for specific courses.

The Ministry of Education offers a wide range of **certificates in French as a foreign language (diplomas and tests)** to validate skills in French, from the initial learning to the most advanced levels. These certificates are harmonised on the six level scale of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (from A1 to C2). The **Diploma of French Language Studies (Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française - DELF)** covers the first four levels (A1 to B2). The **Diploma of Proficiency in French (Diplôme approfondi de langue française - DALF)** covers the last two levels (C1 and C2). The diplomas are independent and are valid indefinitely.

Q4g. Are international students automatically qualified for health insurance?

Yes, students automatically qualify for health insurance.

Up to the law of 8 March 2018 on orientation and success for students⁴², students were affiliated to the student social security regime. This law ends the student social security regime from 1 September 2018. It now provides for students to be affiliated to the **general social security regime**, in order to guarantee the same quality of access to healthcare as for the rest of the population. A transition phase is planned for the 2018-2019 period, only for new students. At the start of the 2019 university year, all foreign students from third countries will be affiliated to the general social security regime. In terms of procedures, the third country national students must first register with their higher education institution, then request their affiliation to the French general social security regime.

From the 2018-2019 university year, there will no longer be a contribution to student social security. The student social security regime will completely disappear from 31 August 2019.

In view of their arrival in France for their studies, foreign students must request their affiliation to the French social security system by registering on the healthcare insurance (*assurance maladie*) site dedicated to the welcome of foreign students⁴³, in order to benefit from the reimbursement of health care expenses when they arrive in France. This site is available in French and English. During the on-line registration process, several documents are requested, including a valid residence permit and registration in a higher education institution for the concerned university year, in order to certify their student status. A temporary social security number is automatically allocated by the site, giving immediate access to the reimbursement of health care expenses by the French social security system.

Q4h. Is there a pre-determined level of sufficient resources for international students at national level? If so, what is the level of sufficient resources and what type of resources are accepted?

Yes

- What is the level of sufficient resources and what documents are accepted as proof?

Article R. 313-7 of the CESEDA stipulates that the student must **prove sufficient resources for existence**, corresponding at least to the level of the basic monthly maintenance grant paid to students with grants from the French Government, i.e. **€615**⁴⁴.

Holders of grants from foreign governments or the French Government are considered as having proof of sufficient resources for existence, whatever the amount of their grant.

- What types of resources are accepted in France?

⁴² Law no. 2018-166 of 8 March 2018 on orientation and success for students.

https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=403292955690E2FEFDB3C630645CBCEC.tplgfr23s_3?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000036683777&categorieLien=id

⁴³ etudiant-etranger.ameli.fr

⁴⁴ The circular NOR IOCL1130031C of 21 November 2011 on the modalities for the application of decree no. 2011-1049 of 6 September 2011 taken in application of the law no. 2011-672 of 16 June 2011 on immigration, integration and nationality and on residence permits of 21 November 2011 stipulates that "in application of the decision by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 9 July 2003, the monthly resources required by foreign students are 615 euros".

https://juridique.defenseurdesdroits.fr/doc_num.php?explnum_id=6313

- Bank statements**
- Guarantee by a third person**
- Other**

The type of resources that can be presented by the student is not specified by the CESEDA. Under these conditions, we can consider that the applicant's own resources (including grants) or resources drawn from any activity can be taken into account.

The following can also be taken into account:

- housing benefits (CAA Bordeaux, 13 October 2011, Ms. Nan Ding);
- family allowances (CE, 8 November 1991, no. 102394, Ms. Niat);
- statement of financial responsibility from a third party, if this proves the real, serious and regular nature of the resources (CE, No. 327338, 23/02/2011, Ms. Rudzevich).

Due to their nature and objectives, social benefits that meet a specific objective (for example, young child benefit) cannot be taken into account. Students cannot benefit from the RSA or indemnities paid by *Pôle Emploi* (job centre). Lastly, the student may **prove by any means that they have sufficient resources** (bank statements showing regular transfers, pay slips, third party statements, etc.).

2.2 Measures and incentives to attract international students

Q5. Please indicate which of the incentives listed below (Q5a-Q5i) are in place in your Member State.

Q5a. Does your Member State carry out **promotional activities and dissemination of information in the countries of origin?**

- Yes, carried out nationally**
- Yes, carried out by higher education institutions**

One of the focuses of the new attractiveness strategy for international students concerns **the launch of a global communication campaign from 2019**, in order to "maintain France's level of attractiveness with its current partners and develop awareness of studies in France in countries where it is less well-known"⁴⁵. Under the responsibility of Campus France and with support from the diplomatic network, this communication campaign will use a variety of supports and channels, in order to diffuse the message **Choisissez la France / Choose France**. It will focus on:

- **A geographical target**, including **three main zones**: French-speaking zone, major emerging countries (notably in Asia), and English-speaking Africa;
- **Mobility at Master / PhD level**;
- **Digital tools**: to adapt to the targeted audience and local uses, the campaign will be supported by digital tools and the social networks. The Campus France offices and the French higher education alumni will be the main vectors.

- **The promotion and diffusion activities organised by Campus France in the countries of origin**⁴⁶

Campus France is a public organisation under the dual responsibility of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI). The Agency is

⁴⁵ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

⁴⁶ Interview with representatives of Campus France, December 2018

tasked with **promoting French higher education abroad** and welcoming foreign students and researchers to France. It encourages international mobility, manages grant programmes and coordinates the alumni network.

In 2017, the **network of Campus France offices worldwide** represented 256 Campus France Offices and Branches, located in 123 countries⁴⁷. Integrated into the French cultural network, the Campus France Offices and Branches are the **action relay for the Agency throughout the world**. The Campus France Offices agents come under the authority of the diplomatic Posts and specifically under the authority of the Cooperation and Cultural Action Advisors. The Offices have the main task of **promoting French higher education** to students in the countries in which they are located. They provide **information and advice to students who wish to come to study in France**, with whom they have a direct contact in the country. They advise them on the courses that exist in France and support them with their study projects and in their administrative procedures before departure.

The information supports are very varied: information brochures and sheets (for example, over thirty city sheets presenting the services in the city where the student is going to study), internet site, videos, social networks, etc. The information is available in French, English, and Spanish, and sometimes Arabic. The Offices also do translation work into the country's language. The information provided concerns the different stages of the stay for foreign students in France: from preparing the departure (budget, accommodation, etc.) to their arrival in France and during their stay.

The **internet sites and social networks** (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) are developed both at head office and each Office level. The internet site of Campus France⁴⁸ is available in three languages (English, French, and Spanish). The internet sites of the Campus France Offices are translated into the country's language. The Campus France Offices adapt their communication as much as possible, thanks to their knowledge of the audience and the country. The use of social networks is different for each Office, depending on the country, in order to adapt to the audience.

Every year, Campus France organises a number of **events worldwide, to promote French higher education (for example, conferences, country days, forums and encounters, etc.)**. Larger scale promotion operations may be implemented in certain countries or geographical zones. In 2017, 55 operations were carried out by Campus France, including 13 in Asia and 11 in the Americas zone. Over 300 French higher education institutions took part in these events in France and abroad, with over 1,200 participations recorded in all⁴⁹. Participation in the different events enables higher education institutions to not only directly meet the students and inform them, but also to facilitate meetings between French higher education institutions and their counterparts abroad, in order to sign cooperation agreements. Amongst the major promotion operations organised by Campus France in 2017, are:

- In **Sub Saharan Africa**, the East Africa Caravan (Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia), from 16 to 24 March 2017: 6,000 visitors crossed the route of the first East Africa Caravan, organised by the French Embassies in Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia and by the Campus France Agency. As part of *the Journée de la Francophonie*, this operation brought together 11 French institutions and representatives of local universities.
- In **Asia**, *Admission Tour and PhD Tour India*, in Delhi, Calcutta, Bangalore, Indore, from 25 February to 2 March 2017: 39 institutions and 11 doctoral schools took part in this operation focusing for the first time on **PhDs**⁵⁰.

- **The promotion and diffusion activities organised by French higher education institutions in the countries of origin**

As part of their strategy of opening up internationally, the French higher education institutions (universities and *grandes écoles*) carry out different promotion and diffusion strategies in the countries of origin: participation in student forums, presence of offices abroad, etc.

⁴⁷ Source: Campus France, 2017 Activity Report, March 2018.

http://ressources.campusfrance.org/agence_cf/rapports_activites/fr/rapport_activite2017_fr.pdf

⁴⁸ <https://www.campusfrance.org/fr>

⁴⁹ Source: Campus France, 2017 Activity Report, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Source: *Idem*.

Q5b. Are scholarships and bursaries available?

- Yes, provided by the State.**
- Yes, provided by the higher education institutions.**
- Yes, provided by private entities.**

The strategic attractiveness plan, presented on 19 November 2018, provides for the tripling of the number of grants offered to international students:

- **15,000 French Government study grants** (compared to 7,000 currently), issued by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE). These concern primarily students from North Africa and African countries. These grants may be financial aid or exemption grants, depending on the situations.
- **6,000 university or school grants**, issued by the institutions on the basis of criteria consistent with their partnership and attractiveness strategies. These grants may be cash aid or exemption grants. In parallel, international PhD students may benefit from specific support programmes that confirm the attractiveness of research laboratories.

Numerous grant programmes are offered to foreign students to help them finance their studies in France. These grants may be allocated by the State, by higher education institutions, by local authorities, by the private sector, by foreign governments, or by the Erasmus+ programme.

1) The different grant programmes

- **Grants from the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE)**

The MEAE allocates numerous grants to foreign students. 25% of these grants are directly financed by the Ministry as part of the Eiffel (for Master and PhD level programmes) or Major programmes (designed for the best foreign baccalaureate level students in the French lycées abroad). The rest is covered by the French Embassies abroad.

Grants from the French Embassies abroad

French Government grants are allocated by the MEAE for studies, work placements or language courses in France. Most of them are allocated by the Cooperation and Cultural Action services in the French Embassies or Consulates abroad.

For example, the "Charpak" excellence study grants from the French Embassy in India are allocated to young Indian students of Bachelor and Master level, in all university subjects. Three types of grants are proposed:

- excellence grants as part of a Master, including a monthly subsistence allocation of 700 euros, healthcare, exemption from visa expenses, and exemption from tuition fees up to 5,000 euros;
- grants as part of a short duration exchange programme (one semester) at Bachelor or Master level, including a monthly subsistence allocation of 615 euros, healthcare, and exemption from visa expenses;
- and grants for short placements in research laboratories, designed for students in economics, engineering and natural sciences, including a monthly grant of 310 euros for a maximum of three months, exemption from visa expenses, and healthcare.

The Eiffel excellence grants

The Eiffel excellence grant programme, **Master level**, launched in January 1999 by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, is designed to support the international recruitment actions by French higher education

institutions, in a context of increased competition between developed countries to attract the best foreign students. In 2005, this system was completed by the **PhD level**, designed for high level PhD students.

This system enables future foreign decision-makers to be trained in the public and private sectors, in four priority study areas (science, economics-management, law and political science) and to stimulate applications from **students from emerging countries (in priority from Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the new members of the European Union) aged up to 30 for the Master level and students from emerging and industrialised countries, and aged up to 35 for the PhD level.**

For the Master level, the grant is for **1,181 euros per month**. In addition to this monthly allocation, services including travel, healthcare and cultural activities are also directly covered. Grant holders may also benefit from the additional accommodation allocation. The grant is allocated for a maximum of 12 months for enrolment in the second year of a Master, for 24 months maximum for enrolment in the first year of a Master, and for 36 months maximum to prepare an engineering diploma, as long as the student meets the academic obligations for each year of the study programme. This system includes around 400 new recipients for each year.

For the PhD level, the grant amounts to **1,400 euros per month**, along with the direct cover of several services: a return trip, social coverage and cultural activities. Grant holders may also benefit from the additional accommodation allocation. The maximum duration of the grant is ten months. This programme includes around 70 new recipients for each year.

The Eiffel programme is the MEAE's largest grant allocation with over 12 million euros per year, for which the management is entirely entrusted to Campus France.

In 2017, 600 grant holders were managed by Campus France as part of the Eiffel programme, including 320 new students in Master and 50 PhD students (for a duration of one to three years)⁵¹.

Excellence-Major grants

The Excellence-Major grant programme, created in 1992, is co-financed by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) and the Agency for French Education Abroad (AEFE), and steered by the AEFE. It aims to allow the **best foreign baccalaureate holders in the French lycées abroad to follow high level higher education in France**. The Excellence-Major grant is allocated for a maximum of five years up to Master 2 level or equivalent.

The Excellence-Major grant is allocated on the basis of academic criteria, with family revenues taken into account after the selection. It grants the student the status of Grant holder of the French Government (BGF), with coverage of healthcare and additional healthcare.

The grant holder benefits from services according to the rate allocated by the selection commission. Three levels of grants are allocated depending on the family situations:

- the start of year grant (annual flat-rate participation of €500 and social coverage),
- the Excellence-Major Rate 1 grant (monthly allocation of €222 per month),
- the Excellence-Major Rate 2 grant (monthly allocation of €685 per month).

The Excellence-Major Rate 1 and Rate 2 grant holders can also benefit from additional defined services (participation in tuition fees up to 5,000 euros per year, participation in tuition fees and travel fees to take part in selection competitions for *grandes écoles* up to 500 euros, etc).

With an annual budget of seven million euros, the programme allocates **around 200 grants every year**. In total, over **800 students**, from nearly **80 different nationalities**, are supported for **five years of studies in France** (generally up to Master 2 level).

⁵¹ Source: Campus France, 2017 Activity Report, *op. cit.*

In 2017, a total of 860 Excellence-Major grant holders, from 80 different nationalities (support during five years of studies in France up to Master level) were directly managed by Campus France⁵². This programme is one of the leading contingents managed by Campus France for 2017.

Quai d'Orsay / Entreprises: co-financed grant programmes

As part of its attractiveness and promotion of French higher education programme, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, signs **public-private partnership agreements** with major French companies to **promote and develop the welcome of foreign students in France**, from the best institutions in their countries of origin, as part of the "**Quai d'Orsay / Enterprises**" programme.

- Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI) grants

The MESRI allocates grants based on social criteria to certain foreign students. To be eligible, they must have lived in France for less than two years and must be resident for tax purposes in France. This Ministry also finances doctoral contracts managed by doctoral schools.

- Higher education institution grants

Certain higher education institutions offer grant programmes to foreign students portawho enrol in their courses.

Paris-Saclay University⁵³ promotes the international opening of the Master courses provided by its member institutions and facilitates the welcome of top international students, particularly those who wish to go on to a PhD project after the Master. Mobility grants, implemented thanks to IDEX *Programme Investissement d'Avenir 3* financing, target **international students admitted to a Master course at Paris-Saclay University**, enrolled in the following member institutions: AgroParisTech, Centrale Supélec, ENS Paris-Saclay, INSTN-CEA, IOGS, Evry Val d'Essonne University, Paris-Sud University, Versailles Saint-Quentin University. Allocated according to **academic excellence criteria**, these grants are allocated for **one or two years to students admitted to a Master at Paris-Saclay University**, depending on the level of admission (first or second year of Master) and subject to obtaining the credits required to move to the next level. The Paris-Saclay University grant amounts to **10,000 euros per year**. It is paid to the student's institution of administrative registration for the duration of the university year and for a stay of ten consecutive months. A maximum flat-rate indemnity of 1,000 euros for travel and visa expenses is also allocated depending on the applicant's country of origin.

The **grandes écoles** also have grant programmes designed for international students. **ESSEC**, for example, offers excellence grants to high level foreign students, covering up to 40% of tuition fees⁵⁴.

- Grants from local authorities

The French regions and cities can allocated grants to foreign students who follow courses in their regions. They also grant doctoral and post-doctoral allocations managed by the higher education and research institutions. Regional welcome grants can also be allocated to foreign students as part of exchange agreements with institutions in other countries.

For example, the **University of Limoges, in partnership with the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region**, offers an annual excellence grant programme, for 2,500 euros or 5,000 euros. This programme is designed for international students who wish to come to study at **Master** level then **follow doctoral studies** the following year at Limoges University.

⁵² Source: Campus France, 2017 Activity Report, *op. cit.*

⁵³ Questionnaire completed by representatives of Paris-Saclay University, December 2018.

⁵⁴ Questionnaire completed by a representative of ESSEC, December 2018.

- **Private sector grants**

For example, the **Total Group** offers different grant programmes, for high-level international students who want to continue their studies in France. These systems are based on **partnerships developed by the Group with universities and grandes écoles**. Different study fields are proposed, linked to the Group's skills, from post-bac to doctoral level.

- **Grants from foreign governments**

Some countries provide mobility grants to their students, in order to continue their studies abroad. For example, since 2012, the **Peruvian government** has implemented several grant programmes for which France is a privileged partner. Thus, the *Beca 18* programme, renamed ***Beca 18 Excelencia Internacional Francia*** in 2017, provides financing at Bachelor level, for 3 years, in the fields of science and technology. Since 2013, France has welcomed 226 grant holders as part of this programme, which benefited from an extension to engineering school courses. In 2017, 52 Peruvian students benefited from a grant and joined 30 French engineering schools in the first year⁵⁵.

- **Erasmus+ mobility grants for foreign students**

Erasmus+ is a European Union programme that supports education, training, young people and sport. Thanks to this programme, over two million students can benefit from a **mobility grant in Europe**: it covers the 2014-2020 period with a budget of 14.7 billion euros.

The **Joint Masters Erasmus Mundus** is a study programme that provides grants to the best students worldwide, for a duration of one or two years, in all fields. In order to qualify, applicants must carry out their Masters studies in at least two countries taking part in the programme. Several French higher education institutions offer joint Masters.

As part of bilateral agreements between higher education institutions, Erasmus+ also offers mobility grants to and from France. They cover installation and residence costs.

2) Campus Bourses (Campus Scholarships): an on-line tool listing the financing possibilities for international students

Managed by Campus France, **the on-line Campus Bourses**⁵⁶ tool lists all scholarships provided by States (French and foreign), local authorities, companies, foundations and higher education institutions. Searches can be filtered by nationality, field and level of studies to find aid that corresponds to the student's profile. Over 600 grant programmes are listed.

3) Management of grant holders by Campus France

Campus France **manages the grant programmes for numerous institutions**, such as Ministries, local authorities, foreign governments, international organisations, French and foreign companies. The agency offers a **range of services to facilitate the stay in France of foreign grant holder students**; these may include preparation for departure, travel organisation, customised welcome on arrival in France and monitoring throughout the stay, notably including accommodation, support for administrative procedures, monitoring of studies, a cultural activity programme, etc. As part of the management of grant holder mobility, the latter have access to an **accommodation (via the CROUS network) and welcome service**.

In 2017, 29,788 mobilities of students, interns, researchers and experts were managed by Campus France. 7,239 study grants and 3,407 intern grants were managed by Campus France on behalf of the MEAE⁵⁷ :

- 22.3% of the 10,646 French government grant holders come from Asia (a slight increase);
- 21.7% from Sub-Saharan Africa (a slight increase);

⁵⁵ Source: Campus France, 2017 Activity Report, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ <http://campusbourses.campusfrance.org/fr/ia/bourse/#/catalog>

⁵⁷ Source: Campus France, 2017 Activity Report, *op. cit.*

- 20.1% from Europe;
- 15.4% from North Africa and 12.2% from the Middle East (decrease);
- 8.2% from the Americas.

Q5c. Are there any other financial incentives or financial support (e.g. loans, tax benefits, etc.) in place?

Yes, provided by the state.

- **Benefits from the Family Benefit Fund (*Caisse d'Allocations Familiales - CAF*):**

Three types of CAF benefits can reduce the rent amount depending on the type of accommodation and the family situation: the social housing benefit (*allocation de logement sociale - ALS*), personalised housing benefit (*aide personnalisée au logement - APL*) and family housing benefit (*allocation de logement familial - ALF*):

- the social housing benefit (ALS) is designed for students who are single or in a couple, without dependants,
- family housing benefit (ALF) is designed for students who are single or in a couple with dependants, in mainland France or the DOM,
- personalised housing benefit (APL) is designed for students who are single or in a couple, with or without dependants, living in subsidised housing in mainland France.

Q5d. Are any incentives with regard to family reunification in place?

- Are any incentives with regard to family reunification in place?

Yes.

Pursuant to article L. 411-1 of the CESEDA, a "foreign national who regularly resides in France for at least eighteen months, with one of the residence permits with validity of at least one year"(employee, private and family life, student, visitor, etc.), and who meets the stipulated conditions, may request to benefit from his/her right to be joined by his/her spouse and/or child under family reunification. The applicant must have, amongst other conditions, "sufficient and stable resources to provide for his/her family."

Theoretically, nothing can withhold the right from a foreign national holding a "student" residence permit to request family reunification. However, students will, by definition, have difficulties in meeting the conditions, particularly the resources criteria, due to the grounds for their stay in France i.e. to continue their studies and not to exercise a professional activity that procures stable remuneration.

- If yes, do family members have the right to work in France?

Yes.

Family members who have arrived in France through family reunification may exercise the professional activity of their choice, both as an employed or self-employed activity. If they wish to exercise a regulated activity, they must provide the proof (diplomas, authorisations, etc) that authorises them to exercise the profession.

Article L.431-1 paragraph 2 of the CESEDA stipulates that "the residence permit issued to a person authorised to stay with regard to family reunification grants its holder, from the issue of the permit, the right to exercise the professional activity of his or her choice, subject to current legislation".

Q5e. Is any support targeted at spouses and other family members of international students offered in your Member State?

No

Q5f. Are courses offered in English/other languages than the national language(s)?

Yes

The law of 22 July 2013 on higher education and research⁵⁸ promoted flexibility, notably allowing institutions to offer courses partially or entirely taught in English.

Increasingly, French universities tend to offer courses in English. The increase in courses in English aims to **adapt to demand from international, non-French speaking students**, particularly in the fields of management, political science and engineering science⁵⁹. Since 2004, the offer of programmes taught in English has been multiplied by almost five in France, going from 286 to **1,328 for the start of the 2018 university year**. Out of these 1,328 French-English programmes, **1,015 are completely taught in English**, mainly **at Master level**. 237 higher education institutions offer courses in English, including 137 public institutions. The fields of study most often offered by the institutions are in business/management, engineering sciences/technology, sciences/environment/health⁶⁰.

An **on-line catalogue "Taught in English"**⁶¹, managed by Campus France, lists almost 1,400 courses taught partially or completely in English. Searches can be filtered by level of diploma, field of studies, and whether or not the programme is taught entirely in English.

The offer of courses taught in English includes short programmes, courses at *grandes écoles* authorised to offer programmes in English, etc.

However, the interviews and questionnaires collected as part of this study have identified **several challenges associated with education in English**. English-speaking students find it difficult to find Bachelor level courses taught in English, as these are rare at this level. Moreover, the offer of courses in English requires several criteria (for example, that the lecturer is able to teach his lessons in English)⁶².

The *Conférence des Directeurs des Écoles Françaises d'Ingénieurs* (CDEFI)⁶³ highlights that one of the main challenges for engineering schools to attract more international students and develop partnerships with foreign institutions, is the **development of courses in English**. Today, engineering schools offer courses in English **in the engineer cycle** (a few modules, one half year or one year during the engineer cycle, often the last year), and **in Masters**, including European Masters, such as Erasmus mundus, international Masters and *Mastères spécialisés* (specialist masters). Slightly over 300 courses in English listed on the Campus France "Taught in English" platform concern engineering schools. These are courses partially or completely taught in English, mostly at Master level⁶⁴. This offer of education in English increases constantly, as engineering schools are aware that it is the most important driver to attract more foreign students, particularly from Asia. However, the offer remains limited. For example, cooperation agreements developed with South Korea, which is one of the target countries for engineering schools, are not yet at the level of the desired ambitions for engineering schools, due to the low diversity of courses offered in English.

Q5g. Are there any incentives from the state for HEIs providing courses in other languages?

Yes

One of the focuses of the Government's new strategy is to **double the number of students benefiting from programmes "taught in English"**. The attractiveness strategy for international students, presented on 19 November 2018, provides that the development of courses taught, in all or part, in

⁵⁸ Law no. 2013-660 of 22 July 2013 on higher education and research

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000027735009&categorieLien=id>

⁵⁹ Interview carried out with representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI), November 2018.

⁶⁰ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

⁶¹ <http://taughtie.campusfrance.org/tiesearch/#/catalog>

⁶² Interview with representatives of Campus France, December 2018.

⁶³ Questionnaire completed by a representative of the *Conférence des Directeurs des Écoles Françaises d'Ingénieurs* (CDEFI), December 2018.

⁶⁴ As there exists only one survey of the number of courses in English offered by engineering schools, this data is not exhaustive as schools have not all referenced their courses in English on the platform.

English or a foreign language should be **eligible for support from the *Bienvenue en France*⁶⁵ (Welcome to France) seed fund.**

Q5h. Is there a possibility for a fast-track application for visa/residence permits?

No

However, the Government continues to promote the welcome for these very high qualified foreign nationals, notably through **simplified procedures and a dedicated welcome set up within the prefectures**. In order to optimise this mechanism, tools have been developed, such as the "**France visas**" portal. Currently being generalised within consulates, this service contains all the information required to guide foreign nationals in their procedures and assist them at each stage of the visa request. The **VLS-TS remote service** is currently being finalised, and will facilitate visa validation procedures, once the student has arrived in France, without requiring him/her to physically travel to the OFII. These two systems also reduce the number of supporting documents required.

Q5i. Are any other incentives not listed above in place?

Several measures for the welcome and stay of international students in France, may have an incentive effect:

- Students have **numerous advantages and student reductions**: access to a reduced price cultural offer (reductions in museums, theatres, cinemas...), preferential tariffs for public transport, university restaurants (around 3.25 euros per meal), reductions for municipal swimming pools and some gyms, etc. At the university, the University service for physical and sporting activities (*Service universitaire des activités physiques et sportives* - SUAPS) also enables access to a wide range of sports with a single contribution at the start of the year.
- Each university has a **healthcare service, the University preventive medicine and healthcare promotion service (*Service universitaire de médecine préventive et de promotion de la santé* - SUMPPS)**. All students can consult a doctor, have a check-up or obtain advice. Some consultations are free, notably for contraception, screening, vaccination, nutrition and psychological monitoring.
- The implementation of the **Student and Campus Life Contribution (*Contribution Vie étudiante et de Campus* - CVEC)** was decided in March 2018 as part of the law on orientation and success for students⁶⁶. This contribution, of 90 euros for the 2018-2019 university year, should enable a **better welcome for students and offer them social, healthcare, cultural and sport support throughout the duration of their studies. The CVEC provides financing for actions with the main beneficiaries being the students**. These actions can take different forms: access to healthcare, social support, sport, access to the arts and culture, improvement to welcome conditions.

2.3 Hosting international students: preparation, arrival and housing

Q6a. What is the nature of the document issued (long-stay visa or residence permit)?

Long-stay visa issued in the third country: long-stay visa equivalent to a residence permit (validity 12 months) or temporary long-stay visa (validity 4 to 12 months), non renewable.

⁶⁵ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

⁶⁶ Law no. 2018-166 of 8 March 2018 on orientation and success for students.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2018/3/8/ESRX1730554L/jo/texte>

Residence permit issued: "student" residence permit valid for one year for the first year of stay in France, then multiannual residence permit for the remaining study cycle. Moreover, students who prove that they come under a mobility programme may, from 1 March 2019, benefit from a multiannual residence permit for the first issue.

- If France issues a residence permit, is this issued in France or in the third country?

Residence permit issued in French territory. *If so, do you issue a long-stay visa in the third country first?: YES*

Foreign students who wish to study in France must request a **long-stay visa** from the consular authorities in their country of residence. However, the procedure varies if their country of residence comes under the **"Studying in France" procedure implemented by Campus France**.

Students living in one of the 42 countries concerned by the "Studying in France" procedure set up by Campus France⁶⁷, and who need a visa to come and study in France, must first carry out their higher education enrolment application via the **"Studying in France" platform**⁶⁸. The visa application is then automatically transmitted to the French consular authorities in their country of residence via this platform.

Students who do not live in one of these countries, and who require a visa to come to study in France, must **contact the French consular authorities in their country of residence**.

Within three months after their arrival in France, they must validate their long-stay student visa with the OFII. After the appointment, the OFII provides a sticker to be stuck in the passport. **This OFII sticker certifies that the long-stay student visa has been validated**. If the OFII formalities are not carried out within the required time limit, a new visa application must be filed with the French consular authorities in the country of residence.

There is also a **"student-competition" visa**, which concerns students who must pass a selection competition before being able to enrol in an institution in France. In order to simplify the administrative procedures, to avoid multiple visits to the consulate and to facilitate the return of students to their country between competition periods, the validity period for the short-stay "student-competition" visa stipulated in article R. 313-3 of the CESEDA is **180 days**. Beneficiaries of this visa can stay in France for 90 days out of a 180 day period. The beneficiaries of this visa may not apply for a residence permit based on an enrolment which is not related to the competitions for which the visa was issued. At the end of the visa validity period, if the person has effectively succeeded in the competition or prior admission test for which the visa was granted, the visa holder must go to the prefecture to request a **temporary "student" residence permit, without the need to return to his/her country**. He/she receives a receipt of first request for a residence permit, whilst waiting for the residence permit to be made. This visa does not enable the person to leave France and come back after a stay outside of the Schengen zone.

Q6b. What are processing times for visa/residence permit applications for third-country nationals in your Member State (minimum, maximum and average)?

The visa processing time **depends on the consulates**. The procedure set up by Campus France provides for an **accelerated visa application procedure** once the enrolment procedure in the institution has been validated. However, students are sometimes faced with additional requests from the consular services and time periods may be extended if the application is incomplete or if there is strong demand

⁶⁷ The following 42 countries come under the "Studying in France" procedure: Algeria, Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, the Republic of the Congo, South Korea, Ivory Coast, Egypt, United States, Gabon, Guinea, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mexico, Peru, Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo, Russia, Senegal, Singapore, Taiwan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey and Vietnam.

⁶⁸ <https://pastel.diplomatie.gouv.fr/etudesenfrance/dyn/public/authentification/login.html>

(notably in the summer period when the student campaign is in full swing, and when not all consular employees are present).

The new plan announced by the Government on 19 November 2018 notably intends to **simplify the visa policy** thanks to:

- Priority given to students in visa application processing by the consulates;
- The recent implementation of the digital France-Visas portal, enabling access to information on supporting documents and a better interface with university enrolments. The France-Visas portal was generalized in 2018 with information, visa assistance, and online application system modules.
- The facilitation of data collection thanks to externalisation with external service providers, and the launch of the portal service provider module, connected to the back office.

The dematerialisation of the documents requested for supporting a visa application, targeting first students and talent passports, is a priority and will be developed by the end of 2019.

Furthermore, a reflexion is ongoing on an online application for residence permit, once arrived in France. This procedure should be implemented in 2020.

Q6c. What are the main requirements for the **renewal of a residence permit** for international students (e.g. does the student need to prove his/her attendance in HEI courses or is the study progress measured)?

When the long-stay student visa expires, the students are responsible for renewing their right to stay to continue their studies in France under certain conditions and requesting a multiannual "student" residence permit. There is a fee and the validity duration corresponds to the number of years remaining in the study cycle in which the person is enrolled.

Article L. 313-17 of the CESEDA stipulates: "I. After a first year of regular stay in France [...], the foreign national benefits, at his/her request, from a multiannual residence permit if:

1° He/she proves his/her attendance, subject to exceptional circumstances, [...] and he/she has not rejected the essential values of French society and the Republic;

2° He/she continues to meet the conditions for the issue of the temporary permit for which he/she was previously a holder.

The multiannual residence permit has the same indication as the temporary residence permit for which he/she was previously a holder. "

Article L. 313-18 of the CESEDA stipulates that: "The multiannual residence permit has a duration of four years, unless it is issued:

1° To a student indicated in article L. 313-7. In this case, its duration is equal to that remaining time in the study cycle in which the student is enrolled, subject to the real and serious nature of the studies, assessed in view of the elements produced by the education institution and by the student. Repeating a year per study cycle does not call into question, in itself, the serious nature of the studies."

This multiannual residence permit, accessible as part of a renewal application, may be issued if several cumulative conditions are met:

- if the student has benefited from a first regular year of stay (article L. 313-17 of the CESEDA). This year may have been covered by a temporary residence permit or a long-stay visa equivalent to a residence permit (VLS-TS);

- if the student has not rejected the essential values of French society and the Republic" (article L. 313-17 I, 1° of the CESEDA);

- if the student has complied with the initial conditions for issue of his/her permit, notably concerning resources (615 euros per month) or the hourly volume of additional work of 60% authorised with a "student" CST (article L. 313-17 and article L. 313-5 of the CESEDA);
- if he/she presents an enrolment in a course integrated into a "Bachelor (*Licence*), Master, Doctorate" (LMD) course or a training course enabling the issue of a "diploma at least equivalent to a Master";
- if he/she proves the real and serious nature of the studies undertaken since the start of the course in France (attendance, exam results, diplomas obtained, explanations in the event of change of course) (see article L. 313-18 of the CESEDA);

Once these conditions have been met and the person has requested the issue, a multiannual residence permit is issued for a **validity duration of a maximum of four years**.

With respect to the calculation of the duration of general CSP for the "student" indication, article L. 313-18 stipulates that "its duration is equal to that remaining in the study cycle in which the student is enrolled". This includes the traditional LMD "Licence Master Doctorate" path, and also other paths such as those offered by engineering schools for example (Circular of 2 November 2016 on the application of the law on the rights of foreign nationals in France⁶⁹).

Two cumulative criteria may be taken into account by the administration to assess the real and serious nature of the studies followed by the foreign national:

- **attendance in the study course and exams;**
- **the control of reasonable progress in the chosen university course.**

It is important to assess these in view of the legitimate grounds, if applicable, due to health reasons or the private life of the individual (death of a close family member, hospitalisation) which, without being sufficient in themselves, may have an impact on attendance or progress or justify failure (absence at exam time, for example).

In the event of a change in orientation, it is important to assess the coherence between the envisaged and previous courses.

Q7. Please indicate if the **hosting initiatives and measures** listed below (Q7a-Q7e) are in place in your Member State. Please state which institution is responsible for these measures.

Q7a. Is induction and orientation support provided in your Member State (incl. opening a bank account, registering in the healthcare system, etc.)?

- Yes, state-organised measures for support in place.**
- Yes, support provided by the higher education institutions.**

The improvement of the welcome conditions for international students is one of the focuses of the Government's new strategy, announced on 19 November 2018. This intends to **encourage institutions to improve all their welcome provisions**, and proposes to **reinforce several measures to facilitate the welcome of international students and encourage them to come and study in France**⁷⁰. These measures aim to:

⁶⁹ NOR Circular: INTV1631686J of 2 November 2016 of the Ministry of the Interior on the application of the law on the rights of foreign nationals in France - provisions applicable from 1 November 2016 to 1 January 2017.

⁷⁰ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

- **facilitate the administrative procedures for international students by setting up one-stop shops or dedicated counters** bringing together all the services that international students need when they arrive;
- **facilitate access to housing;**
- **facilitate integration in the student community**, by setting up a **single contact within the hosting institution**, which will be responsible for supporting the international student in his/her procedures, even before he/she arrives in France.

Moreover, the Government plans to **create a label, entitled "Bienvenue en France" (Welcome to France)**, which will be awarded to institutions that meet the conditions. The aim is to implement a State-recognised label that is visible abroad. Around one hundred higher education institutions have already applied for this label⁷¹. (See Q1f)

Different **measures aiming to facilitate the integration and orientation of international students** have been implemented at national or local levels.

- **The development of one-stop shops**

As part of the Higher Attractiveness Council of 17 February 2014, it was decided to **continue the development of delocalised counters with the implementation of one-stop shops** "wherever the number of students justifies it", in order to improve the welcome for foreign students. The instruction of 3 September 2015 on improving the welcome conditions for foreign students⁷² stipulates that this counter aims to become the **office for all organisations with which the foreign students must carry out procedures and registrations**: prefectures, OFII, and also university or higher education institution services, CROUS, accommodation, social security, etc.

The **partnership agreements signed between the prefectures and the higher education institutions** stipulate the functioning modalities for the one-stop shops, making the passage by the delocalised counter mandatory for the students studying in the partner institutions. The passage by the one-stop shop enables the students to directly receive the residence permit within the higher education institution, instead of going to the prefecture.

The one-stop shops are present in numerous higher education institutions during the period at start of the university year to facilitate the procedures for international students. They enable all the administrative procedures to be carried out in a single location, and provide advice and information required for the stay in France. They bring together all the services related to the stay, health, employment, housing benefits and other social aids, culture, etc.

For example, **the International Researcher Welcome Office (BACI) at Bordeaux University (International Relations Department)** coordinates the organisation each year, for 4 to 5 months (August to December), of the "Residence Permit Cell" for international students requiring French residence permits (first arrivals and renewals) for all the higher education institutions in Bordeaux (4,000 to 5,000 students welcomed each year). This system is offered as part of a **privileged partnership with the Gironde Prefecture** which, during this period, relocates several of its agents to the BACI's offices⁷³.

Paris-Saclay University, alongside the sub-prefecture of Palaiseau and the *Science Accueil association*, takes part in setting up a **multi-services platform, called GATE (Guichet d'Accueil des Talents Étrangers - Welcome Counter for Foreign Talents)**. This one-stop welcome shop enables international students and scientists from the Saclay plateau to complete the main administrative procedures for their installation in France in a single, easy to access location, offering multiple services thanks to the different partnerships⁷⁴.

⁷¹ Interview carried out with representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI), November 2018.

⁷² NOR Instruction: INTV1518417 of 3 September 2015 from the Government on improving the welcome conditions for foreign students.

⁷³ Questionnaire completed by representatives of Bordeaux University, December 2018.

⁷⁴ Questionnaire completed by a representative of Paris-Saclay University, December 2018.

The Welcome Desk Paris⁷⁵: a multi-service and multi-lingual welcome platform for international students and researchers

The **Welcome Desk Paris** was created 16 years ago to meet a real need. It was a pioneer project as Paris was the first city to install it. With support from the City of Paris and the Île-de-France Region, a **multi-services welcome platform for international students** is set up each year, at the start of the university year, by the *Cité internationale universitaire de Paris* (CiuP) and the Crous de Paris. In 2017, the one-stop shop was enlarged to international researchers.

Located in the premises of the *Cité internationale universitaire de Paris* (Paris 14^e), the Welcome Desk is **open for ten weeks**, from September to November, in order to inform international students thanks to the presence of numerous services. The students can find in a single location **all the administrations brought together to simplify their administrative procedures** and find the information required for their study or research stay in Paris and the Île-de-France region.

The following **partners** are present:

- the 6th Office of the Sub-Directorate for Administration for Foreign Nationals (*Bureau de la Sous-direction de l'administration des étrangers* - SDAE) of the **Prefecture de Police responsible for qualified immigration** (students, researchers and talent passports),
- **the French Office for Immigration and Integration (*Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration* - OFII),**
- **the Family Benefit Fund (*Caisse d'Allocations Familiales* - CAF),**
- **the Healthcare Insurance Fund (*Caisse Primaire d'Assurance Maladie* - CPAM),**
- **the Regional Office for companies, competition, consumption, work and employment (*Direction régionale des entreprises, de la concurrence, de la consommation, du travail et de l'emploi* - DIRECCTE),**
- **the National Agency for Information on Housing (*Agence Nationale pour l'Information sur le Logement* - ANIL),**
- and **Pôle Emploi**.

All of these services are **multi-lingual**. Doctoral students from different countries who speak several languages (including rarer languages) are also recruited for support.

The permanent antenna of the Paris Prefecture de Police was installed in 2017 as part of the **partnership between the Prefecture and the City of Paris**. It **facilitates renewal applications for residence permits for international students**. Depending on the cases, students may be received with or without appointments. This antenna is open to all Parisian students. However, difficulties have been reported, due to a reduction in the employees in the Welcome centre for international students and researchers at the Paris Prefecture de Police, leading to longer waiting times.

The Welcome Desk aims to **develop the dematerialisation of certain services**, with, for example, the presence of a CAF terminal enabling students to consult their files.

In 2017, the Welcome Desk registered over 30,000 requests.

- **Examples of initiatives implemented by the institutions to facilitate the welcome and integration of international students**

Different initiatives have been developed by the higher education institutions (universities and *grandes écoles*)⁷⁶ to support and better integrate international students in France. These include welcome and integration days, city visits or cultural outings, support for administrative procedures, tandem

⁷⁵ Interviews carried out with a representative of the *Cité internationale universitaire de Paris* (CiuP), October 2018 and a representative of the City of Paris, November 2018.

⁷⁶ Examples collected from the interview carried out with representatives of Campus France and questionnaires completed by representatives of the *Conférence des Directeurs des Écoles Françaises d'Ingénieurs* (CDEFI), Bordeaux University, and Paris-Saclay University, December 2018.

programmes to meet French students, publications of welcome guides, summer universities, intensive French as a Foreign Language lessons, etc.

The following examples highlight the diversity of the actions implemented:

The Toul'Box at the Federal University of Toulouse:

The Toul'Box⁷⁷ is a tool for students and PhD students, as well as teachers and researchers, to **facilitate their installation in Toulouse and its region**. This customised box offers **several ranges of services depending on the different packs to subscribe to on-line**, from 100 to 200 euros. These services enable the beneficiary to save time and organise his/her installation, with most procedures having been carried out before his/her arrival. The services include: a meeting with the Toul'Box team (welcome pack, housing benefits, migration formalities...), the opening of a bank account, housing insurance, public transport card, SIM card, temporary accommodation solutions, housing reservation, assistance for formalities and rental guarantee, a guided tour of Toulouse. Several options can also be added, including welcome at the airport or station, and French as a Foreign Language lessons or other language lessons.

Actions to facilitate the integration of students within Bordeaux University⁷⁸:

The integration of international students within Bordeaux University is carried out jointly by the International Relations Department (Mobility Office) and the University Life Department (student life offices), with support from student associations. Numerous welcome options are proposed indifferently to "local" and international students, in order to promote diversity. Amongst the support on offer:

- **Support for looking for housing** (university residences, contract with a housing search platform (Studapart), student jobs mobilised specifically for this issue)
- **Intensive French as a Foreign Language week at the start of the university year; FLE lessons throughout the year**
- **Mentoring system between Bordeaux and international students** via an on-line application⁷⁹
- **Welcome sessions / Orientation days** organised on each campus twice a year
- **Festive events**: welcome evening for all international students (exchange and individual mobility); goodbye evening mixing international students and departing candidates
- **Regional outings** (offered at least once a month).

The example of actions carried out by a grande école: ESSEC⁸⁰:

ESSEC created an **international student office** in 2000, to help students in their procedures to obtain a visa then a residence permit when they enter France, and after graduation, a provisional work permit (APT) if they are apprentices, etc. ESSEC has set up **partnerships with different players**, notably banks to facilitate the opening of a bank account before arrival in France, and student loan organisations. A "**Welcome Week**" is organised before the start of the university year, in the form of a **one-stop shop** bringing together banks, insurance companies, the CAF, and ESSEC resources, in order to manage residence permits and the OFII procedure, as part of an agreement with the prefecture.

The "e-International Welcome Solution" application developed by Paris-Saclay University⁸¹

Paris-Saclay University has developed an "**e-International Welcome Solution**"⁸² application, which enables international nationals (students, PhD students, researchers or interns) to obtain in a few clicks a customised information sheet and a stage by stage calendar indicating all the administrative

⁷⁷ <https://toulbox.univ-toulouse.fr/packages/student>

⁷⁸ Questionnaire completed by representatives of Bordeaux University, December 2018.

⁷⁹ <https://parrainage.u-bordeaux.fr/>

⁸⁰ Questionnaire completed by a representative of ESSEC, December 2018.

⁸¹ Questionnaire completed by a representative of Paris-Saclay University, December 2018.

⁸² <https://www.universite-paris-saclay.fr/fr/e-international-welcome-office>

procedures to be carried out before arrival and during the first few days in France. The regulatory monitoring carried out by the international welcome project leader adds value for students, as all the information accessible on-line is based on a viable, stable database.

- **Welcome and Integration days and weeks organised by the universities**

Lille University organises each year its "**International Student Week⁸³**" (**ISW**). Including multiple activities and testimonies, the International Student Week aims to **value the presence of the 8,000 international students at Lille University and the Collegium schools**, and to promote international mobility. The *International Student Week* is a time for discussions, information and conviviality, based on educational, cultural and festive activities. Numerous events (conferences, information meetings, student testimonies, language cafés, gastronomic events, exhibitions, etc) allow students and staff to discover the international dimension of Lille University.

Every year, the **Federal University of Toulouse Midi-Pyrénées** organises the **Student Week⁸⁴**, a **regional event dedicated to the welcome and integration of students**. Over one hundred free events are organised in the 11 university cities of Toulouse Academy, in the areas that most federate student life: sport, associations, arts and scientific culture. The programme focuses on concerts, events, visits, cultural paths, association forums, etc. Since 2006, this event contributes to enabling newly arrived students to know their study location better, without being specifically dedicated to international students.

- **Actions by local authorities**

The example of the City of Paris⁸⁵:

International students are considered a Parisian citizens in their own right and benefit from the **City of Paris' higher education and student life policy**. Beyond the common law provisions, a welcome is specifically organised for international students. The City of Paris has developed reinforced partnerships with the CiuP, the Paris Prefecture de Police and the Crous de Paris, with 703,000 euros dedicated to welcome provisions for international students in 2018:

- **Acc&s** (financed by the Ile-de-France region and the City of Paris), comprise a physical counter open all year round at the CiuP and a digital portal;
- **Welcome Desk**, in the CiuP's premises, with the implementation of an antenna of the Paris Prefecture de Police within the one-stop shop, as part of a partnership between the City of Paris and the Prefecture;
- The City of Paris also finances a **multi-lingual counter within the Crous**.

To support international students, the City of Paris has also developed a **legal advice service within the Maison des initiatives étudiantes** (MIE), with a legal expert from the City of Paris Legal Access Point, as well as **collective general information training modules** on good practices in numerous aspects (right to stay, labour law, university exams, etc.). Like many cities in France, each year, the City of Paris organises "**La nuit des étudiants du monde**" (world students' night), supported and encouraged by the *Association des Villes Universitaires de France* (AVUF). This evening welcome event is organised at the start of the university year for international students who have come to study in France, in the form of a reception in the salons of the City of Paris. 3,000 people took part in October 2018.

Q7b. Is support with finding housing and accommodation provided in your Member State?

- Yes, state-organised measures for support in place.**
- Yes, support provided by the higher education institutions.**

⁸³ <http://isw.univ-lille.fr/>

⁸⁴ <http://semaine-etudiant.univ-toulouse.fr/>

⁸⁵ Interview carried out with a representative of the City of Paris, November 2018.

- **The announcement of measures to facilitate access to housing in the new attractiveness strategy for international students:**

From the interviews and questionnaires as part of this study, one of the main concerns for students is the search for housing. Aware of this issue, the Government announced **measures to facilitate access to housing**, as part of the framework of improving the conditions for the welcome of international students:

The **Lokaviz platform**⁸⁶ is the official student housing site of the student social services network (*réseau des œuvres universitaires et scolaires*). It lists all the available accommodation in the university residences in the CROUS (regional centres for student social services) and offers of housing from individuals throughout France. The new attractiveness strategy for international students, announced on 19 November 2018, aims to translate this platform entirely into English, to allow all non-French speaking students to understand the essential criteria in the search for accommodation⁸⁷.

VISALE is a **free student rental guarantee solution**. Thanks to this solution, students increase their chances of rapidly finding accommodation and owners obtain a guarantee for rental payment. The VISALE rental guarantee is the solution for students who **envisage renting furnished or non-furnished accommodation, from a private or public owner or landlord**. The new attractiveness strategy for international students intends to make the VISALE guarantee accessible to all international students, so that they **benefit from a free rental guarantee and facilitated access to the private rental market**.

- **Accommodation reserved for beneficiaries of grants managed by Campus France**

As part of the management of mobility for grant holders by Campus France, grant holders have access to **a housing and welcome service: rooms are reserved for them via the CROUS⁸⁸ network**.

- **Support provided by the higher education institutions**

The higher education institutions propose different types of support and aid in the search for accommodation (on-line information, partnerships, on-line platform of housing offers, etc). Some may offer housing. It would appear, however, that housing proposals by institutions are rare for free-mover students. They tend to be reserved for students under managed mobility, who often have reserved places in Crous accommodation or on the institution campus⁸⁹.

The *grandes écoles* may have accommodation available on their campuses, as indicated by the ESSEC example, where international students have priority access to accommodation in the ESSEC residences, which can welcome over 1,000 students⁹⁰.

Q7c. Are preparatory courses (incl. language courses, orientation courses, multicultural sessions, intercultural awareness/diversity courses) offered in your Member State?

Yes, courses are provided by higher education institutions.

Depending on the higher education institutions, **different preparatory courses are proposed for the arrival of international students in France**, such as language courses, multi-cultural training sessions, summer schools, etc. (*see the examples developed in Q7A*)

Generally, **intensive FLE lessons are proposed at the start of the university year**, then **FLE lessons are organised on a regular basis** (weekly lessons) during the university year⁹¹.

⁸⁶ <https://www.lokaviz.fr/>

⁸⁷ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

⁸⁸ Interview with representatives of Campus France, December 2018

⁸⁹ Interview with representatives of Campus France, December 2018

⁹⁰ Questionnaire completed by a representative of ESSEC, December 2018.

⁹¹ Questionnaires completed by representatives of the Conférence des Directeurs des Écoles Françaises d'Ingénieurs (CDEFI), ESSEC, and Bordeaux University, December 2018.

2.4 Rights of international students

Q8. Right to work

Q8a. How many hours are international students allowed to work per week or months per year?

With a "student" residence permit, a foreign national is authorised to exercise **a salaried activity as a secondary occupation, without requiring a work authorisation, up to 60% of the annual working duration (1,607 hours), i.e. 964 hours per year** (article L. 313-7 of the CESEDA).

These work hours may be spread unequally throughout the year, as long as this ceiling is not exceeded (for example, a student may carry out his/her 964 work hours in six months, but may no longer work for the remaining six months).

The departure point for calculating the salaried activity as a secondary occupation is a period of 12 months from the date of issue of the residence permit and not on a rolling basis. For example, a temporary "student" residence permit issued on 1 July of year N offers its holder a duration of secondary work of 964 hours up to 30 June of year N+1.

Q8b. Are any restrictions in place in your Member State in terms of the **type/field of work international students** are allowed to work in?

No: There are no restrictions on the type of work / activity (except for compliance with the regulations, for example for the regulated professions).

Q8c. Do students need to obtain **prior authorisation** for the right to work in accordance with national law?

No

Students do not need to obtain prior authorisation (with the exception of Algerian students and students who prove they need to work over the authorised duration as part of their studies). The employer must make a nominative declaration to the prefecture of the place of residence 48 hours before the date of recruitment (article R. 5221-17 of the French Labour Code).

If the authorised duration of work is exceeded, the student may have his/her residence permit removed. Moreover, the employer is liable to an administrative sanction for illegal work (Article L. 313-5 of the CESEDA).

Exception for Algerian students: To exercise work on a secondary basis, Algerian students need to request a prior work authorisation. Pursuant to the stipulations in the French-Algeria agreement, they may exercise this activity up to an annual duration of work corresponding to 50% of the work duration conducted in the concerned branch of activity or profession. Consequently, as the hour volume depends on the concerned professional branch, it will not necessarily be 964 hours per year.

Exception for students who prove they need to work over the authorised duration as part of their studies: "If the student proves that he/she must work over the authorised duration (doctors, lawyers, accountants, etc.), he/she may request an APT to work full time, in accordance with 14° of article R. 5221-3 of the French Labour Code". There is no change of status and the person is considered as following studies on a principal basis, with this work period being necessary to validate his/her diploma.

The person must request an APT from the Regional Office for companies, competition, consumption, work and employment (*Direction régionale des entreprises, de la concurrence, de la consommation, du travail et de l'emploi* - DIRECCTE) before working on a full-time basis. This is renewed until the end of the course.

Q8d. Are international students entitled to exercise **self-employed economic activity**?

No

Article L. 313-7 of the CESEDA stipulates that "the permit (...) gives the right to exercise, on a secondary basis, a salaried professional activity up to 60% of the annual working duration". The foreign student -

who comes under common law and bilateral agreements – **is only, therefore, authorised to work as a contractual employee.**

He/she may not, therefore, under student status, exercise a professional activity as an *auto entrepreneur* (which does not come under contractual employment and does not require a work authorisation).

Q9. Do students have the right to carry out in parallel to their studies or defer their studies for a training or a job in the Member State?

Yes, carrying out a training/job in parallel to studies is possible.

As indicated by the circular no.2015-122 of 22 July 2015 of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research⁹², "*the so-called gap period extends over a maximum duration of a university year during which a student, enrolled in a higher education course, temporarily suspends it with the aim of acquiring a personal experience, either on an autonomous basis or within a host organisation in France or abroad*".

It stipulates that this personal experience may take the form of a work placement or training period in a professional environment under the meaning of the law of 10 July 2014 on interns and is carried out under a three-party agreement.

The foreign student taking a gap year may not be considered as having employee status.

It also indicates that during this period, the person benefits from a university registration "in order to benefit from student status and to retain his/her rights to most of the advantages associated with this status".

Under these conditions, and once he/she has a university registration, the foreign student who benefits from a gap year must be considered as coming under the student residence permit.

Remaining under this status is not an obstacle to carrying out professional training work placements as part of the gap year, as these are considered to come under an intern agreement and are not considered as a professional activity as such.

Q10a. Do students have to complete their studies within a maximum period of time?

No

French regulations do not provide for a legal duration for studies. However, when renewing the residence permit, the Prefect verifies the real and serious nature of the studies (*see Q10b*) and notably the number of repeated years, changes in orientation, etc. to assess whether the student uses delaying procedures (by extending the duration of his/her studies in the country) to remain in France.

Q10b. In accordance with Directive 2016/801 Article 21(3),⁹³ Member states may withdraw a visa/residence permit in case of a lack of progress in the relevant studies. Has your Member State transposed this provision?

Yes (provision implemented before the adoption of Directive 2016/801)

As indicated previously (*See Q6c on the conditions for the renewal of the residence permit*), the requirement for the real and serious nature of the studies is stipulated, since the law of 7 March 2016 on the rights of foreign nationals in France, by article L. 313-18 of the CESEDA.

Two cumulative criteria may be taken into account by the administration, to assess the real and serious nature of the studies followed by the foreign national:

- attendance in the study course and exams;
- the control of reasonable progress in the chosen university course.

⁹² NOR circular : MENS1515329C no. 2015-122 of 22 July 2015 of the MENESR (Ministry for Higher Education and Research) on the implementation of a gap period.

http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid285/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=91567

⁹³ See Article 21(2)(f) of the Students and Researchers Directive

The Prefect is responsible for assessing, in view of all the elements in the file, if a renewal refusal is justified. It is important, notably, to take into account the age of the facts, the person's path since his/her arrival in France and the seriousness of the studies followed (failure in exams, absence of validation of the diploma, numerous changes in orientation...).

Q11. Do the **number of years** an international student possesses a residence permit for the purpose of studying count towards being granted access to long-term residence or citizenship?

Yes for the citizenship application

No for the residence permit

The number of years under the student status cannot be taken into consideration for obtaining a **"long term resident - EU" residence permit**, which is issued to foreign nationals proving a regular stay of five years and meeting the conditions of article L. 314-8 of the CESEDA, in accordance with Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003.

Persons proving a regular and uninterrupted stay of at least 5 years in France may indeed obtain the "long-term resident - EU" residence permit; this prior stay may have taken place under any type of residence permit: temporary, multiannual or residence permit. Certain categories of grounds for stay are, however, excluded on an exhaustive basis:

Therefore, and in accordance with the Directive 2003/109/EC, article L. 314-8 excludes from the scope of application residence permits corresponding to a temporary right to stay to people who do not necessarily intend to stay in France on a durable basis. Periods under certain permits, notably the temporary or multiannual "student" permit cannot be taken into account for the 5 years of regular stay prior to the request for this status (article L. 313-7 of the CESEDA).

With regard to citizenship, the number of years under the student status are taken into consideration and can even reduce the requested number of years before submitting an application.

Article 21-17 of the French Civil Code stipulates that: *"Subject to the exceptions provided by articles 21-18, 21-19 and 21-20, citizenship may only be granted to a foreign national who proves habitual residence in France during the five years prior to the application filing"*.

Moreover, article 21-18 of the same code stipulates the reduction in the period indicated in article 21-17 to two years: *1° For the foreign national who has successfully completed two years of higher education in view to acquiring a diploma issued by a French university or higher education institution; (...)*

External factors affecting attracting international students

Q12. Based on existing national sources (evaluation reports, media reports, etc.), what are the **external factors** affecting the attraction of international students in your Member State?

Higher education institution rankings: The ranking of higher education institutions may have an impact depending on the profiles of the students (geographical zone, field of study, etc)

The language in which courses are taught: this factor depends on the profile and language of the students. Speaking French is a significant attractiveness factor for French-speaking international students. The increase in courses in English in the institutions should increasingly enable non-French-speaking students to be targeted.

Culture

The **attractiveness factors depend on the type of student**. They differ according to whether the student has links with France (family already present for example), whether he/she comes to France for France (culture, language, etc), whether he/she is looking for a specific course and he/she wants the best possible offer in the global higher education market, etc.

The **international rankings** may play a role for certain student profiles (courses of excellence, geographical zone, other factors evoked above, etc.). However, it is not the factor with the most influence. For example, the Shanghai ranking is a reference in Asia, but not in the other world regions. The rankings may play a role for students **enrolled in fields of excellence**. Well-placed institutions, for example, highlight this item in their communication strategies⁹⁴.

According to some questionnaires and interviews carried out as part of this study, some third countries pay specific attention to these international rankings, for example, by conditioning cooperation agreements or grants to a good position of the concerned institution in the international rankings⁹⁵.

Campus France has developed an **argument called "Ten good reasons to study in France"**⁹⁶ (available in French, English and Spanish):

- 1) Education subsidised and guaranteed by the Government;
- 2) Quality higher education adapted to students' needs;
- 3) High-level research;
- 4) A world-class economic power;
- 5) An appealing destination for international students;
- 6) A environment favourable to innovation and young entrepreneurs;
- 7) A pleasant and satisfying style of life at the heart of Europe;
- 8) The art of living "à la française";
- 9) French, an international language;
- 10) Advanced industries and international corporations that are leaders in their field.

The survey by Campus France and Kantar Sofres on France's image and attractiveness for foreign students

Three Campus France - Kantar Sofres surveys were carried out in 2011, 2013 and 2017 on **France's image and attractiveness for foreign students**⁹⁷. The latest survey was carried out on-line from 10 July to 26 October 2017 with a sample of 14,245 foreign students including 2,528 who intended to come to France to study in the near future (cohort 1), 4,876 who are currently studying in France (cohort 2), and 6,841 who studied in France (cohort 3). This survey showed that 9 foreign students out of 10 recommended France as a study destination, 9 foreign students out of 10 were satisfied with their stay in France and 9 foreign students out of 10 declared that they were satisfied with the value of their diplomas (88% were satisfied with the quality of teaching). The qualities associated with France and French higher education are confirmed, and even tend to improve.

Whilst their weight was lower during the latest 2017 survey, some **criticisms** tend to remain concerning **living costs, administrative procedures, housing costs and the possibility of working in France after the studies**. With regard to administrative procedures, for example, 53% of the students questioned in 2011 said they were unsatisfied, compared to 52% in 2013 and 46% in 2017.

France is **perceived** as being a country:

- with a considerable **cultural and artistic outreach** (94% compared to 90% in 2011; 91% in 2013),
- **intellectual and scientific** (90% compared to 87% in 2011; 88% in 2013)
- and **with a prestigious history** (90% compared to 87% in 2011; 88% in 2013).
- The **perception of students on the French economy improved in 2017**, returning to its 2011 level: 76% of students questioned consider that France has a stable, high-performance economy (78% in 2011; 64% in 2013).

⁹⁴ Interview with representatives of Campus France, December 2018

⁹⁵ Interview carried out with representatives of Campus France, December 2018 and questionnaire completed by a representative of the *Conférence des présidents d'université* (CPU), December 2018.

⁹⁶ Campus France, Ten good reasons to study in France.

http://ressources.campusfrance.org/visuels_medias/campusfrance/promo/fr/10_bonnes_raisons_fr.pdf

⁹⁷ Campus France, Image and attractiveness of France with foreign students (*Image et attractivité de la France auprès des étudiants étrangers*), main results of the 2017 Campus France Kantar Sofres barometre, Les notes de Campus France no.54, January 2018

http://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/etude_prospect/sofres/en/note_54-2_en.pdf

The **quality of the education** remains at the top of the **criteria for choosing France**. However, the cultural interest and knowledge of French language have become more important; the reputation of the institutions has improved and now comes before the value of diplomas.

The **main reasons for choosing France**:

- the **quality of the education**: 46% (45% in 2011; 51% in 2013)
- the **knowledge of French language**: 41% (37% in 2011; 42% in 2013)
- the **cultural interest**: 38% (31% in 2011; 35% in 2013)
- the **reputation of the institutions or teachers**: 34% (31% in 2011; 37% in 2013)
- the **value of the diplomas**: 32% (33% in 2011; 35% in 2013).

The survey shows that France often benefits from the **fact that foreign students speak French**. In return, **French-speaking increases at the end of the study stay**, even though 9 students out of 10 are also English-speakers.

- Before departure, 84% of the foreign students had an average level of French or better (83% in 2011 and 2013);
- After the study stay, 57% of former non-French speaking students declared that they speak French fluently (48% in 2013; 55% in 2013);
- They were 94% with an average level of English or better (new question in 2017).

2.5 Challenges and good practices in attracting international students

Q13. What are the (a) **challenges** and (b) **good practices** that have been observed in your Member State on attracting international students and for whom is it considered a challenge/good practice (HEI, Member State, student, other)? For each challenge/good practice: why is this considered a challenge/good practice and is this based on input from experts (if so, which experts)/surveys/evaluation reports/interviews/other?

a) The main challenges:

The challenges and obstacles encountered by students vary depending on their profiles. Based on existing reports and the interviews and questionnaires carried out as part of this study, several challenges have been identified⁹⁸:

- The **search for housing** (to which is added the need to have a guarantee, etc.) is one of the main challenges for foreign students.
- The **complexity of administrative procedures** is a challenge identified by all players questioned: procedure to obtain a visa, change of status, etc.
- Improvements can be observed in the possibilities of working in France after the studies. However, some representatives of higher education institutions highlight **the complexity of the formalities to be carried out with the DIRECCTE**, when students work, either during their studies as apprentices, or just after their studies.
- The international student may have the **feeling of being isolated**: difficulties in integrating, making friends, understanding the university system, etc. This is particularly the case for foreign doctoral students who have very few lessons and have difficulties in creating ties.
- The **reform of social protection** does not appear to be clear for international students, who consider this procedure as a new procedure to be carried out in addition to the others.
- Some institutions, notably engineering schools and universities, have shared the challenge of **developing courses in English** in order to continue to attract more foreign students and develop partnerships with foreign institutions.
- Several institutions highlight the **importance of the welcome conditions**, including quality administrative services for an international public (multilingual staff).

⁹⁸ These challenges have been identified based on the interviews and questionnaires carried out with representatives of Campus France, the *Cité internationale universitaire de Paris* (CiuP), the *Conférence des Directeurs des Écoles Françaises d'Ingénieurs* (CDEFI), the *Conférence des présidents d'université* (CPU), ESSEC, the Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI), Bordeaux University and Paris-Saclay University.

The survey by Campus France and Kantar Sofres on France's image and attractiveness for foreign students⁹⁹ identifies as the main challenges: **living costs, administrative procedures, housing costs, and the possibility of working in France after the studies**. Living costs are a subjective criteria, which depends on several factors and levels of comparison, such as the country of origin and the student's situation.

- With regard to the **visa application**, we can mainly identify the **challenges associated with time periods**, the application compilation and information. To answer this, the good practices recommended for the welcome of foreign students at the visa application stage are as follows:

Measures are taken to ensure the priority processing of study visa applications, if applicable, through organisational solutions to reduce processing times and enable students to join their host institutions in time:

- by adapting the appointment grids to reduce appointment times: specific periods for filing long-stay visa applications for studies should be offered in June, July, August and September. Specific attention is paid to students who wish to carry out high level studies (Master and PhD) in France as well as students who come as part of bilateral or inter-university programmes.
- by reinforcing the coordination between the services concerned by the campaign (consular services, SCAC, economic services): the services of Embassies that have signed bilateral agreements notably for co-financing of grants must inform the consulates in order to improve the processing of applications related to the implementation of the latter.
- by preparing targeted communications in order to better inform about the procedures: positions monitor the continuous updating of the information available on their internet sites, with precise indications on the visa issue procedures for students (selection criteria, procedures, supporting documents...), and, if applicable, adding a clear link to the "France-visas" site.

b) Examples of good practices:

See the examples of good practices presented in Q7a.

Amongst the main good practices identified from a set of reports and the interviews and questionnaires collected as part of this study, we can note:

- **The focus on setting up one-stop shops**, with the pooling of international welcome systems and intervention from the prefectures. It should be noted that, despite the interest they present, these systems are often difficult to set up. Only a few one-stop shops are open all year round, most are only open for the start of the university year. Some university hubs set up one-stop shops for in January due to organisation in semesters and the arrival of new students. These counters, and particularly the presence of the prefectures, are some of the measures designed to simplify student paths throughout their stay, in order to attract and retain them.
- **Welcome by institutions within education services and the International Relations Directorate**. However, it is most often students under managed mobility who benefit from support and not free-movers.
- **Events set up by the institutions**: integration day or week, with refresher courses in French, methodology seminars, city visits, excursions, etc.
- More rarely, the **implementation of French as a foreign language lessons** to help students in their daily lives.

⁹⁹ Campus France, Image and attractiveness of France with foreign students (*Image et attractivité de la France auprès des étudiants étrangers*), main results of the 2017 Campus France Kantar Sofres barometre, *op. cit.*

- The numerous systems in place, such as **mentoring or other actions to better integrate the international students**¹⁰⁰.

Initiatives designed for students benefiting from international protection

Whilst students benefiting from international protection are not included in the scope of this study, it appears important to present examples of initiatives in the welcome and integration of foreign asylum seekers, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and beneficiaries of international protection.

- **The example of the MEnS Network**¹⁰¹

The MEnS (*Migrants dans l'Enseignement Supérieur*) network was created in September 2017. It currently brings together around forty French higher education institutions committed to welcoming students and researchers in exile. It also aggregates university partners in migrant welcome, specifically the CPU, Campus France, the *Agence universitaire de la francophonie* (AUF), the PAUSE programme, the Résume association and Uni-R. In parallel, the Network has regular discussions with the DIAIR.

The students concerned are: refugees, asylum seekers, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and stateless persons.

The MeNS Network's aims are to:

- **Promote and support the orientation, enrolment and restart of studies, French language learning and the validation of levels and diplomas and to facilitate social and administrative support** to enable optimal living and study conditions for students and researchers in exile, in French higher education institutions.
- **Coordinate and represent its members, convey the questions, proposals or demands to competent partners and authorities**, after collective validation of positions under the conditions indicated later.
- **Pool good practices, diffuse and exchange information and documents, provide shared tools to best carry out the Network's main mission**. For this, the network is organised around shared times, groups and spaces.

Four working groups (*groupes de travail* - GT) have been set up. Their role is to identify the main problems and make proposals to meet the following issues:

GT1: French as a foreign language (FLE) for migrants and access to studies;

GT2: Validation of acquired skills and recognition of diplomas;

GT3: Coordination of action with institutional and associative partners, on a local and national level;

GT4: Welcome for researchers and international strategy.

The working groups have enabled a set of tangible proposals for the government to be prepared, and which are currently under discussion with the office of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

A website is also planned to publish recommendations on best practices for institutions.

The Network supports PAUSE and the AUF in their action to respectively support researchers in exile and French learning for students in exile.

Lastly, the Network works on an international level to federate a network of universities committed to helping refugees.

The **main recommendations** issued to the institutions, resulting from the **good practices noted in France and abroad** on the welcome for refugee students are as follows:

- Include welcome for students and researchers in exile in the institution's policy

¹⁰⁰ Interview with representatives of Campus France, December 2018

¹⁰¹ Questionnaire completed by a representative of the *Réseau Migrants dans l'Enseignement Supérieur* (Migrants in Higher Education Network - MEnS), November 2018.

- Set up a one-stop shop for welcoming all students and researchers in exile, allowing them to have a contact for all their administrative procedures, at the university and with the public administrations
- Provide systems for linguistic support systems and the construction of professional paths
- Guarantee access for exiled students to the institution's preventive medicine services (medical check-ups, health and psychological monitoring...) and to social assistance services
- Facilitate the restart of studies and insertion in the courses of students in exile
- Facilitate the creation of refugee networks within the universities and help them cooperate with the existing networks/associations in the universities
- Recognise the commitment of students for refugees (student commitment and civic service)
- Create tools to train staff and inform students
- Support exiled students in their diploma recognition procedures
- Support researchers in exile continue their careers
- Set up an ad hoc commission to assess exiled researcher applications which selects applications on formally established criteria, voted by the competent bodies
- Set up steering and monitoring tools for the welcome procedures for students and researchers in exile.

The **main challenges** identified are: the necessity to bring institutions closer together for a better territorial distribution that avoids concentrating the reception of refugees in some institutions only; manage to alleviate the financial efforts made by universities; allow access for refugees enrolled in university diplomas to CROUS grants; support, orientate and better integrate refugees in society and the employment market; better support researchers in exile after their exit from specific mechanisms such as the PAUSE programme.

- **The example of Wintegreat**

Wintegreat is a **social start-up which aims to breathe new life into the career paths of refugees**. Wintegreat has developed a solution to allow *grandes écoles* and universities to commit with a dual impact: on the refugees, who reveal their potential and regain a career path that meets their expectations and on the students who have a citizenship experience. It is based on an ecosystem that places refugees in companies looking to diversity their recruitment and identify talents.

The **Wintegreat programme** is a **12-week springboard programme**, hosted in the *grandes écoles*, and based on lessons (FLE lessons, English lessons, inter-cultural education...), support and a network. In addition to the opportunities that the participants can find thanks to Wintegreat's support or on their own during the programme, Wintegreat offers **additional possibilities via its partners**, to restart studies or professional training, or to directly direct participants towards major companies.

The **WERO platform** offers numerous possibilities to participants: it guarantees a relationship of trust with large companies who wish to take on as an intern or recruit talents that they cannot find elsewhere.

Section 3: Measures and incentives to retain international graduates

3.1. Measures and incentives to retain international graduates.

This section will look at the measures and incentives implemented in France to **retain** international graduates after their studies.

Q14. Measures and incentives to **retain** international graduates in Member States.

Q14a. What are the conditions for **access after study** to national labour market/ self-employment/ start up or spin-off activities/ research project?

Foreign graduates with a diploma at least equivalent to a Master or Professional Licence or a level I diploma labelled by the *Conférence des grandes écoles* may, request a change of status, at the end of their studies or directly, if they can produce an employment contract; or request a temporary residence authorisation (APS) allowing them to look for salaried employment or set up a business.

In both cases, the employment situation is only valid if there is consistency between the diploma and employment and with remuneration at a level at least equal to 1.5 times the SMIC (article R. 5221-29 of the French Labour Code).

- **For what period does France allow students to stay after studies in order to seek employment or set up a business?¹⁰² What happens after this period?**

The law of 24 July 2006 on immigration and integration created a **temporary residence authorisation (APS) allowing foreign students who had obtained a diploma equivalent to a Master to benefit from a right to stay of six months to look for work as part of a first professional experience.** The duration of this APS is extended to one year by law no. 2013-600 of 22 July 2013.

Since 1st November 2016, pursuant to the law no. 2016-274 of 7 March 2016 and its application decrees, **the issue of a one-year (non-renewable) APS was confirmed** and now concerns foreign students who hold a diploma of bac + 5 level (Master or level I diploma from the *Conférence des grandes écoles*), a PhD or a Professional Licence who, following their studies, **remain in France to look for paid employment or set up a business.** Consistency with the education course remains necessary to avoid procedural abuse.

The law no. 2018-778 of 10 September 2018 for managed immigration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration provided for the creation of a "job seeker or company creation" residence permit that enables students and researcher to remain in France for one year after the end of their studies to start their careers.

The administrative situation of graduate students who find work at the end of their studies is aligned with that of students who benefit from an APS to look for their first job. In both cases, the employment situation is only valid if there is consistency between the diploma and employment with remuneration at a level set by Council of State decree.

The APS has been increasingly used by international students since its creation:

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of students Beneficiaries of APS	3,740	8,453	11,228	12,724	13,759

Source: AGDREF, DSED, Ministry of the Interior

¹⁰² See article 25(1) of the Student-Researchers Directive

- **Are there any restrictions regarding the job field in which the international student can seek employment or set up a business?**

Yes

Graduate students are exempted from the labour market test if there is consistency between the diploma and employment with remuneration at a level set by Council of State decree.

Thus, a graduate student who finds employment in a sector of activity and with responsibilities far removed from his/her diploma should be subject to the labour market test (his/her employer must prove that he/she has not found a candidate with the skills sought on the labour market) before receiving a residence permit authorising him/her to exercise the professional activity, in accordance with common law provisions.

- **Does the international student require a minimum level of degree in order to be allowed to stay after studies in order to seek employment or set up a business?¹⁰³**

Yes

The required diplomas to obtain a temporary residence authorisation (APS) are exclusively diplomas authorised on a national level, i.e. diplomas obtained in France or French diplomas issued by a foreign university with an agreement with the French government.

These diplomas come under two separate categories:

- diplomas at least equivalent to the level of Master (ruling of 12 May 2011 (NOR: IOCL1109636A) taken in application of article R. 311-35 of the Ceseda);
- diplomas other than those at least equivalent to the level of Master: Professional Licence diplomas and those of level I "MS" (*Mastère spécialisé*) and "MSc" (Master of Science) labelled by the *Conférence des grandes écoles* (CGE).

The Master only covers "Master 2" (Bac+5), that are awarded on completion of a second university cycle and not "Master 1" (Bac+4, the level of the old masters) which correspond to the first year of a second university cycle.

The ruling of 12 May 2011 refers to other lists of institutions or diplomas, notably:

- the list of schools authorised to issue the title of graduate engineer (ruling of 25 February 2013 setting the list of schools authorised to issue the title of graduate engineer, NOR no.: ESRS1241586A);
- the list of diplomas from private and consular technical higher education institutions approved by the Ministry of Higher Education and granting their holders the grade of master (Official Special Bulletin no. 4 of 20 June 2013 of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research).

Q14b. Are there any other particular policy measures or incentives to retain international students in place?

The law of 10 September 2018 which transposes the "Students and Researchers" Directive 2016/801 enables students under a mobility programme or convention between higher education institutions and researchers **to carry out a mobility operation in France covered by the residence permit from the first EU Member State.**

This law also proposes to **benefit to former foreign graduates with a diploma** at least equivalent to the level of Master or a Professional Licence or a level I diploma labelled by the *Conférence des grandes écoles*, **within a maximum of four years after the date they obtained their diploma in France, the same rights and obligations provided by the temporary residence permit indicated above ("student job seeker or company creation").**

Thus, the foreign student who has graduated in France, who has returned to his/her country of origin (or another country) after his/her studies in France, and who then wishes to return to work, has the possibility of benefiting from this deferred right, up to a maximum of four years after obtained his/her diploma.

¹⁰³ See article 25(2) of the Student and Researchers Directive.

Foreign students holding a "job seeker or company creation" APS may be issued with **multiannual "talent passport" valid for a maximum of four years** as an employee with the indication "young employee graduate or employee of a young innovative company", "highly qualified worker - European Blue Card", "researcher" and "artist-performer" depending on the professional project presented. It is not necessary to request a work authorisation from the DIRECCTE.

Lastly, holders of the "talent passport" permit have the option of bringing to France their spouse and the couple's children (and not only the children of the talent passport's holder as it is currently the case).

Q15. Are there **initiatives of HEIs or the private sector** whereby support is provided to students following the completion of their studies? (e.g. in specialised or niche areas, in the form of counselling, contract with students to commence work with a company after the completion of their studies). Please also consider initiatives at a regional level.

Yes, initiatives implemented by higher education institutions.

Yes, initiatives implemented by the private sector

Initiatives may be implemented by the higher education institutions to provide support to students after their studies. However, these actions generally target all students, without specifically targeting international students.

For example, during their courses, ESSEC students benefit from career advice and support. Following their studies, these services are provided by the ESSEC Alumni association to members. If they choose to become members of the association, graduates have access to a set of tools to promote their professional integration¹⁰⁴.

Initiatives have also been implemented by the private sector, often as part of partnerships with higher education institutions.

- **The monitoring of graduates after their studies:**

The higher education institutions, or other actors, **monitor graduates after their studies**, particularly in terms of **professional integration**. These surveys generally concern all students, without specifically targeting international students. For example, engineering schools generally monitor their students after graduation, without distinguishing between French and foreign students¹⁰⁵.

In its annual report¹⁰⁶, the CGE indicates that "the comparison between students from European Union countries and students from countries outside of the EU is significant. 76.1% of students from countries outside of the EU decide to remain in France to work, whereas only 30.3% of foreign students from the EU make that choice."

In the survey on graduate integration in 2018¹⁰⁷, the CGE notes that "foreign graduates are proportionately more numerous, after their studies, to take a job outside of France, notably in their country of origin".

¹⁰⁴ Questionnaire completed by a representative of ESSEC, December 2018.

¹⁰⁵ Questionnaire completed by a representative of the Conférence des *Directeurs des Écoles Françaises d'Ingénieurs* (CDEFI), December 2018.

¹⁰⁶ Conférence des grandes écoles, 2018 Annual Report

<https://www.cge.asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2018-cge-rapport-d-activite.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ Conférence des grandes écoles, Insertion of Grandes écoles graduates (*L'insertion des diplômés des Grandes écoles*), Results of the 2018 survey conducted between January and March by 176 *Grandes écoles* members of the CGE, June 2018

<https://www.cge.asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/enquete-insertion-cge-2018.pdf>

The survey carried out by Campus France and Kantar Sofres on **France's image and attractiveness with foreign students**¹⁰⁸ is based on three cohorts, including one on **graduates who have studied in France**. The **France Alumni network** also enables monitoring of international graduates from French higher education.

Q16. Does your government and/or HEIs implement any strategies in your Member State to **encourage former international graduates** (i.e. international alumni who have already left the Member State) to establish and/or maintain a connection to the national labour market)?

Yes, strategies implemented by higher education institutions.

Yes, strategies implemented by the government.

Strategies are implemented both by the government and the higher education institutions in order to retain ties with their former international graduates, mainly via **alumni networks**.

- **The France Alumni platform created by Campus France**¹⁰⁹

The France Alumni network, coordinated by Campus France, is the **global network for graduates from French higher education**. The **France Alumni platform**¹¹⁰ was launched in 2014, with the aim of maintaining the ties that exist between France and people educated in the country. France Alumni allows institutions to reinforce their image internationally and offers services and advantages to their graduates. The on-line platform offer different services: professional opportunities, advice to promote the French path, alumni portraits, etc. The representatives of France Alumni worldwide regularly organise encounters and events for the alumni present in the countries.

105 countries have launched their networks. The network includes almost **265,000 members in these 105 countries**, and over 3,000 partners (voluntary, free membership). 750 higher education and training institutions have joined the France Alumni network, both in France and abroad.

The aim is to build on these networks in terms of **influence, and notably economic diplomacy**, as highlighted in the example of the initiative launched in the USA (*see box below*).

The creation of the France Alumni Ambassadors network in the USA

The **France Alumni Ambassadors network in the USA**¹¹¹ was created to promote French higher education in American institutions.

An **on-line mapping** lists all the France Alumni Ambassadors in the country. It has over 700 voluntary ambassadors in the USA.

The long-term aim is to create a world network of ambassadors to serve as relays in different areas with the French Embassies abroad.

The France Alumni network is particularly useful, in terms of **development with the economic world**. In Poland, for example, the network was created one and a half years ago. Since then, over 700

¹⁰⁸ Campus France, Image and attractiveness of France with foreign students (*Image et attractivité de la France auprès des étudiants étrangers*), main results of the 2017 Campus France Kantar Sofres barometre, Les notes de Campus France no.54, January 2018.

<https://www.campusfrance.org/fr/ressource/image-et-attractivite-de-la-france-aupres-des-etudiants-etrangers-principaux-resultats-1>

¹⁰⁹ Interview with representatives of Campus France, December 2018.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.francealumni.fr/fr>

¹¹¹ <https://www.francealumni.fr/fr/poste/etatsunis/page/24190/devenez-ambassadeur-france-alumni>

job offers have been proposed via the platform. Companies have shown a real desire to use this network to find candidates in the skills areas that concern them.

International graduates also play a role in the country in **recruitment support for candidates**. More and more institutions ask graduates to be **recruitment jury members abroad**.

France Alumni is a network unifier: without replacing the existing networks, it becomes an important tool for embassies. It also enables French companies to be put in contact with each other in geographic zones that they do not know, for example.

As part of the monitoring of the French President's speech on 28 November 2017 in Ouagadougou, Campus France has developed and put on-line on 1 June 2018 **a module to verify diplomas obtained in France**. This module is integrated into the France Alumni platform. An Alumni who wishes to request a circulation visa can download his/her diploma obtained in France in his/her France Alumni profile. Campus France has undertaken to provide the visa services with the verification results within short time periods.

- The alumni networks developed by higher education institutions

Numerous higher education institutions have developed their alumni networks. These are more generally **grandes écoles** than universities, where the networks are currently being created¹¹². The alumni represent a major issue for the institutions, as testified by the conference organised on 5 June 2018 by the *Conférence des grandes écoles* (CGE) on "Alumni, players for the future"¹¹³. In her introductory speech, the CGE's Chairperson provided an estimate of between 1.5 and 3 million alumni for the 220 *Grandes écoles* of the CGE. Some CGE *grandes écoles* can build on very significant networks (for example: 50,000 alumni for ESSEC, 57,000 for HEC, over 100,000 for the INSA Group, etc.), others have smaller networks due to more recent school creations or sizes, with lower student numbers. A **survey on the state of alumni associations in France** was carried out by Choose my Company, in partnership with the CGE¹¹⁴. This study shows that the main missions of the alumni networks are **individual support, employability, student recruitment and professional development; outreach of the school in France and abroad; and financing**, notably to feed the association. One-third of schools have an international delegation, responsible for graduates based abroad. Alumni associations are considered as extending the role of the career and corporate relations service in the *grandes écoles*.

3.2 Challenges and good practices in retaining international students

Q17. What are the (a) **challenges** and (b) **good practices** that have been observed in your Member State on retaining international students and for whom is it considered a challenge/good practice (HEIs, Member State, student, other)? For each challenge/good practice: why is this considered a challenge/good practice and is this based on input from experts (if so, which experts)/studies/evaluation reports/surveys/interviews/other? Please briefly summarise the input and findings of these experts/studies/evaluation reports/interviews/other.

a) Challenges:

After their studies, international students are faced with several difficulties which limit their stay in the country. Amongst the main challenges identified by the private sector representatives questioned as part of this study, we can note:

- **The difficulties due to change of status procedures:** Procedures to change status are complex and students who do not meet the conditions for the Talent Passport may

¹¹² This is the case, for example, for Paris-Saclay University and Bordeaux University.

¹¹³ *Conférence des grandes écoles*, Acts of the conference 5 June 2018, "Alumni, players of the future".

<https://www.cge.asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2018-actes-du-colloque-5-juin-alumni-acteurs-de-l-avenir.pdf>

¹¹⁴ *Conférence des grandes écoles* and Choose my Company, 2018 AlumniIndex® Study, 5 June 2018

<https://www.cge.asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2018-06-05-etude-alumni-cge.pdf>

have to wait up to six months to obtain their change to employee status¹¹⁵. Certain private sector representatives also highlight the need to improve the reception in the prefectures, as well as the necessity for the prefectures and the DIRECCTE to have a better understanding of the different situations arising during status changes ¹¹⁶ ;

- The length of **application processing times**¹¹⁷ and **times for the issue of residence permits**: the time periods for obtaining permits are also a brake on the smooth flow in the immigration services. In the Paris region, for example, a student needs to wait around three to four months before obtaining a new permit;
- The **difficulties related to the different procedures depending on the administrations**: some private sector representatives note that the measures are not the same between the different administrations concerned by student immigration procedures. Depending on the DIRECCTE and Prefectures, the filing modalities, supporting documents and time to obtain residence permits vary considerably. Similarly, obtaining an APS is considered as a real "bonus", but the conditions of issue (diploma, definitive certificate of success) vary from one prefecture to another. According to the same actors, international students are well informed of the immigration procedures, but they come up against poorly trained prefectural officers who are often unaware of the new regulations. In their opinion, the administrations lack the resources to harmonise the procedures and ensure that students outside of Paris and in Ile de France are not treated differently, for both the appointment and to obtain a residence permit.
- **The visa and residence permit validation policies are not dematerialised**, which is also a brake on retaining students¹¹⁸.

b) Good practices:

- The role of the **alumni** (*see Q16*)
- The **provisions to facilitate professional student immigration**: Over the last few years, the implementation of modalities to facilitate professional student immigration have shown results. The **digitalisation** of the procedures is the main reason. For example, the DIRECCTE in Ile de France is experimenting an on-line system, where foreign students living in Paris and their sponsor employers can file work authorisation applications on line. In a few minutes and a few clicks, the application is filed and an officer must process it within 3 weeks. This practice, if it is generalised to the other DIRECCTEs could facilitate the procedures for companies that are often wary when faced with administrative procedures, for the foreign students and especially for the administrations as it avoids sending by post, the accumulation of paper files and reduces response times. Certain prefectures are also open to the sending of documents by email, which facilitates the procedures¹¹⁹.
- The **creation of the Talent Passport - Qualified Employee status** has enabled the most highly qualified students to stand out from the others and be able to benefit from facilities in application receipt and processing times¹²⁰.
- **The Temporary Residence Authorisation** represents a very practical tool for job seeking students. It allows students to look for work in France without being subject to labour market test¹²¹.

¹¹⁵ Questionnaire completed by representatives of France Immigration, January 2019.

¹¹⁶ Questionnaire completed by a representative of Fragomen, December 2018.

¹¹⁷ Questionnaire completed by a representative of Fragomen, December 2018.

¹¹⁸ Questionnaire completed by representatives of France Immigration, January 2019.

¹¹⁹ Questionnaire completed by representatives of France Immigration, January 2019.

¹²⁰ Questionnaire completed by representatives of France Immigration, January 2019.

¹²¹ Questionnaire completed by representatives of France Immigration, January 2019.

Section 4: Bilateral and multilateral cooperation with third countries

Q18. Has your Member State concluded and/or intends to conclude any **bilateral and/or multilateral agreements** with countries of origin concerning international students? Please distinguish between agreements in place with countries with developed economies and those with developing economies as classified by the United Nations and summarise and provide an overview of the type of agreements – without listing all the agreements and detailed provisions.

Yes, bilateral/multilateral agreements have been signed or are planned with industrialised countries. Please elaborate on the aspects listed below:

Yes, bilateral/multilateral agreements have been signed or are planned with developing countries. Please elaborate on the aspects listed below:

Since 2006, France has signed agreements with emigration countries in order to carry out consistent management of migratory flows adapted to the needs of both signatory countries and the migratory profile of the partner countries, as part of a partnership.

These agreements reinforce the idea that migration and development are closely related. In general, they are based on 3 aspects: the organisation of legal migration, the fight against clandestine immigration and solidarity development.

23 agreements have been signed.

8 concerted management of migration flow agreements:

- Agreement with Senegal signed on 23 September 2006 and completed by an amendment on 25 February 2008 (entry into force on 1 July 2009);
- Agreement with Gabon signed on 5 July 2007 (entry into force on 1 September 2009);
- Agreement with Republic of Congo signed on 25 October 2007 (entry into force on 1 August 2007);
- Agreement with Benin signed on 28 November 2007 (entry into force on 1 March 2010);
- Agreement with Tunisia signed on 28 April 2008 (entry into force on 1 July 2009);
- Agreement with Cape Verde signed on 24 November 2008 (entry into force on 1 April 2011);
- Agreement with Burkina Faso signed on 10 January 2009 (entry into force on 1 June 2011);
- Agreement with Cameroon signed on 21 May 2009 (awaiting ratification)

9 agreements or conventions on the mobility of young professionals:

- Agreements with Macedonia on 1 December 2009 (entry into force on 1 June 2013), Montenegro on 2 December 2009 (entry into force on 1 June 2013), Serbia on 2 December 2009 (entry into force on 1 June 2013) and Lebanon on 26 June 2010 (awaiting ratification).
- Agreement with Gabon signed and entry into force on 24 February 2010
- Agreement with Canada signed on 14 March 2013 (entry into force on 1 January 2015)
- Agreement with Bosnia-Herzegovina signed on 3 July 2014 (awaiting ratification)
- Agreement with Algeria signed on 26 October 2015 (entry into force on 5 April 2018)
- Convention with the USA (OFII/FACC) signed and entry into force on 17 March 2017.

6 agreements on professional migration only:

- Agreement with Mauritius signed on 23 September 2008 (entry into force on 1 September 2010)
- Agreement with Russia signed on 27 November 2009 (entry into force on 1 March 2011).
- Agreement with Georgia on 12 November 2013 on the stay and circular migration of professionals (awaiting ratification)
- Agreement with South Korea signed on 17 September 2015 (awaiting ratification)
- Agreement with Armenia signed on 27 October 2016 (awaiting ratification)
- Agreement with India signed on 10 March 2018 (awaiting ratification)

With the exception of the agreements signed with Senegal and Russia (which refer to common law), all the agreements offer the **possibility to graduates of certain diplomas to complete their education with an initial professional experience.**

For this, the student is issued a temporary residence permit allowing him/her to look for and occupy employment as long as this is related to his/her course and has remuneration at least equal to one and a half times the SMIC (except for certain agreements which do not contain stipulations on remuneration).

If the student has an employment contract or promise that corresponds to these criteria, he/she can obtain a change of status in accordance with his/her employment situation.

The temporary residence permits are issued according to different modalities depending on the agreements. Depending on the agreements, the provisions of common law may be more or less advantageous.

- Duration condition:
 - 6 months renewable once: Benin, Burkina Faso, Mauritius, Tunisia, Lebanon;
 - 9 months non renewable: Cape Verde, Congo;
 - 9 months renewable once: Gabon, Cameroon; - 12 months: Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Armenia, Georgia;
 - 12 months renewable once: India.

- Diploma condition:
 - Diploma at least equivalent to a Master obtained in a French institution: Cape Verde, Congo;
 - Diploma at least equivalent to a Master obtained in a French institution or in the country of origin as part of an agreement for the issue of diplomas within an international partnership: - Lebanon, India;
 - Professional Licence or diploma at least equivalent to a Master obtained in a French institution: Benin, Gabon;
 - Professional Licence or diploma at least equivalent to a Master obtained in a French institution or in an institution in the country of origin as part of an agreement for the issue of diplomas within an international partnership: Mauritius, Tunisia, Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia;
 - Professional Licence or diploma at least equivalent to a Master obtained in a French institution or in an institution in the country of origin **or in a third country authorised by this country** as part of an agreement for the issue of diplomas within an international partnership: Cameroon, Burkina Faso;
 - Professional Licence or diploma at least equivalent to a Master, reciprocity of higher education institution: Senegal.

Q19. Are there any measures or incentives in place to avoid **brain drain** in the country of origin when attracting and retaining international students?

Yes, measures related to brain drain are in place.

One of the focuses of the attractiveness strategy for international students announced on 19 November 2018 aims to **increase the presence and outreach of France abroad**¹²². The attractiveness of French higher education is not only based on the number of international students present in France, but also on the presence and outreach of French institutions abroad, under very varied forms. This delocalised education offering is often adapted to **best meet local needs**. The Government intends to **intensify the projection of French universities and schools abroad**, by building on **two complementary objectives**:

- **Increase the outreach of French higher education**, by multiplying the training capacities of institutions abroad;
- **Reinforce French development aid policy**, by offering young people in partner countries the "possibility of following courses offered by French institutions without having to leave their own country". The French-Senegal campus, along with the French-Tunisian University for Africa and the Mediterranean are cited as examples.

¹²² Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

These delocalised campuses **are a pillar of this development aid policy**, with emphasis on Africa, to **avoid brain drain and to respond to rationales of university reinforcement** in certain world regions. The aim is to meet local, economic or industrial needs, for example. This may be a request from local French companies¹²³.

The attractiveness plan focuses on **projects with universities in 19 African countries identified as priorities** (Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Haiti, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Chad, Togo). Several projects are being developed in West Africa and North Africa (Maghreb).

This strategy is based on two tools:

- A **seed fund containing five million euros** will be set up in 2019 by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs to support the emergence of education projects co-built by French and foreign institutions, by taking into account the specific needs of the society and employment market in the considered countries;
- A **support fund containing 20 million euros per year** from 2020 will be created by the French Development Agency (AFD), to support the development of these projects.

The example of the French-Senegal campus:

During his visit to Senegal in February 2018, the French President wanted France and Senegal to join forces to create a French-Senegal campus. On 16 November, the French and Senegalese Ministers for Higher Education signed a common declaration that marked the first tangible aspects of this **future campus: located within the new city of Diamniadio**, it will offer 17 education projects in the areas of **agronomics and agro food, digital technologies**, the reinforcement of capacity and **trainer training** and the **tertiary sector**. 8 French institutions and 12 Senegalese institutions have committed to welcoming the first students and teachers to the Campus for the start of the 2019 university year¹²⁴.

Q20. Do HEIs in your Member States have **initiatives and cooperation agreements with HEIs in third countries in place**? If so, what types of agreements and for which purpose (e.g. student exchange programmes)?

Yes

In a context marked by strong international competition, the institutions have seen significant transformations over the last two decades in order to develop and reinforce their international openness strategies.

The law of 10 August 2007 on the freedoms and responsibilities of universities¹²⁵, known as the LRU law, granted **universities** autonomy allowing them to develop a real international strategy. Each higher education institution develops its own international openness strategy through bilateral agreements signed with foreign institutions outside of the EU, diplomas with international partnership (double diplomas, joint diplomas...), delocalised courses, European mobility programmes as part of Erasmus+, etc.

The cooperation agreements between French and foreign institutions are particularly important for the institutions as they notably allow for the exemption from tuition fees on both sides, when this item is included in the agreement¹²⁶.

There are no exhaustive figures due to the complexity of processing such a significant amount of information¹²⁷. The type and number of agreements vary according to each institution. For example,

¹²³ Interview with representatives of Campus France, December 2018

¹²⁴ Press file, Attractiveness Strategy for international students (*Stratégie d'attractivité pour les étudiants internationaux*), 19 November 2018.

https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/document/document/2018/11/dossier_de_presse_-_strategie_dattractivite_pour_les_etudiants_internationaux_-_19.11.2018_0.pdf

¹²⁵ Law no. 2007-1199 of 10 August 2007 on the freedoms and responsibilities of universities.

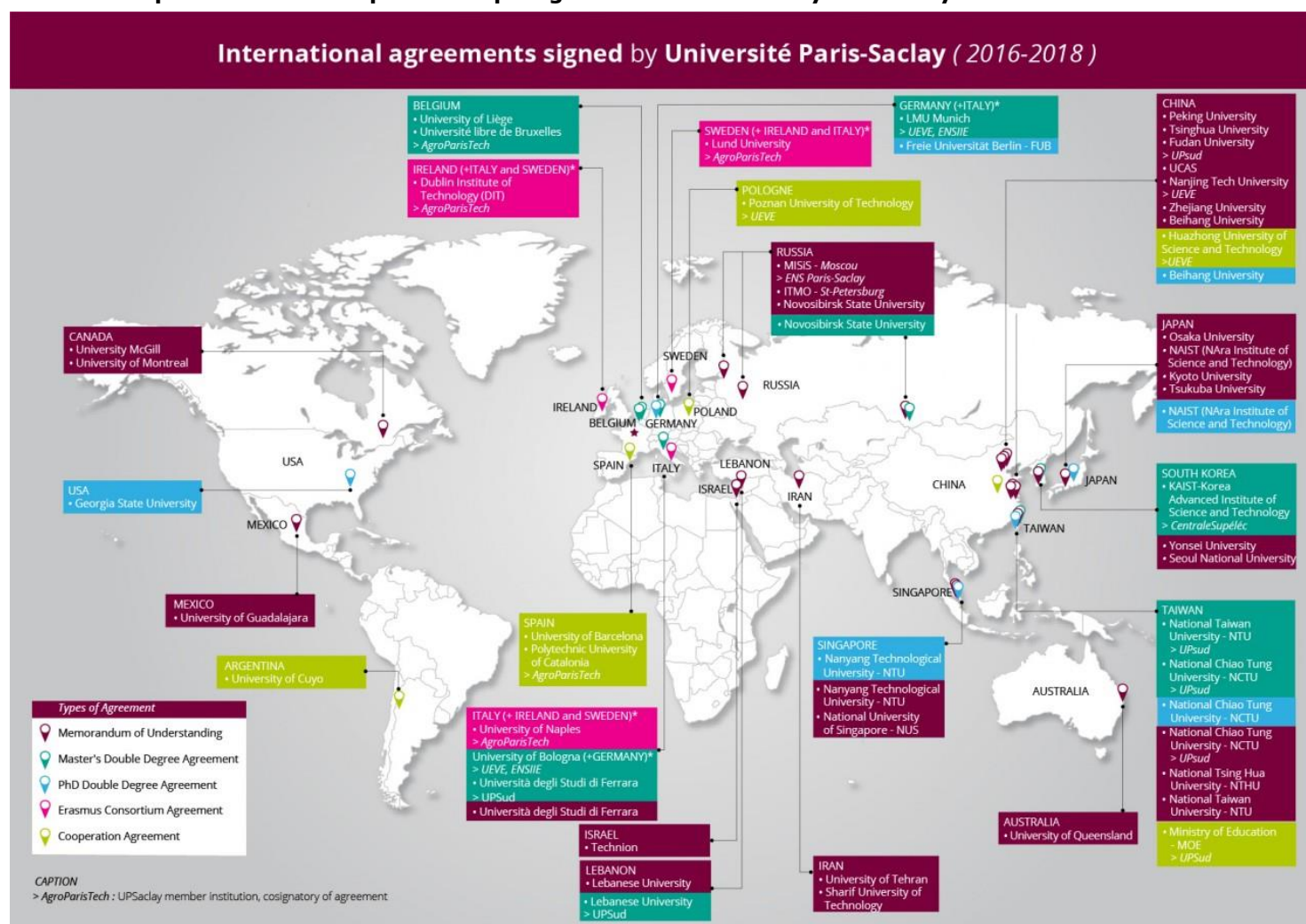
<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT00000824315>

¹²⁶ Interview with representatives of Campus France, December 2018

¹²⁷ Interview carried out with representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI), November 2018.

Paris-Saclay University has signed over 400 agreements with all types of foreign universities and higher education institutions¹²⁸.

Map of international partnerships signed with Paris-Saclay University since 2016¹²⁹:



Bordeaux University's partnership strategy has two complementary dimensions: the development of partnerships and the identification of priority university partnerships in targeted world regions. With the essential support from IdEx¹³⁰ since its creation in 2014, the internationalisation momentum has resulted in a significant increase in the number of international cooperation agreements: the number of diplomas through international partnerships has been multiplied by three in four years, and the mobility opportunities have increased for students as part of bilateral exchange agreements. In parallel, since 2014, four priority interest geographic zones have been targeted: Japan, Canada, California and the Basque country. Around ten priority university partners have since been identified. In 2015, along with the expansion to new geographic zones of interest for the site (China, India, Brazil and Taiwan), a

¹²⁸ Questionnaire completed by representatives of Paris-Saclay University, December 2018.

¹²⁹ <https://www.universite-paris-saclay.fr/fr/international-partnerships>

¹³⁰ In 2010, the French government launched the **Programme of Investments for the Future (PIA)** designed to finance innovative and promising investments in France. Higher education and research were identified as key priorities, with the aim of developing in France around ten world-level **higher education and scientific research hubs of excellence**. The **initiatives of excellence (IdEx)** bring together higher education and research institutions that are already recognised for their scientific and educational excellence, according to a regional logic. Their aim is to ensure France's scientific outreach abroad and attract high-level teachers, researchers and students. Bordeaux University's Initiative of excellence (IdEx Bordeaux) is one of the major programmes selected to meet this aim.

university was added to the list of target university partners, the National Taiwan University in Taipei. With regard to international partnership agreements, Bordeaux University has 17 Consortium Agreements, 185 Framework Agreements, 19 Delocalised Diplomas, 39 Double diplomas / multiple diplomas / joint diplomas, 124 student exchange agreements, and 698 Erasmus+ study agreements¹³¹.

The **grandes écoles** develop their own international strategies, based on a broad academic network and targeted initiatives worldwide (bilateral or multilateral partnerships, delocalised courses, etc.).

For example, according to the questionnaire completed by the CDEFI as part of this study¹³², the main actions developed by the **engineering schools** internationally, most often within the framework of cooperation agreements, concern student mobility and double or joint diplomas¹³³. French engineering schools welcome nearly 20,000 foreign students to their courses in France, representing 14.3% of the total in 2017-2018. The share of foreign students has increased by 30% over the last five years and has doubled since 2005. The three main countries of origin of students are Morocco, China and Tunisia. This change testifies to the attractiveness of French engineering schools and shows the effectiveness of the promotion policy for these institutions abroad. One of the key actions favoured by schools to develop incoming and outgoing mobility (notably to rebalance incoming and outgoing flows) is the double diploma. In 2016, slightly over 3,000 engineering school graduates held a double diploma, over half of which thanks to a partnership with another European university.

Locations of French higher education institutions abroad

The study carried out by Campus France on the locations of French higher education institutions abroad¹³⁴ highlights that the implementation of these campuses abroad is the result of **specific initiatives in a context of autonomy for the institutions**. Several objectives meet this strategy:

- promote the institution abroad;
- offer students an international experience whilst retaining the same quality of teaching;
- meet the needs of delocalised French companies. Local students who have received "education à la française" are more attractive: quality of teaching, no expatriation costs, no problems for expatriate staff adaptation, etc;
- meet the host country's education needs whilst avoiding brain drain;
- develop the country's attractiveness (for example, Morocco) whilst diffusing French know-how.

Campus France quotes the *Global Higher Education* which states that in 2014, France was **in fourth place of the main international campus exporting countries** (12), behind the USA (77), the UK (30) and Australia (17). The main importing countries of international campuses are China, of which Hong Kong (30), Dubai (24) and Singapore (14).

The Campus France publication identifies the **different forms** of higher education institution outreach abroad:

- **institutions abroad** (created following a bilateral governmental agreement or a bilateral agreement between institutions),
- **multi-site campuses** (opening of campuses where the quality and organisation of education are identical to the original institution, whilst adapting to the country's education needs),
- **delocalised institutions** (identical reproduction of the institution abroad),
- **delocalised courses** (delocalisation of the course and not the institution),
- **programmes supported as part of bilateral or multilateral agreements** (programmes initiated by the governments offering education of excellence adapted to the local context, mobilising a group of French and foreign institutions),
- **offices abroad** (representation of the institution abroad to identify the development potential on-site, promote the institution and recruit students),

¹³¹ Questionnaire completed by representatives of Bordeaux University, December 2018.

¹³² Questionnaire completed by a representative of the *Conférence des Directeurs des Écoles Françaises d'Ingénieurs* (CDEFI), December 2018.

¹³³ The scope of this study covers international students and notably excludes researchers and interns. The agreements signed with engineering schools within this framework are not developed in this section.

¹³⁴ Campus France, Locations of French higher education institutions abroad (*Les implantations des établissements français d'enseignement supérieur à l'étranger*), Les brèves no.2, May 2016.

http://ressources.campusfrance.org/visuels_medias/campusfrance/cartes_geo/fr/carte_campus_aetranger_fr.pdf

- **joint and double diplomas** (partnerships aimed at offering double diplomas to students, including mandatory mobility. This system is particularly developed by universities, due to its effectiveness for mobility and its low cost).

The education offering of **engineering schools** abroad can be presented as an example¹³⁵. They are amongst the institutions that have invested the most in the education offering abroad, by welcoming over 7,000 students abroad, representing almost one-third of the foreign students welcomed to schools in France. Over 20% of students enrolled in French higher education abroad have been educated as part of an offering developed by an engineering school. Today, there are around twenty installations of engineering schools abroad including four delocalised campuses (Centrale Beijing, Centrale Casablanca, CNAM Casablanca and Madagascar).

In November 2015, the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research instructed France Stratégie to carry out a consultancy study on **the promotion and development of French higher education abroad**. In September 2016, France Stratégie published the results of its work in the form of a report entitled "French Higher Education beyond the borders: the urgent need for a strategy". The latter highlights the challenges higher education is facing in internationalising and issues several recommendations to reinforce the internationalisation strategy of higher education institutions¹³⁶.

After a survey of institutions and diplomatic posts, the report describes the countries, disciplines and levels of studies and the installation modalities used by French institutions that export their offering abroad. This report prepares **an analysis of the deployment of the international offering and lists new mobility forms**, with the presence of over 600 programmes abroad, 140 physical installations, almost 330 diplomas delocalised abroad, 138 remote education programmes for a total of almost 37,000 students worldwide.

With regard to the French offering abroad, the report underlines that it concerns mainly **courses of excellence in the second cycle** (almost 70% of diplomas issued) or in specialist areas for which the France brand is recognised (hotel industry, fashion, etc.), with small-sized installations (on average slightly over 200 people registered). **The type of installation favoured by French institutions concerns mainly partnerships** (almost two-thirds of delocalised French programmes involve a foreign academic partner). **Management and engineering sciences are the fields most concerned by delocalisation** (over three-quarters of people enrolled are in the law/economics/management (DEG) (39.8%) and sciences/technologies/health (STS) (36.3 %) fields). **69% of programmes delocalised by French institutions mobilise French language in their courses**, 57% of programmes are entirely taught in French. However, this overall share of French teaching varies considerably depending on the geographic installation zone and the type of programme. The report also notes **an active commitment by engineering schools** which are the institutions that have the most invested in this type of internationalisation. They welcome **almost 7,000 students abroad**, representing one-third of their foreign students. The report describes **a segmented action by business schools**, which train **almost 3,000 students abroad** (excluding multi-sites campuses) and favour two types of commitment: multi-site offerings aiming to welcome their own students for varying periods and offerings targeting profitable segments, and notably executive education. Lastly, the report underlines that **this approach is generally limited for universities: they educate one-third of the students enrolled abroad**, which is low in view of the share of students that they host in France (almost three-quarters). Whilst one out of two universities delocalises part of its education offering abroad, this proportion hides significant disparities. Firstly, the **company administration institutions (*instituts d'administration des entreprises* - IAE) represent one-third of the offering** delocalised by universities (25%). These involve reduced numbers of students and programmes (on average 60 students for a delocalised Bachelor diploma and 30 for a master). Lastly, the **offering is spread out over a number of academic partners abroad**: 263 delocalised diplomas in 52 countries with 145 academic partners. Almost 90% of courses delocalised by universities are outside of bilateral government cooperation programmes, both for partner

¹³⁵ Questionnaire completed by a representative of the *Conférence des Directeurs des Écoles Françaises d'Ingénieurs* (CDEFI), December 2018.

¹³⁶ France Stratégie, French higher education beyond the borders, the urgent need for a strategy (*L'enseignement supérieur français par-delà les frontières, L'urgence d'une stratégie*), September 2016
https://www.strategie.gouv.fr/sites/strategie.gouv.fr/files/atoms/files/rapport-enseignement-superieur-26-09-2016-final-web_0.pdf

institutions (University of Sciences and Technologies in Hanoi, Sorbonne Institute Kazakhstan, etc.) or for French universities abroad (French University of Egypt, French University of Armenia, Galatasaray University, etc.).

Q21. What are the (a) **challenges** and (b) **good practices** that have been observed in your Member State with regard to bilateral and multilateral agreements and for whom is this considered a challenge/good practice (HEIs, Member State, student, other)? For each challenge/good practice, why is it considered a challenge/good practice and is this based on input from experts (if so, which experts)/studies/evaluation reports/surveys/interviews/other? Please briefly summarise the input and findings of these experts/studies/evaluation reports/interviews/other.

a) Challenges:

- The **context of global competition with the emergence of new competitors**, that notably offer attractive grants for international students (e.g. Turkey and Saudi Arabia). The offer of grants is therefore a major criteria in terms of attractiveness¹³⁷.
- One of the challenges to be met in terms of education offerings abroad concerns the **coherence between demands from certain countries or partners and the international strategy of engineering schools**. The latter have recently invested in larger-scale projects in Africa and are increasingly expected to develop partnerships with African institutions and thus support the local education offering. However, country expectations are not always in line with the international strategies of engineering schools, which do not necessarily have the human, technical and financial resources to meet these demands.

b) Good practices:

- The **institutions located abroad** (see Q20).

¹³⁷ Questionnaire completed by a representative of the *Conférence des présidents d'université* (CPU), December 2018.

Conclusion

Fourth host country for international students worldwide and first non-English speaking country, France must meet numerous challenges in a context of strong international competition. For this reason, over a number of years, France has implemented a number of measures designed to attract and retain international students, including the multiannual residence permit issued for the duration of the studies, facilitated access to the employment market with the issue of a temporary residence permit during the job search, the simplification of administrative procedures, etc.

Whilst France has significant **advantages in terms of attractiveness and has recently reinforced the measures** to attract and retain international students, **several challenges** have been identified, based on the interviews and questionnaires carried out as part of this study. The complexity of administrative procedures and the problem of housing are the main obstacles, along with the feeling of isolation of international students.

Numerous **initiatives** carried out by the higher education institutions have been identified as part of this study, to not only develop the different aspects of the attractiveness strategy, but also to improve the welcome, support and integration of international students.

The announcement of the new attractiveness strategy for international students in November 2018 proves that the issue of international students is a priority for France. France is no longer only challenged by neighbouring countries (Germany, Russia), but by powerful attractiveness hubs (China, Canada) and by new players (Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Netherlands). In order to attract 500,000 students by 2027, it is considered essential to adopt an overall strategy, notably by improving the reception conditions, by increasing the number of courses taught in English and by improving access to the employment market for graduates.

However, the measures presented have raised several discussions with the different players concerned (students, student associations and unions, universities and *grandes écoles*, etc), notably concerning differentiated tuition fees. In this context, in January 2019, the Ministry for Higher Education instructed a working group to open **discussions on the reception of international students**. New changes to the welcome policy for international students are planned in the coming months, notably with regard to the volume of exemptions to tuition fees.

Annex 1: Statistics

The statistical annex consists of the following:

- Annexe 1.1.: Contextual statistics on the type of Higher Education Institutions
- Annexe 1.2.: Number of students per field of study
- Annexe 1.3.: Number of international students enrolled in universities by top 5 nationality and gender
- Annexe 1.4.: Number of international students who have graduated, interrupted or terminated their studies
- Annexe 1.5.: International students who have remained in France **at least two years** after graduation per reason

Annex 2: List of interviews carried out or people who have contributed to the study

The interviews and questionnaires were carried out between October and December 2018 by Christelle Caporali-Petit (French EMN Contact Point Manager), Anne-Cécile Jarasse (policy officer within the EMN), Tamara Buschek-Chauvel (policy officer within the EMN) and Emelyne Grellety (intern within the EMN).

1) List of interviews carried out

Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI)

- Olivier STEFFEN, Assistant to the Head of the Strategy, expertise and management of international cooperation programmes department, European and International Affairs Delegation (DAEI)
- Leila WUHL-EBGUY, Assistant to the Head of Department of human resources, parity and the fight against discrimination strategies, Service for the coordination of higher education and research strategies, General Directorate for Higher Education and Professional Insertion
- Marie-Hélène PRIEUR, Department of HR, parity and the fight against discrimination strategies, General Directorate for Higher Education and Professional Insertion

Campus France

- Florian BONAVENTURE, Communications Director
- Olivier CHICHE-PORTICHE, Director, Department of Geographical Coordination
- Karine MOUCHELIN, Assistant Director, Student Welcome and Life Department
- Nabil M'SILTI, Head of the digital service responsible for Campus France's digital communications, Communications Department.

City of Paris

- Sayna SHAHRYARI, Student Life Advisor, Office of Marie-Christine Lemardeley, Assistant Mayor to the City of Paris, Responsible for Higher Education, Research and Student Life

Cité internationale universitaire of Paris (CiuP)

- Marina BURKE, Director, Department for support for international mobility

2) List of completed questionnaires and contributions received

➤ Institutional players

ENIC-NARIC France Centre, attached to the Centre international d'études pédagogiques (CIEP)

- Hélène BEKKER, Manager, Diploma Recognition Department
- Elizabeth ZAMORANO, Assistant Manager, Diploma Recognition Department
- Wafa TRIEK, Processing unit manager, Diploma Recognition Department

General Directorate for Foreign Nationals in France (Direction générale des étrangers en France (DGEF) of the Ministry of the Interior, Sub-directorate for residence and employment (SDST)

- Simon Bertoux, Sub-director for residence and employment,
- Isabelle Burel, Assistant to the Sub-director for residence and employment, Head of the Professional Immigration Office,
- David Robert, Head of the Community law and Specific regime Office,
- Béatrice Perez, Assistant to the Head of the Community law and Specific regime Office,
- Stéphane Coconnier, Assistant to the Head of the Professional Immigration Office,
- Antoine Buno, Policy Officer at the Professional Immigration Office,

➤ **Universities and grandes écoles**

ESSEC Business School

- Edith NGUYEN, Officer for student relations and services

Bordeaux University

- Véronique DEBORD-LAZARO, International Relations Director, Research, International, Partnerships, Innovation hub
- Glenda GILMORE, International Promotion Officer, Research, International, Partnerships, Innovation hub

Paris-Saclay University

- Marie-Amélie PLAZENET LABROSSE, International Welcome Project Manager, Campus Life Department

➤ **Associations representing the universities and grandes écoles**

Conference of Directors of French Engineering Schools (CDEFI)

- Aurélie NOGUES, Policy Officer International and Development Commission

Conference of University Presidents (Conférence des présidents d'université - CPU)

- Jean-Luc NAHEL, International Relations Advisor

➤ **Network bringing together institutions involved in the reception of migrants**

Network of institutions involved in the reception and support for students and researchers in exile - Migrants in higher education (Migrants dans l'enseignement supérieur - MEnS)

- Mathieu SCHNEIDER, Vice-president of Strasbourg University and coordinator of the MEnS network

➤ **Private Sector**

Fragomen France

- Françoise MENOUE, Practice Leader

France Immigration

- Caroline TREUILLARD, General Manager, France Immigration, Mobility Compliance Group
- Cécile RENAUDET, Head of France Immigration

Annex 3: Bibliography

1. Texts, reports and studies

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- Campus France, Beyond the influence: the economic contribution of foreign students in France, Les notes no. 45, November 2014
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2. Legislative texts

a) National legislation

• Laws

- Law no. 2018-778 of 10 September 2018 for managed migration, an effective right to asylum and successful integration.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2018/9/10/INTX1801788L/jo/texte>

- Law no. 2018-166 of 8 March 2018 on orientation and success for students

https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do;jsessionid=403292955690E2FEFDB3C630645CBCEC.tplgfr23s_3?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000036683777&categorieLien=id

- Law no. 2016-274 of 7 March 2016 on the rights of foreign nationals in France

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000032164264&categorieLien=id>

• Codes

- Education Code

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006071191>

- Code on Entry and Residence of Foreign nationals and Right of Asylum (*Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile*)

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- Labour code

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• Decrees, rulings, circulars

- NOR order: ESRS1820223A of 21 August 2018 setting the tuition fees for public higher education institutions under the Ministry of Higher Education

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000037359652>

b) European Legislation

• Directives

- European Parliament and Council Directive (EU) 2016/801 of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (update)

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