

Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity

City profile: Paris, France



Population: 2,148,271 (2020)

GDP per capita: \$63,150 (2018)

Major industries: commerce, finance, tourism

Percentage of migrants: 25% (2016)

Mayor's name: Anne Hidalgo | **Next election date:** 2026

Socioeconomic profile

Paris is the French capital and the country's largest city. The city proper has a population of 2,148,271 spread over 105 km², with another 10 million people living in the larger metropolitan district (INSEE, 2020). The Paris urban area is the largest in the European Union, although growing slowly at a rate of 0.6% a year (UN, 2018). In terms of age, 19% of the population is 19 or under, and 22% over 60 (INSEE, 2020). Paris proper is divided into 20 administrative districts (arrondissements), arranged in a spiral around the Seine river (Paris Government, n.d.). The city's distinctive urban structure, in place since the mid-1800s, is characterised by wide avenues and a large residential population in the city centre. One consequence of this central planning has been to push lower-income residents to the suburbs, or *banlieues*. This term now holds a pejorative meaning since these highly segregated areas are largely settled by working-class immigrants, many living in large public housing projects or *cités* (Packer, 2015).

The Grand Paris region accounts for 5% of European GDP (Le Grand Paris, n.d.). Per capita GDP for the city of Paris is very high, recorded at \$63,150 in 2018.¹ An estimated 15.2% of residents in the city proper live in poverty (INSEE, 2017a), although some of the *banlieues* experience poverty rates of more than 40% (Observatoire des Inegalites, 2017). The unemployment rate of 13% is higher than the national average and almost double the EU average (Eurostat, 2019). In the poorest suburbs, 38% of youth and 24% of all residents are unemployed (Le Monde, 2017). Most Parisians work in commerce, transport and services (68%), public administration, health and social action (25%) (INSEE, 2017b). Tourism accounts for 12% of salaried employment in Grand Paris (Paris Office of Tourism, 2019). In 2015, 87% of individuals surveyed about

their quality of life said they were satisfied living in Paris (Eurostat, 2015).

Migration profile

Paris is home to a large proportion (38%) of France's foreign-born population (INSEE, 2012). One in four residents are foreign-born, and of that population 80% were born outside the EU (Eurostat, 2016). Paris' immigrant population is mainly North African, with 10.5% of migrants from Algeria, 8% from Morocco, 6% from Tunisia and 17.7% from other African countries (INSEE, 2017c). Racial and ethnic tensions in Paris have been high for decades, due in part to the residential and economic segregation experienced by *banlieue* residents. Growing Muslim populations have provoked fears of religious extremism and some anti-police protests have turned violent (Bloomberg, 2017). France has received the second-highest number of asylum applications in the EU over the past two years (totalling around 250,000), of which 75% were rejected. Despite attempts to dismantle them, Paris still housed several informal migrant camps (Asylum Information Database, 2019). Paris has declared itself a City of Sanctuary and created a network of 'refuge cities' aiming to provide better reception and integration policies for immigrants (Equal Times, 2018). Currently, immigrants integrate into the French labour market slowly, with only around half of foreign-born residents active in the labour force one year after arrival. European immigrants are the most likely to find employment, in contrast to those born in North and sub-Saharan Africa. This may be due in part to asylum-seekers' inability to access the labour market unless they have waited over six months for a decision on their application (Asylum Information Database, 2019). Although 78% of Paris residents believe that foreigners are good for the city, only 52% believe that foreigners are well-integrated (Eurostat, 2015).

¹ This figure is provided in nominal US\$ and is not comparable with other cities profiled. See OECD Stats (2018). Information is extracted in US\$, constant prices, constant PPP, then converted into local currency using OECD PPP-local currency conversion rate, then converted into nominal US\$ using OECD's local currency to US\$ conversion rate.

Governance structures

The city of Paris is divided into 17 electoral districts. Residents vote in closed party elections every six years to choose their district council, the members of which then serve on the 163-strong Paris Council, which elects the mayor (Paris Government, 2020a). The major parties currently represented on the Paris Council are Paris en Commun (Socialist, 34%) and Changer Paris (Centrist and Republican, 34%). Paris en Commun controls a leftist coalition comprising 59% of the Council (ibid.). The city council governs civil registration, culture, economy, education, environment, roads, social welfare and urban planning, while the city police are controlled by the central state (City Mayors, 2020). Since 2016,

Paris has pursued a plan to better integrate with the *banlieues* through shared governance and improved transport, forming the New Metropolis of Grand Paris.

Paris has implemented a participatory budget scheme, meaning that Parisians can vote on how to allocate 5% of the city budget. They currently prioritise housing, climate, cleanliness and social care (Paris Government, 2018). The city council provides services in job training, integration through employment and volunteering opportunities (Paris Government, 2020b). The regional economic development agency, Invest in Paris Region, is responsible for boosting the competitiveness of companies and increasing the city's international outreach (EU Commission, 2019).

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