



Moving to France

Citizenship versus Residency (Temp or Permanent)

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There are some similarities between permanent residency and **French citizenship**. Both require you to have lived in France for three to five years and have integrated into French society. For example, you need sufficient knowledge of the **French language** (at least A2 level).

There are three types of **permanent resident cards** in France:

- **Ten-year resident card for foreigners** (*carte de résident de 10 ans d'un étranger*): valid for 10 years, this resident card allows both EU/EFTA and non-EU/EFTA citizens to stay in France
- **Long-term EU resident card** (*carte de résident de longue durée-UE*): non-EU/EFTA nationals can apply for a long-term EU resident card that allows them to live in France for 10 years and visit most other EU/EFTA countries without a visa
- **Permanent resident card** (*carte de résident permanent*): both EU/EFTA and non-EU/EFTA nationals can get unconditional and permanent residence in France (unless your behavior poses a **threat to public order and security**). You can only get this card after you've already had a 10-year resident card or long-term EU card.

The permits are usually valid for 10 years, but you can renew these indefinitely. That means that you can remain in France as long as you renew your card.

The permanent resident cards are not to be confused with the **temporary resident cards**, which are:

- **Long-stay visa with a residence permit** (*visa de long séjour valant titre de séjour, VLS-TS*): this visa allows you to stay in France for one year and can usually be exchanged for a longer permit after it expires.
- **Temporary resident card** (*carte de séjour temporaire*): valid for up to five years and can be renewed three times.
- **Multi-year resident card** (*carte de séjour pluriannuelle générale*): this resident card is usually valid for four years and comes with visas such as the **family visa**.

Who can retire in France?

Citizens of the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA), or Switzerland will not need a visa. Non-EU citizens, however, must apply for a **French visa** before entering the country. The French government's **visa web portal** allows you to quickly check whether you'll need a visa to enter France.

If you're moving to France from outside the EU, EEA, or Schengen area, you'll need to apply for a long-stay visa (*visa de long séjour*), and apply for a residency permit within two to three months of your arrival (depending on the type of visa issued). This will allow you to live in the country for up to a year. Retirees may opt to apply for a visitor visa (*VLTS-TS Visiteur visa*). To get a visitor visa, you'll need to prove you have sufficient income to support yourself in France (be it through pension income, savings,

or investments) and show evidence of having private health insurance. In addition, you must submit a declaration stating that you won't undertake paid work while in France.

The France visa service requires evidence that you have income or funds of at least equivalent to the French minimum wage (*salaire minimum interprofessionnel de croissance* – SMIC). In 2022, the SMIC is €19,237 a year before deductions for tax and social contributions. After deductions, that works out to a monthly net income of €1,266 (about €15,200 a year).

You can replace your VTLS visa with a visitor's residency permit after a year. After five years, you can apply for permanent residency.

This information was provided courtesy of **Expatica.com** where you will find other helpful resources for France and other countries throughout Europe.