

# **The Citizenship Booklet**

## **Foreword**

You have just set up a request for obtaining French Nationality. By doing so you demonstrate your wish to become part of the national community and to respect its values and to enrich it.

In order to become naturalised the civil law requires you to prove that you are integrated into French society, which does not imply that we must all be the same or have to live in a certain way, but you must adhere to certain essential principles and values of the French Republic and to have a sufficient knowledge of its language, its history and culture and of French society, as well as those rights and obligations that acquiring nationality confers upon you.

This is why you will be invited for an interview during which the authorities will assess how you have taken on board these values and principles, your motivation, your knowledge of the basic rules of French society and the reasons for your application.

This booklet offers you some examples of the knowledge you will find useful at the interview.

*{translators note: observe that this last sentence gives the interviewer the right to go "off livret" as apparently some do}*

## **The French Republic**

France is a democracy.

The leaders of state are elected by universal suffrage: this means that all citizens, male and female, have the right to vote.

The Principles of the republic are founded on historical Conflict

The Republic is a political system whereby its elected leaders govern in the name of the people. It is founded on laws which all must respect. The growth of the republic has been both gradual and the result of several conflicts.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1789, the people of Paris took possession of the royal prison, called "La Bastille". As a symbol of freedom the 14<sup>th</sup> of July has become the date of our national celebration. The national anthem "La Marseillaise" was also written at this time. "Marianne"

is the symbol of the Republic. Her statue, which is in all town halls, is a reminder of the French revolution. The blue white and red tricolore flag also dates back to the revolution.

The Republic guarantees respect for its principles of Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood. These three words constitute its national slogan. [La Devise]

(side note: Do you have the right to say anything you want in public? Freedom of expression is a fundamental right. Nonetheless there are limits to this in order to respect the rights of others. It is therefore forbidden to publish insults, defamatory statements, hate speech or to excuse crimes against humanity)

### **Freedom**

Fundamental freedoms are guaranteed; freedom of thought, freedom of religious belief, freedom of expression, the right to gather and form groups.

*{ translators note: the right to “se reunir “ has been translated as to “gather and form groups” which may sound strange to English ears but is a fundamental right to create societies, pressure groups, political parties, unions etc stemming from anger at historical attempts by royalty and governments to restrict “organisation “ of citizens}*

## **Values and principles**

The Republic was finally and firmly established in 1875. During the 1880's laws were passed guaranteeing freedom of the press. Primary schooling became compulsory and all public schools were free to all and secular.

### **Equality**

All citizens have the same rights and duties irrespective of their sex, their origins, their religion, their opinions, or their sexual orientation.

The Declaration of The Rights of Man and Citizens (see the end of the booklet) dates back to the French revolution of 1789. This guarantees the freedom and equality of all citizens.

## **The French Republic**

### **Brotherhood**

France is based on willingness for all citizens of France to live together. This willingness is expressed by the feelings of cohesion of its citizens.

Its practical expression is found in the social security system paid for by businesses and all those who work in France which has been in place since 1945.

(Side note: An employer cannot refuse to hire someone because of his birth origin, his belonging to a particular ethnic group or religion, or because of his gender. Any decision [hiring, promotion etc ] made by an employer must be based on professional grounds and not personal ones. Treating someone less favourably because of their birth, their religion or their gender is discrimination.)

France condemns all discrimination, meaning all behaviour which treats any person or group less favourably than others. Racism is a criminal offence.

## Values and principles

### Secularism

Secularism is a fundamental principle of the Republic. It means two things:

The state adopts a neutral stance to religion. It does not give aid to any religion. Religion is in the private domain of the individual.

The state guarantees religious freedom. Everyone is free to believe or not to believe in any religion he wishes.

This principle is an old one: it was legally enshrined by the law passed in 1905 separating the state from the Church.

(Side note: Why are students in schools, secondary and higher schools forbidden from wearing overly obvious religious symbols while in school? The law of the 15<sup>th</sup> march 2004 forbids the wearing of any symbol or clothing which shows overtly [too visibly] that they belong to a particular religion. In reality a school is a public institution which educates all citizens: it must remain neutral as regards religion. The ban on wearing all overly visible religious symbols contributes towards this neutral stance.

### Citizens have both rights and obligations

Everyone must obey the law and regulations. The fundamental rights as between private individuals are defined in the **Civil Code**.

There are also communal rules which deal with life and society and which are enshrined in law. For example the **Penal Code** defines crimes and the penalties which can be imposed for breach.

(Side note: How can you find out about the law and what laws are in force?)

All law, often grouped together in particular CODES can be found on the internet at:  
[www.legifrance.gouv.fr](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr)

The site [www.vie-publique.fr](http://www.vie-publique.fr) contains the main rules and how legal procedures and institutions work. )

## **The French Republic**

Some of the rights and obligations of French citizens:

### **Citizens contribute towards the financing of public services**

According to their means all citizens must contribute towards the financing of public services by the payment of taxes.

They pay towards the social security system by the payment of (national insurance) contributions taken directly from their pay. The declaration of income and the payment of tax are compulsory.

*{translators note I have used the term "national Insurance" as a reference for English readers. The actual system is a little more complex}*

### **All citizens have access to civil service employment**

All citizens have equal access to working for the civil service. They are chosen solely on their character and their professional abilities.

### **Citizens contribute to National Defence**

At time of war, every citizen can be called up to the army to be part of the defence of the country. From the age of 16 all French people must register at their local town hall so they can participate in "a day of defence and citizenship".

(picture of Senegalese infantrymen in the French Army during the First World War (1914-1918). This illustration demonstrates that the mobilisation of all Frenchmen included troops of the colonial empire. Of the 8 million men mobilised about 650,000 were from the French colonial empire, mainly from north and sub-Saharan Africa.)

## **A democratic and political society**

France is a democracy, a state governed by law. Its principle is: government of the people by the people and for the people.

Political power is subservient to the law: it must function in accordance with the rules.

The law treats all citizens equally.

Judicial independence is guaranteed.

Political parties may be created and carry out their activities freely.

How the state is to work is laid out in a document, **The Constitution**. Our current constitution is that of the 5<sup>th</sup> republic adopted in 1958.

Our institutions are founded on the basis of the separation of powers between the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary; total power should not be in the hands of the same authoritative body.

### **The main officers of state**

**The President of the republic** is elected for 5 years by universal suffrage. He appoints the government run by the Prime Minister, elected by the majority at the general election.

**Parliament** is made up of two parts: the **National Assembly** and **The Senate** who vote on the laws and monitor the government. The MP's in the National Assembly are elected every 5 years in general elections.

Legal power is vested in the system of **Magistrates**. The law punishes breaches of the law by imprisonment or other punishments according to law. The justice system decides litigation between individuals or companies and as between the citizen and the state.

*{translators note: I have transposed some UK terminology as to MP's "Députés" for ease of understanding but the term Magistrate is not the same as the English lay courts for minor crimes. The Magistrature are all the professional judges from high to low}.*

### **Local authorities closest to citizens**

#### **Citizens**

(All French people over the age of 18 and who have not had their right to vote taken away by a court order.)

#### **The citizens elect:**

In the **Regions**, regional councillors, elected for 6 years,

In the **Departments**, departmental councillors elected for 6 years ,

In the **Communes**, Mayors and municipal councillors elected for 6 years.

Those elected to these roles themselves elect the members of the **Senate** (see later)

**Citizens also elect the Members of Parliament**, who vote on the law in the name of the people.

**Parliament** consists of two chambers:

The Assemblée Nationale *{Translators note; roughly the House of Commons}*

The Senate *{Translators note; the upper chamber, very roughly like an elected house of lords}*

**Citizens also elect The President of the Republic**

The president is elected for 5 years and he appoints the **Prime Minister**.

**The role of parliament is to subject the government to checks and balances in the conduct of policy and the politics of the nation.**

*{translators note: The booklet goes a bit diagrammatical in this section which I have tried to take account of by way of explanation, which I appreciate, is a little subjective}*

## **Communes Departments and Regions**

At the local level three organisations have powers devolved to them by central government.

### **The Commune**

France has 36000 communes.

They are administered by a mayor and a municipal council.

They are, amongst other things, responsible for pre and primary schools, sports and cultural activities and road maintenance. They hold records of their citizens' civil status i.e. they register births marriages and deaths.

### **The Department**

France has 101 departments.

They are administered by departmental councils and are amongst other things responsible for secondary schools, the protection of children and social care for the elderly.

## **The Region**

The Regions are administered by Regional Councils.

Amongst other things they have responsibility for public transport, professional training, and the building and maintenance of upper schools.

## **Overseas Territory**

French territory also includes departments and regions abroad: Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Martinique, Mayotte and Réunion.

Overseas territories like French Polynesia have a status which takes account of their own local interests but as an integral part of the Republic.

In the departments and regions of mainland France and in the overseas territories the state is represented by a **Prefect**.

## **A few Historical Milestones**

The fundamental workings and values of French society are rooted in history. What follows is not an attempt to summarize all of France's history but to point out a few of the main points which have brought France to where it is today and to set out some of the events which form part of our national consciousness.

### **Prehistoric France:**

**The grotto at Lascaux:** this is one of the most famous prehistoric grottos in France, renowned notably for the quality of its cave paintings

*{translators note: the booklet shows a picture of " the chamber of the bulls" with a brown horse with a black mane between two large Aurochs on the left side of the cave wall }*

### **The France of Antiquity:**

From 50 years BC the settlement of the Romans had a long-lasting effect as the local population adopted their customs, way of life and Latin culture.

*{Translators note: the booklet here shows a picture of a Roman theatre at Orange in the valley of the Rhone}*

### **The middle ages:**

5<sup>th</sup> century: King Clovis (466-511) unified the various Frankish tribes. This was an important stage in the creation of the single cohesive state of France. He adopted the Christian religion.

15<sup>th</sup> century: Joan of Arc (1412-1431): during the 100 years' war against England this young peasant girl led the French armies and liberated part of France. This national heroine is the embodiment of courage in the service of France.

*{Translators note: picture of Jeanne d'Arc attached}*

16<sup>th</sup> century: Henri IV (1553-1610) the edict of Nantes in 1598 gave Protestants freedom to practice their religion and thus re-established peace amongst religious groups.

*{translators note: picture of Henri IV attached}*

### **The modern era:**

17<sup>th</sup> century: Molière (1662-1673): the most famous playwright of French theatre who lived during the reign of Louis XIV. To him we owe plays like " L'Avare" (the miser)

*{picture attached}*

18<sup>th</sup> century, the reign of Louis XIV (1643-1715): France was then ruled as an absolute monarchy with all power concentrated in the hands of the king. At this time a powerful state centralised on Paris was established.

*{note: photo of the chandeliers in the palace of Versailles attached. The construction of the palace was started in the reign of Louis XIV }*

The philosophers of the age of enlightenment: Through their literary works the philosophers Rousseau, Voltaire, and Diderot fought for the ideals of tolerance and freedom of thought.

*{picture attached}*

**The French Revolution:** In 1789 the French populace revolted against the absolutism of the monarchy. The first republic was proclaimed in 1792. This period marks the origin of the values of the republic with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens in 1789.

*{note picture of the taking of the Bastille attached. The Fête de la Fédération of 14<sup>th</sup> July 1790 commemorates the taking of the Bastille and the unification of the nation}*

**The Time of Empire:** Napoleon the First (1769-1821) ruled France for nearly 15 years and fought numerous wars in Europe. He was also responsible for the creation of the civil code of law.

*{pictured}*

**The creation of a huge colonial empire:** from the 1830's, often by wars of conquest mainly in The Antilles, Africa and Asia.

### **1848: The Abolition of Slavery.**

Victor Hugo (1802-1885): One of the greatest French writers fought against social inequality and the death penalty. He wrote "Les Misérables" and "Notre Dame de Paris"

*{Photo attached}*

### **The birth of the Third Republic (1875)**

The republican style of government is established in a stable form. Jules Ferry minister for education at the beginning of the 1880's was the man behind free and secular public education.

*{centenary celebration postage stamp pictured}*

**The First World War (1914 -1918):** A massive conflict which affected all of Europe as well as the United States. The battles caused over 9 million deaths. The 11<sup>th</sup> November is a public holiday in memory of the end of the First World War.

*[picture of women working in an arms factory making shells and wheels]*

**The Second World War (1939 -1945)** Adolf Hitler, the Nazi dictator in power in Germany, triggered the Second World War. Amongst other countries he invaded France. The Nazis carried out persecutions of political opponents and exterminated millions of Jews, homosexuals and disabled people. Historians estimate that the war caused 50 million deaths, the majority of which were civilians. The 8<sup>th</sup> May is a public holiday commemorating the end of the Second World War.

*{picture of landing craft. The Normandy landings on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 marked a decisive step toward the liberation of France.}*

**The Vichy Regime (1940 -1944):** Following the defeat of France by the Germans, Marshall Pétain formed an anti-democratic government, the capital of which was Vichy.

The regime collaborated with Nazi Germany and as such has its part in the responsibility for the deportation of Jews.

**Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970):** The leader of the French resistance against the German armies that occupied our country. It was he who crafted our present day governmental systems. (The 5<sup>th</sup> Republic)

*{Inevitably, picture of Charles de Gaulle}*

**French decolonisation (1952-1962):** from the European colonial empires came demands for Independence. French decolonisation started in Asia and spread into Africa. This process gave rise to wars such as those in Indochina and Algeria.

**The Treaty of Rome (1957):** this created a European Economic Community between 6 European countries, one of which was France. Its objective was to establish a close union between European nations. This European organisation has made a strong contribution to maintaining peace in Europe.

*{European flag pictured, symbolising the Ideals of Unity and harmony between Europeans}*

**May 1968:** A socialist movement initiated by students. It spread to include the salaried and the working classes. The strikes and demonstrations were amongst the largest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**The age of Majority was settled at age 18. (1974)**

**The Law allowing termination of pregnancy on request (1975)** proposed by Simone Veil, authorised abortion.

**Abolition of the death penalty in France, 1981.**

### **France is rich.....in contributions made by foreign Nationals:**

Throughout its history many people have come to France to settle and live. Many have made the choice to choose to acquire French Nationality. These people represent a wealth for our country. By their talents many great names have thus contributed to the glory of France.

**Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918):** son of a Russian mother and a Swiss father. To this poet we owe (amongst others) the collections "Alcools" and "Calligrammes".

**Josephine Baker (1906-1975):** of American origin she was the lead singer dancer and leader of the well-known black Review. She was renowned as a member of the resistance in the Second World War.

**Andrée Chedid (1920-2011):** born in Cairo in Egypt to a Syrian mother and a Lebanese father she was a writer and French poet.

**Marc Chagall (1887-1985):** A painter of Russian origin to whom we particularly owe the decor of the ceiling of the Paris Opera House.

**Georges Charpak (1924-2010):** This Physicist of Polish extraction, a pioneer of Bio-medical imaging and particle detection received the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1992.

**Marie Curie (1867-1934):** Physicist born in Poland to whom we owe the discovery of the atom at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She is laid to rest in The Panthéon.

**Valérie Benguigui (1961-2013):** of Algerian origin this actress has appeared in several films ( *Le Prénom* {the first name} and television series (*Avocats et Associés* ) {Lawyers and Associates}.

**Dalida (1933-1987):** A singer of Egyptian origin who has had numerous popular successes; *Bambino, IL venait d'avoir 18 ans* {he had just turned 18}, *laissez moi danser* {let me dance}

**Leon Gambetta (1838-1882)** Grandson of an Italian businessman, he helped the revival of France after the defeat in 1870. He is one of the founding fathers of the Third republic.

**Françoise Giroud (1916-2003)** of Swiss origin this major personality of the French Press and co-founder of *L'Express*- was a Secretary of State on two occasions.

**Joseph Kessel (1898-1979)** : this great reporter and novelist was born in Argentina and was elected to the *Académie Française* in 1962.

**Romain Gary (1914-1980):** of Russian origin he is the only writer to receive the Goncourt Prize (for literature) on two separate occasions.: the first in 1956 under his real name for "*Les racines du Ciel*" {the roots of the sky} and the second in 1975 writing under the pseudonym of Émile Ajar for "*La Vie devant soi*" {the life ahead of you}

**Vassily Kandinsky (1866-1944):** a painter of Russian origin who was one of the founders of Abstract art.

**Miriam Makeba (1932-2008):** This woman, who was committed to the fight against Apartheid, was the first South African singer to obtain a Grammy award for *Pata, Pata*.

**Georges Moustaki (1934-1998):** Born in Warsaw, this father of modern volcanology was largely responsible for educating the general public in this field.

**Alain Mimoun (1921-2013):** an athlete of Algerian origin and a soldier in the Second World War he won the marathon at the Olympic Games in 1956.

**Leon Zitron (1914-1995):** born in Russia this journalist became famous for the television programmes he produced or co-produced ( *Intervilles, Tours de France* )which reported on great events.

We have only listed here people who obtained French citizenship. Many others could have been mentioned. Furthermore France has many talented people from immigrant

backgrounds such as Michel Platini, Zinedine Zidane, and Jamel Debbouze Gad Elmaleh Marie N'diaye.....

## **France's place .....in Europe and the world**

### **French citizens are European citizens.**

France is one of the pioneers of European construction. In 1957 it was one of the founder members of the European Economic Community. In 1992, the European Union was created which drew its member states closer together. Today the union is comprised of 28 member states who all share democratic principles. Citizen's rights are guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union which was adopted in the year 2000.

French citizens have also been European citizens since 1992. Every 5 years they vote in European parliamentary elections. They are free to travel, to work, to study and to live in the other countries of the EU. As such they are entitled to vote in local elections in the country to which they have moved.

Since the year 2000, along with 17 other member states of the Union, France shares the single currency, The Euro.

### **France is the fifth largest Power in the world:**

France is a member of numerous international organisations. It is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

*{translators note: The ONU in French: l'Organisation des Nations Unies}*

France has proposed a quarter of the resolutions voted upon since 2002. Some have been to initiate military operations in conflict zones.

### **The French Language.**

French is spoken fluently by 200 million people across the world. The French represent only about 1% of the world's population but those who speak French are present in 70 countries.

### **France's economic importance.**

France has about 100 large companies with over 10,000 employees. These multinational French companies are present in numerous countries.

Certain sectors of the French economy are known for their excellence, like the aerospace industry and the luxury goods market, with certain brands renowned throughout the whole world.

Feted for its historical monuments and culture France is the premier destination for tourists in the world: tourism is a vital element in our economy.

(Photo of the Eiffel Tower, designed and built by the engineer Gustav Eiffel for the Universal Exposition in 1889. This much visited monument attracts over 7 million visitors per year)

(Photo of the Airbus A380 whose maiden flight was in 2005).

## **A few particular features of France..... and her territories.**

In 2014 France contained 66 million inhabitants. Its territory extends over 675,000 square kilometres, including the mainland and the overseas territories.

France has 17 urban areas with more than 500,000 inhabitants. Spread across the whole of France these conurbations have international standing. According to the 2011 census the 10 largest are: Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Lille, Bordeaux, Nice, Nantes, Strasbourg and Rennes.

### **A few particularly notable sites**

**Le Mont Blanc**, a summit in the Alpine mountain chain, it is the highest mountain in Europe (4810m) *{pictured}*

**Le Mont-Saint-Michelle:** In a bay in Normandy, is a rocky island upon which an Abbey stands, which is listed as a World Humanitarian site by UNESCO. *{pictured}*

France is crisscrossed by large **waterways**: The Loire, The Seine, The Garonne, The Rhone, and The Rhine.

The Loire is the longest river in France.

*{Picture of the 10<sup>th</sup> century royal castle at Amboise on the Loire}*

*{Translators note: **Page 23** of the Livret contains maps of the regions, regional centres etc of France and the overseas territories which I cannot type and are v. poorly represented on a kindle...}*

## **The Declaration of The Rights of Man and of all Citizens, 1789.**

**Art 1:** All men are born and live in freedom and with equal rights. Social distinctions can only be based on their value to the common good.

**Art 2:** The goal of any political group is the preservation of the natural and inalienable rights of man. These are the right to freedom, to private property, safety and resistance against oppression.

**Art 3:** The principle of total sovereignty lies with the Nation. No body, no individual may exercise authority unless expressly derived therefrom.

**Art 4:** Freedom means the right to do anything that does not infringe upon the rights of others: thus the exercise of those natural rights of man has no limit save that which ensures the rights of other members of society to enjoy the same rights. These limits cannot be determined otherwise than by law.

**Art 5:** The law has the right only to prohibit actions detrimental to society. No action not prohibited by law can be restrained and no man can be forced to do what the law does not require.

**Art 6:** The law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to take part in its creation either through themselves or by their representatives. The law must apply to all, whether it be to protect or to punish. Being equal in its eyes, all citizens shall have equal access to all honours and to all positions and public employments according to their abilities, with no other distinction save their virtues and their talents.

**Art 7:** No man shall be accused, arrested or detained save in the instances determined by law and in accordance with the rules so prescribed. Those who solicit, enable, carry out, or have carried out for them, the exercise of arbitrary power must be punished; but any citizen called to account or arrested according to law must obey immediately: he who resists commits a crime.

**Art 8:** The law may only provide for punishments which are strictly and clearly necessary, and no-one can be punished save according to a law enacted and published prior to the offence and lawfully exercised.

**Art 9:** As every man is presumed innocent until proven guilty, if it is deemed necessary to arrest a person, any force used beyond that which is required to secure him shall be punished severely by law.

**Art 10:** no-one need be concerned about his opinions, even religious ones as long as their expression does not disturb public order as laid down by law.

**Art 11:** The free expression of thoughts and opinions is one of man's most precious rights: every citizen can therefore speak, write or print freely unless that freedom is legally determined to have been abused.

**Art 12:** To guarantee the rights of Man and Citizens a security Force is required: this Force is thus created for the good of all and not for the private use of the individuals in control of it.

**Art 13:** To maintain the public security Force and for the expenses of the administration thereof, a subscription from the general public is essential: it must be shared equally between all citizens according to their means.

**Art 14:** All citizens have the right to verify, either by themselves or by their representatives, the need for the public subscription, to consent freely to it, to observe how it is employed, so as to determine the amount, the basis for it, and the collection, recovery and duration thereof.

**Art 15:** Society has the right to call any public servant to account for his conduct in the administration of government.

**Art 16:** Any Society in which the guarantee of Rights is not ensured nor the separation of Powers established is constitutionally invalid.

**Art 17:** The right to own property, being held inviolate and sacred, no-one can be deprived thereof unless a public authority, legally established clearly demands it and on condition that a fair and prior indemnity is paid.