

HIGHLIGHTING HOSPITALITY:

THE ROLE OF CITIZEN HOSTING IN THE RECEPTION OF MIGRANTS

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION IN
LYON AND THE RHONE REGION IN 2022

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Key findings

Citizen hosting is a significant contribution in receiving migrants

1,254 people were hosted in the Rhone region in 2022

279,322 bed-nights

39% children

17% single women with children

446 households, 44% of which are single adults

A year marked by the arrival of displaced people from Ukraine

43% of people hosted were displaced from Ukraine, accounting for 18% bed-nights

77% of these are hosted by two schemes specifically designed for this group

Various accommodation types

618 accommodation places mobilised

66% of people were placed in a homestay

31% in an independent apartment

3% in shared accommodation

79% of accommodation in the Lyon city and metropolitan areas

Support at the centre of citizen hosting

At least 1,630 volunteers

450 households hosting in their home

At least 876 volunteers involved to provide social, administrative and inclusion support

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Introduction

Although those opposed to immigration in France receive a lot of publicity, the engagement of many citizens in helping to build a welcoming society, although it is very tangible, receives much less coverage.

From 2015, in response to the refugee reception crisis in Europe, initiatives have nevertheless increased to meet to the needs of refugees and migrants and to facilitate encounters between the new comers and the host society¹. This engagement has led to the establishment of groups of inhabitants and civil society organisations offering citizen accommodation to migrants in many areas.

The war in Ukraine and the displacement of over five million people in the European Union have highlighted this form of hosting, because of the extraordinary upsurge in solidarity from Europeans who have opened their homes to Ukrainians. Citizen hosting then received considerable interest from European governments, who would not have been able to cope with the urgent need for accommodation without this engagement.

France, where around 100,000 people fleeing the conflict came to², has not stayed on the sidelines in this situation. Citizen accommodation has been one of the main solutions to accommodate displaced Ukrainians in France³. Against a national shortage of reception capacity, this type of accommodation has attracted growing interest from public authorities. However, in addition to these opportunities to find available space, the development of citizen accommodation requires consideration of the role that citizens can and should play in hosting migrants in France.

But these citizen hosting initiatives are difficult to understand, as they are very scattered in the forms they take and the types of accommodation they offer. Most of them are local initiatives and are not very high profile. They are hardly involved with the discussion and decision-making bodies relating to migrant reception policies, even though some attempts at co-ordination

¹ See Nadine Camp, 'La mobilisation citoyenne et l'hébergement des personnes exilées. Vers un nouveau modèle d'accueil ?' [Citizen Engagement and the Accommodation of Refugees. Towards A New Reception Model?], *Études de l'Ifri*, Ifri, December 2022, available at: www.ifri.org.

² See *Conflit en Ukraine, bilan d'un an d'engagement du ministère de l'Intérieur* [Conflict in Ukraine, Overview of the Ministry of the Interior's Commitment], available at: www.interieur.gouv.fr.

³ *Ibidem*. According to this report by the Ministry of the Interior, "Accommodation of displaced Ukrainians is based on three complementary arrangements: self-contained housing, citizen accommodation and collective accommodation."

have been initiated by the French government, particularly with regard to the accommodation of people displaced from Ukraine⁴.

The objective of this study is to shed light on citizen accommodation, its role, its challenges, its limitations, etc...by providing an overview of the situation in a specific area, namely the Lyon metropolitan area and the Rhone region in France.

Clearly, drawing up an overview of citizen accommodation in France, and even more so at European level, is an undertaking requiring resources that are difficult to mobilise. Therefore, this study has to be seen as a modest contribution, but it is also grounded in the belief that such an overview must be part of a local context in terms of migration flows, the accommodation situation and civil society presence.

Moreover, this study is mainly based on quantitative data, which in itself is far from accounting for all the issues involved in citizen accommodation, even in the Rhone region. The aim here is to get a better understanding of the nature of this form of accommodation, of making it more visible to the CSOs and to other stakeholders involved, and to try to shed some light on the role that citizens have to play in hosting migrants by examining the conditions in a specific area.

⁴ The online platform 'Pour l'Ukraine' set up by the Interministerial Delegation for the Reception and Integration of Refugees (Diair) made it possible to centralise all offers of support in France, including accommodation. The Prefects were responsible for co-ordinating this accommodation with the help of CSOs specifically for this purpose. However, only a part of the citizen hosting of displaced Ukrainians was organised under this co-ordination scheme, as many people were housed spontaneously. The Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing (Dihal) published a guide 'Hébergement citoyen des déplacés ukrainiens : éléments de cadrage, retour d'expériences' [Citizen Hosting of Displaced Ukrainians: Framework Elements and Feedback].(see : www.gouvernement.fr). Since 2017, Dihal has also launched a programme to support citizen hosting for beneficiaries of international protection, which in 2019 became the Cohabitations solidaires programme. (cohabitations-solidaires.fr). This programme supports 20 home-sharing projects in France.

Methodology

Setting up an observatory for citizen accommodation in the Rhone region

The conduct of a study on citizen accommodation in France in late 2022, which mainly focused on the Lyon metropolitan area, highlighted the need for several organisations to share experiences and to work in networks locally⁵. Following on from this study, Synergies migrations set up an observatory for citizen hosting in the Rhone region in early 2023.

Six civil society organisations (CSOs) are actively involved in this observatory's work⁶ and meet monthly. Its objectives, which have been co-designed, are as follows:

- To produce an overview of citizen accommodation in the Rhone region to provide an overall understanding of initiatives implemented, to measure citizens' contribution in accommodating and supporting migrants, and to make this activity visible;
- To facilitate the sharing of experience between civil society organisations providing citizen accommodation in the Rhone region;
- To identify and analyse the common issues related to citizen accommodation;
- To facilitate dialogue with the relevant stakeholders – at local and national level – to help build collective responses.

This study is part of the framework of this observatory's first objective.

A participatory but not exhaustive study

In order to conduct this overview, a questionnaire was co-developed with the six civil society organisations involved in the observatory. Particular attention was paid to ensure that the questionnaire reflected their actual experiences and questions, without however overburdening their work, which is often mainly carried out by volunteers.

Ten CSOs offering different types of citizen accommodation in the Rhone region – including those involved in the observatory – agreed to complete

⁵ Nadine Camp, *op.cit.*

⁶ Aclaam, Forum réfugiés, J'accueille, JRS Welcome Lyon, L'ouvre porte and Terre d'ancrages.

the questionnaire⁷. It should be noted that the latter actually represent 57 CSOs offering citizen accommodation, with one of them⁸ forming a network.

The questionnaire was supplemented by one-to-one interviews and group discussions. This study presents the analysis of the information collected. However, it is not the result of a collaborative approach and is solely the author's responsibility.

This overview also does not claim to be exhaustive: the ten CSOs which responded to the questionnaire are not the only ones offering citizen accommodation in the Rhone region.

The concept of citizen accommodation: the approach taken

Citizen accommodation can cover many different situations. For the purpose of the observatory for citizen accommodation in the Rhone region, the following definition was chosen: any type of free accommodation offered by a group of people from civil society, on a temporary basis, to an individual migrant or migrant family. This covers homestay accommodation, as well as the provision of an independent apartment by these groups and CSOs, which are also mobilised to provide support for the people hosted and to help them establish links with the host society.

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The aspect of support, provided by the NGO organising the accommodation or in partnership with other organisations, is an essential component in citizen accommodation as it is understood here.

⁷ AAFD, Aclaam, Act for Ref, Appartage, Efco, Forum réfugiés, J'accueille, JRS Welcome, L'ouvre porte, Terre d'ancrages. See the Appendix for a presentation of these CSOs.

⁸ L'Aclaam is a support NGO for a network of 56 CSOs, including 48 which offer citizen accommodation.

Accommodation provided by a third party on an individual basis and outside any collective framework has not been taken into account in this overview (for example, accommodation in the home of a family member or a member of their community of origin, without a link to a NGO). This aspect of accommodation, which is particularly difficult to understand, is nonetheless important⁹.

Nor is squat accommodation, including legally authorised ones, taken into account by the observatory for citizen accommodation at this stage. Although it may be the result of citizen engagement which provides shelter and support for people involved, this type of accommodation involves different situations and challenges, particularly with regard to site occupation.

Accommodation in shared housing was only partially taken into consideration, when it was organised by organisations involved in the observatory and which provided a broader range of citizen accommodation, mainly by mobilising volunteers.

The group affected

The group affected by this overview is made up of migrants, regardless of their administrative status and country of origin. It should be noted that some of the organisations which responded to this questionnaire are open to all people in precarious circumstances, including French nationals. However, the organisations surveyed for 2022 did not actually offer accommodation to this type of user. Out of the ten organisations surveyed, two of them only offered accommodation to displaced Ukrainians.

⁹ The Observatory for Homelessness Report for 2021 puts the number of households that hosted third parties in the Lyon metropolitan area at 2,300, while pointing out that this number is probably an under-estimate.. See: *Le sans-abrisme et l'exclusion liée au logement en 2021. Rapport annuel de l'observatoire du sans-abrisme [Homelessness and Exclusion Related to Housing in 2021. Annual Report by the Observatory for Homelessness]*, November 2022.

A significant contribution to the accommodation of migrants in the Rhone region

Citizen accommodation cannot be reduced to its single aspect of accommodation, as meeting and forging links with the host society are an essential aspect of this form of hosting. Nevertheless, it makes an effective contribution to providing a temporary accommodation solution for people who might otherwise be sleeping rough.

The situation of access to accommodation and housing in the Rhone region, and more specifically in the Lyon metropolitan area, has a *de facto* impact on citizen hosting, since in 2021 the observatory for homelessness in the Lyon metropolitan area estimated the number of homeless people at 22,000¹⁰.

This form of accommodation, as provided by the CSOs which have taken part in this study, does not constitute a permanent solution, but it does make it possible, in ways that vary from one NGO to another, to provide accommodation for a period which can range from a few months to several years¹¹ while waiting for other accommodation or housing.

A high number of people staying in citizen accommodation

In 2022, **1,254 people** in total, accounting for **446 households**, were hosted in the Rhone region by the CSOs surveyed¹². This hosting corresponded to **279,322 bed-nights** in citizen accommodation. It should be noted that these data are not exhaustive, and that the actual number of people staying in citizen accommodation is probably higher.

This figure is relatively high, particularly when compared with the number of emergency accommodation places funded by the state in the Rhone region

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ See below, Different types and length of citizen accommodation, p. 16.

¹² This figure includes adults and children.

in the same year, which is 7,822¹³, excluding those dedicated to displaced Ukrainians¹⁴.

The ten CSOs surveyed provide a variety of accommodation types. Some restrict accommodation to specific profiles (notably asylum seekers, beneficiaries of international protection, displaced Ukrainians or single people only), while others do not stipulate any pre-conditions, but in fact host families more easily, as they offer accommodation in self-contained housing. This diversity is reflected in the profile of people hosted in the Rhone region.

1,254 people in total, accounting for 446 households, were hosted in the Rhône region by 57 CSOs

Out of 446 households accommodated, **44 % are made up of single adults** (see Graph No. 1). There are two main reasons for this high proportion: on the one hand, single men are not given priority access to accommodation because of the prioritisation of people based on vulnerability criteria; on the other hand, some citizen accommodation programmes give priority to access to single people, particularly when it is a case of homestay, which accounts for 63% of the places offered¹⁵. However, this last analysis needs to be qualified here, as 2022 saw a significant proportion of displaced families from Ukraine hosted in private homes in the Rhone region¹⁶.

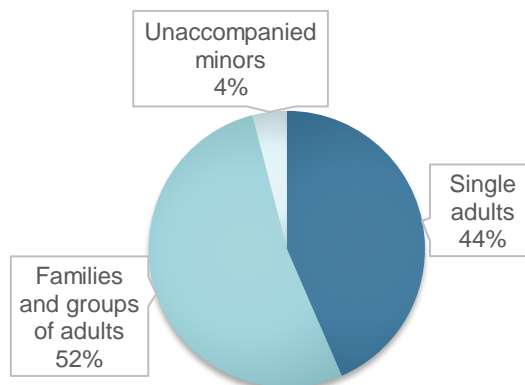
¹³ See *Bilan d'activité 2022 de la direction départementale de l'emploi, du travail et des solidarités (DDETS) du Rhône [Activity Report 2022 of the Rhône Departmental Directorate of Employment, Labour and Support (DDETS)]*, available at: <https://www.rhone.gouv.fr/>.

¹⁴ In 2022, 925 places were created to host displaced Ukrainians, including 259 places in citizen accommodation, according to the DDETS du Rhône report.

¹⁵ The Dihal report *Hébergement citoyen : pourquoi et comment ça marche ? Retour d'expérience et bonnes pratiques [Citizen Hosting: Why and How It Works? Feedback and Good Practices]*, published in September 2018, emphasised that this "system was suitable for single adults and those aged less than 25 years."

¹⁶ See the Focus on Accommodating Displaced Ukrainians, p. 14.

Graph No. 1: Breakdown of families/single people



There is little information available regarding the legal status of people hosted, which influences the type of accommodation or housing theoretically available¹⁷. One of the CSOs reserves its accommodation programme for asylum seekers, and to a lesser extent, for beneficiaries of international protection; one only deals with children under appeal to the juvenile court waiting for a protection order as unaccompanied minors (UAM); another deals with beneficiaries of international protection and displaced Ukrainians who are beneficiaries of temporary protection; and two others only deal with this last group.

However, it should be noted that at least **159 people had a residence permit¹⁸ on admission into one of these citizen accommodation programmes in 2022**, and were therefore, in principle, eligible for social housing, i.e. nearly 13%. On the other hand, 543 displaced Ukrainians who were beneficiaries of temporary protection¹⁹ were in citizen accommodation, which accounts for a significant proportion of people hosted in 2022.

¹⁷ People are eligible for different types of accommodation, depending on their legal status: asylum seekers should, in principle, be housed by the state as part of the National Reception System for asylum seekers, but in reality this system can only accommodate about 50% of the relevant people; people without a residence permit are only entitled to access emergency accommodation, which is also the state's responsibility. Refugees can be housed in temporary reception centres (CPH), but the number of places is very limited, and they are eligible under common law. They are entitled to access social housing as are all people legally resident in France (apart from asylum seekers). In practice, there is a shortage of places both in the reception centres and in social housing.

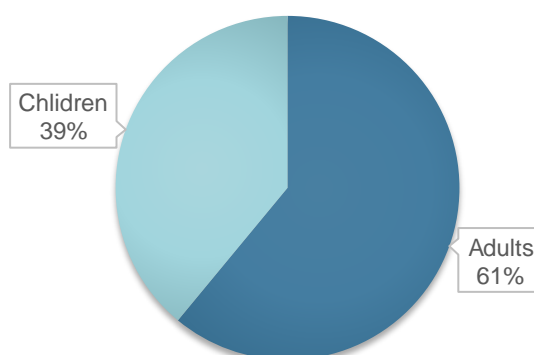
¹⁸ Excluding asylum seekers.

¹⁹ The Temporary Protection Directive authorised by the European Council on 4 March 2022 only concerns displaced Ukrainians. Its implementation in France is governed by a Circular dated 10 March 2022. It stipulates that beneficiaries of temporary protection will be issued with a six-month renewable provisional residence permit, are entitled to accommodation outside the National Reception System for Asylum Seekers, to allowances for asylum seekers and to work.

A significant proportion of children among those hosted

A high proportion of children were hosted in citizen accommodation in 2022²⁰. Indeed, out of 1,254 people accommodated, **489 were children, or 39%**. The vast majority of them were housed with their family. 18 of these were unaccompanied children, including 15 under appeal to the juvenile court waiting for a protection order as unaccompanied minors (UAM).

Graph No. 2: Proportion of children hosted



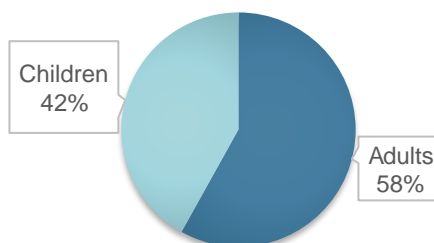
The data collected show an increasingly higher proportion if we take into account the **number of bed-nights** rather than the number of people hosted: **42 % are children** (see Graph No. 3), which indicates that the latter spend more time in citizen accommodation than adults²¹. This may be explained by the fact that the length of time spent in loaned independent apartments, which more often affects families, is generally longer than in homestay. Indeed, children account for 48% of bed-nights in independent this type of citizen accommodation, whereas they only account for 21% of bed-nights in homestay.

42 % of bed-nights in citizen accommodation in the Rhone region involved children in 2022

²⁰ It should be noted that nationally the FAS report *Baromètre enfants à la rue [Survey on Children Sleeping Rough]*, August 2023, indicates that at least 1,990 children, including 480 aged under three, were sleeping rough on the evening of 21 to 22 August 2023. This figure does not include children living in shanty towns or squats, nor those housed by third parties.

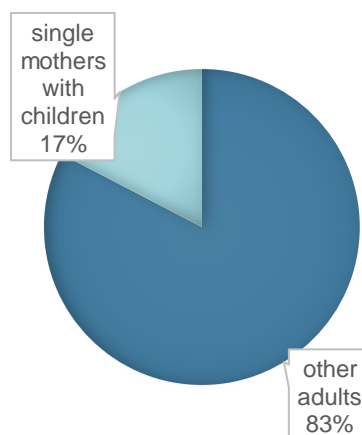
²¹ These data only apply to nine out of the ten CSOs surveyed.

Graph No. 3: Breakdown of bed-nights adults/children



Out of 765 adults housed, 133 were single women with children²². It should be clarified that this figure includes at least 73 displaced Ukrainians, many of whom are women separated from their husbands. It may be assumed that the proportion of single women with children usually hosted in citizen accommodation, excluding those who have fled the conflict in Ukraine, is lower²³.

Graph No. 6: Proportion of single women with children out of adults accommodated



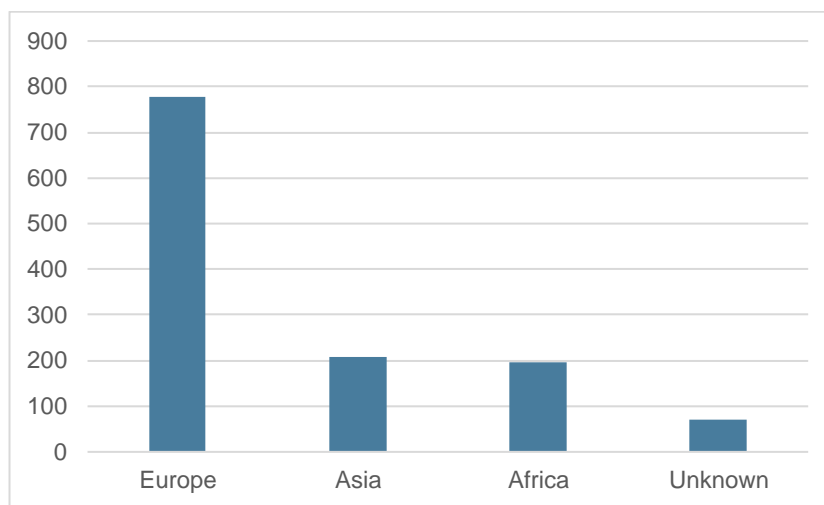
²² Data gathered from nine out of the ten CSOs surveyed accounting for a total of 1,227 people accommodated.

²³ Data gathered for 2022 only make it possible to distinguish single women with children displaced from Ukraine when they have been housed by CSOs catering solely for this group. See below, The Accommodation of Displaced Ukrainians: A Specificity of 2022, p. 17.

A significant proportion of people from Europe

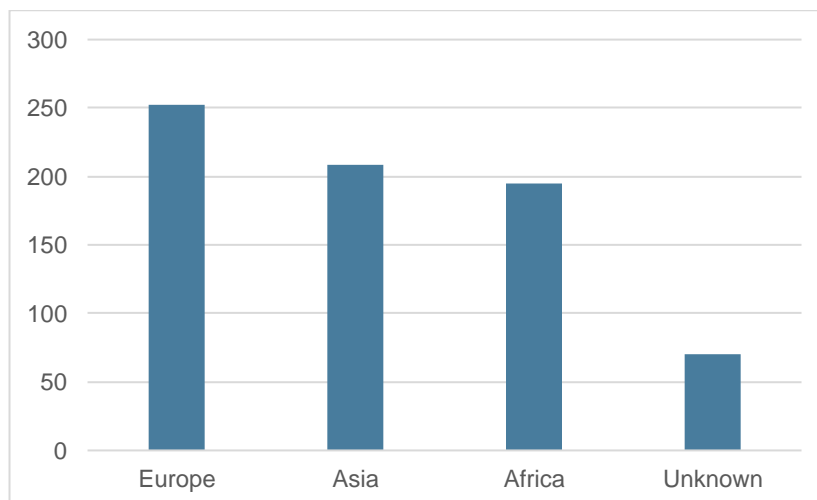
The origin of people hosted is not recorded by all the CSOs. However, the study does identify the region of origin for 90% of them and shows that the vast majority come from Europe (62%).

Graph No. 7: Continents of origin of people accommodated (all origins included)



The conflict in Ukraine has had a major impact on the proportion of people from Europe. Excluding people displaced from Ukraine, the proportion of people from Europe nevertheless remains the highest (35%), while that of people from Asia (29%) and Africa (27%) is not far behind, with each continent accounting for almost a third of people hosted.

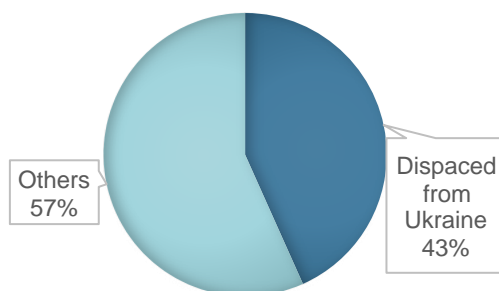
Graph No. 8: Continents of origin – excluding Ukraine



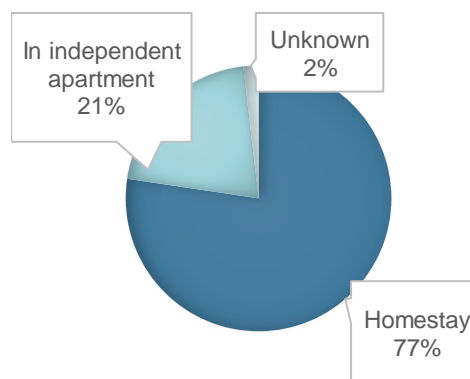
The accommodation of people displaced from Ukraine: a specific characteristic of 2022

In 2022, **543 people displaced from Ukraine** were hosted by the CSOs surveyed, or **43 % of the total number**²⁴ (see Graph No. 9). The majority of this group in the Rhone region were homestays, with only 21% of people housed in independent apartments (see Graph No. 10).

Graph No. 9: Proportion of people displaced from Ukraine



Graph No. 10: Accommodation arrangements for people displaced from Ukraine



The vast majority of displaced from Ukraine who were housed in citizen accommodation were part of dedicated schemes (see Graph No. 11): two of the CSOs surveyed organised this accommodation when they had no ongoing citizen hosting programme and very limited experience. Between them, they accommodated **77% of documented people displaced from Ukraine**. Out of the other eight CSOs surveyed, who have been providing citizen accommodation for several years, only three hosted people displaced from Ukraine²⁵.

77 % of people displaced from Ukraine have been accommodated in specific programmes

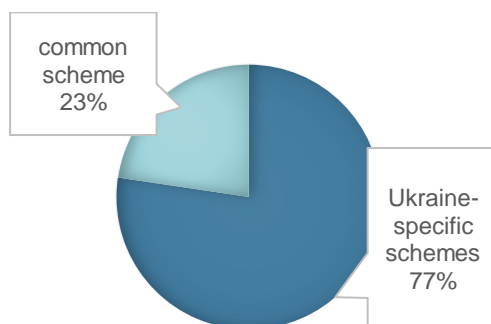
The accommodation of this group in specific schemes however only accounts for **18% of reported bed-nights** (see Graph No. 12). Indeed,

²⁴ It should be noted that the DDETS Rhône, in its activity report for 2022, only listed 259 citizen hosting places in state-supported schemes for displaced Ukrainians.

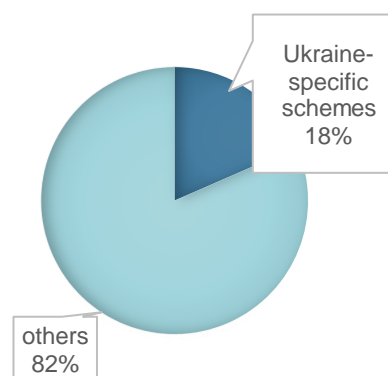
²⁵ One of these three CSOs represents a network of 48 CSOs providing citizen accommodation, including 11 that have hosted displaced Ukrainians.

people displaced from Ukraine only began arriving in March and were gradually accommodated. One of these associations also indicated that a proportion of the hosting had been suspended or stopped in summer 2022, either because the families had left for Ukraine, or because some hosts wanted to be able to lodge their own family during the holidays. Nevertheless, it seems that a significant proportion of this group continued to be hosted in citizen accommodation in late 2022.

Graph No. 11: Proportion of people displaced from Ukraine hosted in specific programmes



Graph No. 12: Proportion of bed-night in Ukraine-specific schemes



The mobilisation of citizen accommodation to host people displaced from Ukraine in the Rhone region was therefore hardly based on the pre-existing solidarity network. It also very slightly relied on the experience of citizen hosting CSOs in the region. Some of them were however involved in coordination meetings organised by the Rhone prefecture on the reception of people displaced from Ukraine during the year.

The reception of people displaced from Ukraine relied very slightly on the experience of citizen hosting CSOs in the region

Different types and lengths of citizen hosting

For 2022, **618 citizen hosting solutions were mobilised**²⁶ by the ten CSOs surveyed, representing 57 CSOs in the Rhone region.

A larger number of homestays but corresponding to fewer bed-nights

The majority of citizen accommodation mobilised in 2022 is in the form of homestays. Eight CSOs mainly offer this type of accommodation²⁷, involving cohabitation between hosts and guests.

Four of these CSOs organise accommodation in the form of chains: several families mobilised to host one person or a family in turn. Generally, between three and five hosts take it in turns to host the person/people in their home for a period of a week per month, or for two weeks every two months. The guest changes their place of residence often, but returns regularly to the same family. With this type of hosting, there is generally no limit on the length of stay.

The four other CSOs offer accommodation in successive households, for periods of one to three months with a maximum length of stay of nine to 12 months (apart from one of the CSOs which does not set a maximum length of stay).

Self-contained housing accounts for a third of total citizen accommodation and is offered by 50 CSOs²⁸. This type of accommodation is based on the mobilisation of a group of volunteers who organise to provide one or more self-contained properties, most often for families, either on loan from a private third party or a city or town council, or by raising the money needed to rent or, much more rarely, by buying one or more properties.

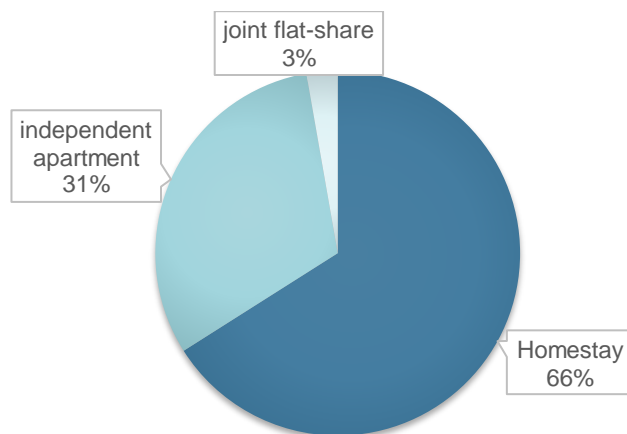
There is also some shared housing (17), mainly provided by just one of the CSOs surveyed. The organisation identifies the people who are ready to host a housemate and finances the guest's share of the rent. People are generally referred for shared housing after an initial period in a homestay.

²⁶ Data presented in this section only relate to actual placements during 2022. They do not take into account offers of accommodation that did not result in a placement during the year.

²⁷ Two other CSOs offer homestays but on an exceptional basis.

²⁸ Including 48 members of the Aclaam network.

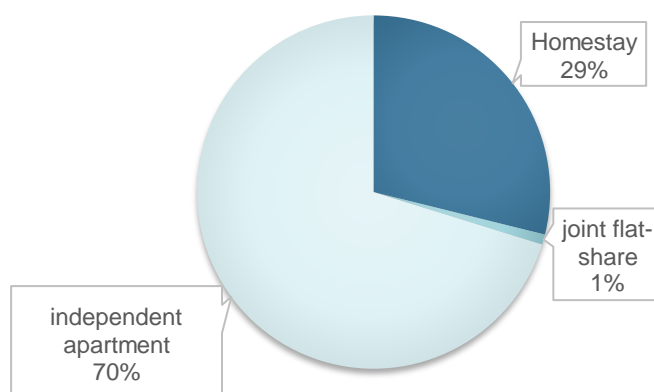
Graph No. 13: Types of accommodation offered



Although independent apartments only accounts for 31% of the places available, it represents 70% of bed-nights in citizen accommodation for 2022. This is mainly due to the fact that this type of accommodation mainly houses families and does not have a predefined time limit.

Although independent apartments only accounts for 31% of the places available, it represents 70% of bed-nights in citizen accommodation for 2022

Graph No. 14: Breakdown of bed-nights per accommodation type

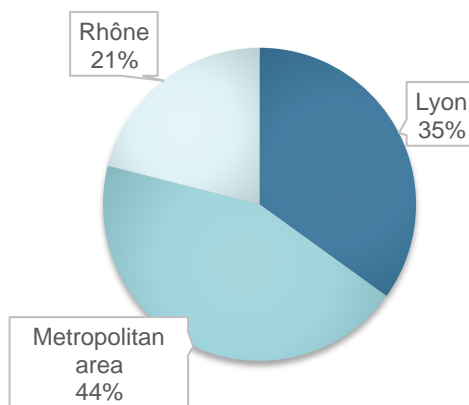


Offers of citizen accommodation mainly in Lyon and the metropolitan area.

All types of citizen accommodation are mainly in the Lyon metropolitan area (excluding the city of Lyon) (44%), as well as the city of Lyon (35%) (see Graph No. 15).

Several Lyon-based CSOs have reported difficulties in convincing people to accept accommodation outside of the metropolitan area, or even outside the city of Lyon, because of their concern about not being able to access some services or encountering problems with travel.

Graph No. 15: Location of accommodation



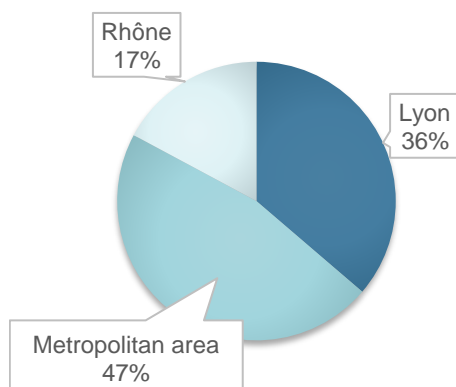
The vast majority of citizen accommodation is in the Lyon metropolitan area (excluding Lyon) (45%) and the city of Lyon (39 %).

The proportion of people in independent apartments is high in the metropolitan area (43%) and, to a lesser extent, in the city of Lyon (26%). despite the high price of accommodation (see Graph No. 17).

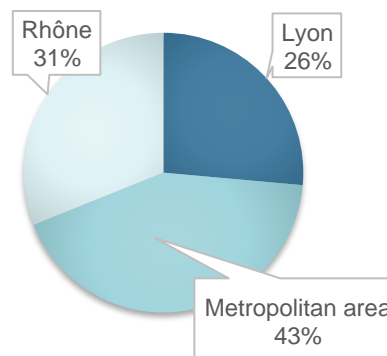
While 21% of the total accommodation is in the Rhone region (excluding Lyon metropolitan area and city), this area provides nearly a third of all independent apartments loaned to migrants.

Shared housing is all in the city of Lyon.

Graph No. 16: Location of homestay accommodation



Graph No. 17: Location of independent apartments



A stay which can last several years

The length of stay in citizen accommodation varies considerably from one organisation to another, depending on the terms and conditions set out within the organisation, the people hosted and the type of accommodation offered.

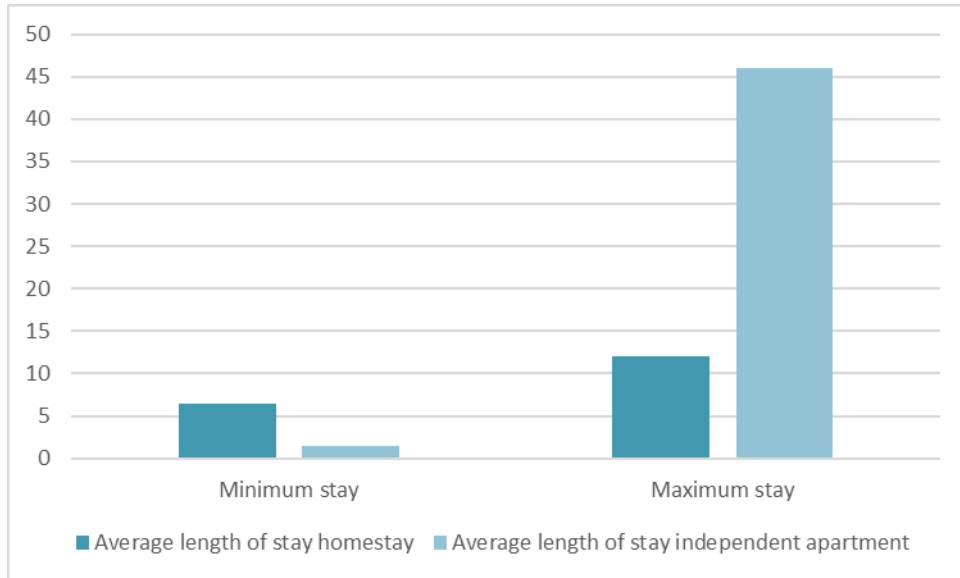
Only three out of the CSOs surveyed have a limited predefined length of stay for the person or family hosted (between nine and 12 months). The other CSOs are most often committed to offering accommodation until the person or family find another solution, mainly with support offered by the NGO or through partner CSOs, or even until they become autonomous. This last approach requires that the people hosted obtain a residence permit and find housing, which most often involves finding a job. This choice of action significantly impacts the length of stay²⁹.

The CSOs have been asked about the total length of stays up to 31 December 2022, since the arrival of people in their citizen accommodation, and not only for 2022. The answers³⁰ show an average stay per accommodation type ranging from 1.5 months³¹ to 46 months for a stay in independent apartments, and from 6.4 months to 12 months for homestays (see Graph No. 18).

²⁹ See below, support: an essential aspect of citizen accommodation, p. 24.

³⁰ Eight out of ten CSOs answered this question.

Graph No. 18: Average length of stay (in months)



Support: an essential aspect of citizen accommodation

While citizen accommodation contributes very tangibly to solve the problem of a lack of accommodation and housing in the Rhone region, and more specifically in the Lyon metropolitan area, it goes far beyond this aspect. As a temporary solution, more or less in the long term, a number of resources need to be mobilised which will help the people hosted to move onto other types of accommodation or self-contained housing.

This study does not intend to go into the details of support offered or the effects of the encounter between migrants and the host society on the integration of people. However, it is essential to highlight the citizen engagement that this type of hosting mobilises.

Volunteer commitment at the heart of citizen accommodation

The CSOs which participated in this study rely extensively on citizen engagement to host migrants, but also often to co-ordinate the activities and support people in their integration³². In total, **at least 1,630 people have engaged around citizen hosting of migrants in the Rhone region in 2022³³**, whether for homestays or independent apartments.

So, the study found that **450 households hosted people in their home**. As we have seen, depending on the type of hosting offered, it may be necessary to mobilise several households to accommodate a single person, either as part of a hosting chain or as part of successive hosting relays. These types of hosting were developed in order to not impact too heavily on the hosts and to avoid their disengagement.

Care and support are needed for both the hosts and guests to ensure that cohabitation goes smoothly. Six of these CSOs surveyed have reported **70 volunteers³⁴** mobilised in 2022 to facilitate homestays.

³² Four of these CSOs are run entirely by volunteers. Five CSOs rely on one or more employees (locally or nationally) to co-ordinate activities and to provide support to the reception network. Only one relies on citizen engagement for hosting people, as supporting hosts and guests is undertaken entirely by employees as part of a mission delegated by the state for the reception of displaced Ukrainians .

³³ This figure includes people who have hosted in their own home, counting only one person per hosting household.

³⁴ These volunteers can act as referents, mediators or co-ordinators for hosts and guests.

At least 876 volunteers have also been mobilised to support guests with the procedures. Five CSOs report that they provide administrative/legal, social and healthcare support (through referrals) and help create social links.

Furthermore, partnerships are developed, in a more or less structured way, with CSOs or city/town services to ensure additional support.

Two of the CSOs surveyed rely entirely on partnerships to provide support for people they receive (whether or not funded by the NGO as part of its agreements), focusing their activity on the accommodation aspect, which is most often provided in home in their case. Although support is outsourced, it is a key point in the reception process, particularly when it comes to people leaving their citizen accommodation.

After citizen accommodation: the challenge of ending the stay

Seven out of ten CSOs³⁵ were able to provide information on the housing situation of people leaving citizen accommodation. Although these data are only related to 367 people, they give us an initial overview (see Graph No. 19):

- 41 % of them have moved into self-contained housing, either public or private³⁶ for which they afford the rent. This high number is explained mainly by the fact that access their own apartment or house, is a condition for leaving hosting for several CSOs³⁷. The CSOs provide accommodation and support for people until they are able to move into their own home. This data must be measured against the length of the stay, which is often very long for CSOs: the difficulties in accessing housing are real, and in many cases, accommodation and support last for several years before the person can move into self-contained housing.
- Solutions provided by *Maison de la veille sociale (MVS)*, which is responsible for sheltering homeless people calling the 115³⁸, or the National Reception System (DNA) for asylum seekers are relatively few in number (17% in total).
- 15 % of people find a solution with another citizen hosting NGO. This raises the question of the burden placed on citizen accommodation, which is seen as a stage in people's integration, but which needs to link up with other services.

³⁵ This represents 55 CSOs.

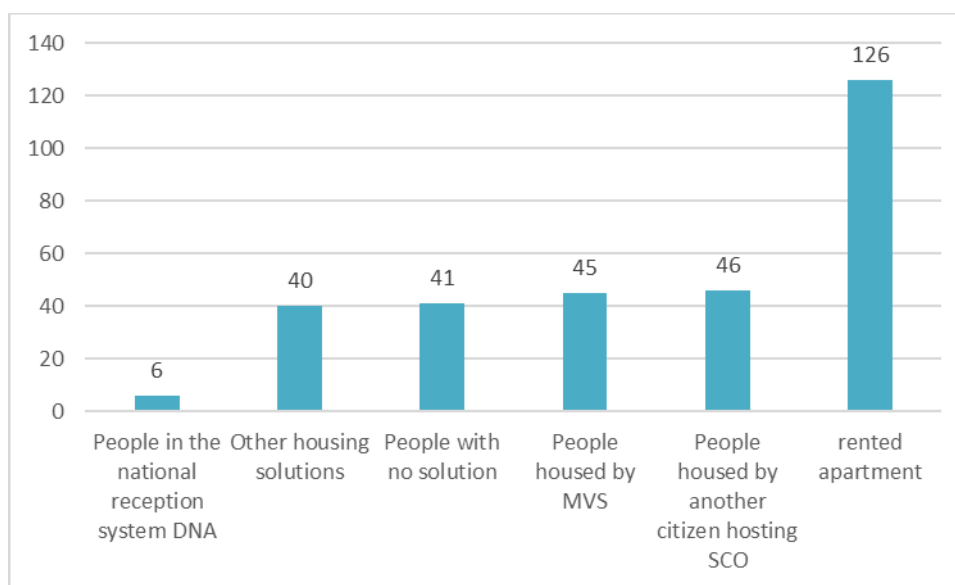
³⁶ The data from 2022 do not distinguish between private and social housing.

³⁷ Including a network which brings together 48 CSOs which provide accommodation.

³⁸ 115 is the number to call to request emergency accommodation for homeless people.

- Access to their own apartment is difficult for beneficiaries of international protection for whom access under common law, particularly to social housing, is possible in principle³⁹.

Graph No. 19: Situation of people moving on from citizen accommodation



The issue of access to accommodation or housing before moving into citizen accommodation, like moving on, is a critical issue for CSOs. The local context has a significant impact on the CSOs.

In 2021, the observatory for homelessness⁴⁰ estimated the number of homeless people in the Lyon metropolitan area at 22,000⁴¹. The median time to access an emergency housing space⁴² was 11 months⁴³. This same report indicated that only one household in five experiencing homelessness had been offered accommodation or housing within a period of less than a year.

³⁹ According to the assessment prior to the development of the PLALHPD de la Métropole de Lyon and du PDALHPD du Rhône in 2019 [Departmental Action Plans for Accommodation and Housing of Disadvantaged People for the Lyon metropolitan and Rhône regions] - Monographie de la Métropole de Lyon, undertaken by the DDSC du Rhône in April 2021 : 25 % of social housing allocations related to priority applications involved applications of less than one year; 36% involved applications one to two years' old; 20% two to three years' old; and 20% over three years' old.

⁴⁰ Homelessness and housing exclusion in 2021. See the observatory on homelessness' annual report

⁴¹ It is not yet possible to say whether people in citizen accommodation are included in the data collected in the observatory on homelessness' report, and if so, in what proportion.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ These periods ranged from 3 to 23 months.

Therefore, particularly in Lyon and the metropolitan area, the CSOs are dealing with a high number of applications with limited resources. These applications also come from people for whom, in most cases, this solution is the only alternative to the street. Tension caused by the lack of accommodation and housing significantly affects the opportunity to move on.

The scarcity of accommodation and housing places in the metropolitan area is compounded by administrative hurdles encountered by migrants during their integration. Indeed, obtaining a residence permit is a prerequisite to access social housing, and the right to work is a prerequisite to access the necessary financial resources. However, the complexity of the procedures and obstacles encountered in many situations mentioned by several CSOs surveyed⁴⁴ makes access to a place migrants can rent by themselves difficult and long.

This situation significantly impacts citizen accommodation generally, and even more markedly the CSOs which have chosen unconditional, open-ended accommodation⁴⁵ which, as we have seen, could last up to almost four years on average⁴⁶. **Several citizen hosting CSOs, which are mainly made up of engaged citizens, are worried about the fatigue of people involved and the difficulty in finding new volunteers, both hosts and those who support or co-ordinate reception.**

The existence of bridging solutions to enable people to move on from citizen accommodation seems crucial to engage citizens for the duration and to receive migrants in suitable conditions, both for the guests and the hosts.

⁴⁴ Depending on the public they serve, the CSOs mention various problems: the inability to access the right to work provided for in article L 554-1 of CESEDA (Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile: Code Governing Entrance and Residence of Foreign Nationals and the Right to Asylum) for asylum seekers, even in the absence of a response from Ofpra (Office française de protection des réfugiés et apatrides: French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless People) within 6 months; waiting times of several months for a civil status document to be issued by Ofpra if international protection is granted; delays in renewing residence permits at the prefecture, which leads to a break in rights; waiting times for appointments at the prefecture to apply for a residence permit, etc.

⁴⁵ See Nadine Camp, 'La mobilisation citoyenne et l'hébergement des personnes exilées. Vers un nouveau modèle d'accueil ?' [Citizen Engagement and the Accommodation of Refugees.], *Études de l'Ifri*, Ifri, December 2022, p.33.

⁴⁶ See above.

Conclusion

Seen in isolation, the citizen hosting CSOs may seem to play an insignificant role in the accommodation of migrants. The CSOs that contributed to this study have each accommodated on average 22 people throughout the year⁴⁷. Because they are often the result of very local initiatives – apart from a few national networks and state-sponsored CSOs to organise the reception of people displaced from Ukraine – they are usually not visible and could appear to be little more than a collection of individual solidarity initiatives. This overview, although it is not exhaustive, does show however that citizen accommodation contributes significantly to receiving migrants, at least in the Rhone department.

The upsurge in solidarity which made it possible to take in people fleeing the war in Ukraine in 2022 played a major role in the scale of this reception. However, citizen hosting for other migrant groups is relatively high when compared, for example, with the number of state-funded accommodation places⁴⁸.

The information collected also shows the significant commitment required to make the forms of accommodation studied here possible: the hosting of a person or family often requires the commitment of several host households, as well as a large number of volunteers to ensure the hosting and support runs smoothly for hosts and guests.

The diversity of citizen hosting practices is the key to its success, and undoubtedly enables it to become established in an area, where anyone can find a variety of hosting arrangements. However, the diversity of these initiatives makes it difficult to promote and harness the expertise of its stakeholders. Although the management of hosting people displaced from Ukraine relied heavily on citizen hosting, it only marginally drew on the experience of CSOs already active in this field in the Rhone region.

However, the CSOs and citizens involved in this form of hosting are faced with the same realities as other stakeholders in the field: difficulties related to exile and their consequences on people's lives in France, the complexity of administration situations, the scarcity of accommodation and housing solutions which are essential for people to continue their integration in

⁴⁷ This figure drops to 15 people per NGO if we exclude the CSOs that received displaced Ukrainians, for whom the number of beneficiaries was much higher than the average.

⁴⁸ See *below*.

another setting... and they mobilise all possible resources, with the vast majority of them volunteers, to find suitable solutions on a case-by-case basis.

Citizen hosting is often valued for its ability to create links between people arriving in the country and the host society. Indeed, this is one of the main aims of the CSOs involved. However, this encounter, which is a potentially powerful factor for social inclusion, is part of the reality of reception policies which have a strong impact on it, and very often exhaust those who dedicate a large amount of their time voluntarily to make this type of reception possible.

This snapshot of citizen accommodation in the Rhone region is part of the local context. This exercise could also be replicated in other areas, which each have their own specific characteristics, whether in border areas, large conurbations or rural areas. In all these regions, citizen accommodation has grown, and its stakeholders have developed a wealth of experience and expertise which deserves to be better known, taken into account and supported.

To achieve this, we believe it is necessary to build bridges and develop dialogue between the citizen hosting CSOs, which are fully-fledged actors in the reception of migrants, and other stakeholders, whether it be state, local authorities or all other private stakeholders involved.

Citizen accommodation is much more than a private hosting initiative, it has become an integral part of reception in France. It cannot be considered in isolation from public policies that affect not only migrants in our country, but also each citizen in the host society.

It is necessary to build bridges and develop dialogue between citizen hosting CSOs, which are fully-fledged stakeholders in the reception of migrants and other stakeholders

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The opinions expressed are those of the author alone and are not necessarily shared by all of the CSOs involved in the work of the observatory on citizen accommodation of migrants in the Rhone region.

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Synergies migrations is a think tank based on dialogue and action at the crossroads of expertise, support with decision-making and stakeholder capacity-building on asylum, immigration and inclusion issues. Synergies migrations intends to contribute to the development of informed policies and practices that promote migrant access to protection and dignity and the emergence of an open and inclusive society.

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