



OUTCAN Guide | Life in Lille, France

LOCATION

Country: France

Town: Lille

Info to Consider:

- Family (non-dependents) can visit and stay 90 days **without a visa**.

POPULATION

Size: Lille has a population of approximately 230,000. Located close to the French and Belgian border (The French Flanders), Lille is the capital of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region. It is the fourth-largest urban region in France with a population of just over one million.

Ethnicity: 80% French Nationals, 20% others.

LANGUAGE(S)

Official language: French

Prevalence of French or English speaking: The official language is French with pockets of areas where the Picard dialect, Dutch and Flemish are spoken. Official services are provided mainly in these three languages. English is also widely spoken by many locals.

COST OF LIVING

Currency & Exchange rate to consider: Euros 1 EUR = 1,47652 CAD (March 2024)

QUALITY OF LIFE

Climate and potential for severe weather, natural disasters:

- Winter temperatures rarely drop below zero and average around 4 degrees Celsius. The average high summer temperatures are in the low 20s.

Laws and culture:

- Speed limits are 130 km/hr on motorways and 50 km/hr in cities/towns.
- Driving is faster than what we are used to and driving lanes (as well as vehicles) are smaller than what we are used to.
- Parking spaces in Lille are mostly parallel parking spaces. If not, spaces are generally very tight.
- Most of the roads you will encounter are of the highest quality, and the motorways – though often tolled – are a very efficient way of travelling between cities.
- Penalties for drinking and driving are severe. The legal blood alcohol limit is 0.05%.
- It is illegal to completely cover your face in public places in France. However, the following are exceptions:
 - clothing is required or authorized by law (e.g. a full helmet for a motorcycle)
 - The dress is justified by health reasons or professional reasons (protective mask for example)
 - The outfit is part of sports practices, festivals or artistic or traditional events.

This ban includes fully covering your face in the international arrivals area at airports. Failure to comply can lead to a heavy fine. There are no exemptions for tourists or religious reasons.

Safety and Security:

- While it is a safe city, look out for pickpockets as in any European city.
- Crime is increasing due to high rates of youth unemployment. Use caution when riding the subway.
- There is a threat of terrorism in Europe. Terrorists have carried out attacks in several European cities. In France, separate attacks causing multiple deaths and injuries have taken place. The attacks, whether opportunistic or premeditated, targeted public spaces, including an entertainment venue, restaurants and tourist sites. Further attacks in Europe are likely.

Level of isolation:

- Language challenges can cause a high level of isolation, particularly among spouses.
- Four Canadian families in this location.

HOUSING

- Housing in the economy. Furnished possible.
- Most homes and flats are much bigger than the average in Canada.
- Help for housing is available from a local French agent for Canadians.

EMPLOYMENT

Are there employment opportunities for spouses?

- Due to tax and legal implications, spousal employment in the economy is not an option.
- Employment is extremely limited. Families should plan to be a single-income family for the duration of the posting. **CFMWS | MFS | OUTCAN Europe | CFMWS**
- Language abilities in French would be a condition for employment.

Op Tempo: Varies depending on place of work and position.

HEALTH CARE

Access:

- France ranks among the World Health Organization's top 10 countries for quality health services.
- Access to SHAPE medical facilities located in Mons, Belgium (90 km)
- The Canadian Medical Clinic in Geilenkirchen is responsible for the healthcare of all Canadian military members in Europe, and can be accessed.
- All bills associated with the care of dependents are the member's personal responsibility and are to be claimed through PSHCP. **PSHCP Member Portal (pshcp-msh.ca)**

Special needs:

- Yes, depending on the language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed.
- It is highly advised that the family consult with Medical Screening Officer in Canada and/or the Canadian Element to ensure that the required services are readily available in either English or French before accepting a posting.

Consideration for pregnancy/birth:

- Health care for pregnancy and birth is available in the economy.

Dental:

- Dental care can be accessed in town. You are required to pay upfront, and you can then claim your expenses.

SCHOOLING

- For an approved list of schools, please contact Children's Education Management at: CEMGEE@forces.gc.ca
- Children's Education Management - Canada.ca
- Gestion de l'éducation des enfants - Canada.ca

Curriculum vs. Canadian curriculum:

- The curriculum varies depending on the choice of school.
- Canadian history or geography is not offered at any school.

Resources for special need children:

- Access to special needs services depends on the choice of school, there may be language requirements, area of specialization and degree of support needed, so it may be very limited.
- Consult with CEM and the school before making any commitments.

CHILDCARE

- Largely available on the economy.

TRANSPORTATION

- Lille Airport (LIL) is located in Lesquin, 7 km (4 mi) south-southeast of Lille.
- Get an international licence before leaving Canada.
- Very good train system. Good biking to work and walking everywhere. Excellent public transportation.

RESOURCES AND AMENITIES

Is there a Military Family Services centre available in that location?

- No physical centre. Families in France are supported by the Remote Team: MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com

Psychosocial / Mental Health Resources:

- Not at post, MFS(E) Social Workers, CAF SW/Mental Health Team for members are located in Geilenkirchen, Germany. Padre is located in Casteau, Belgium(SHAPE).

Communications:

- Cell phone and internet plans are very affordable and reliable in France. Examples of companies are Orange, SFR, Bouygues Telecom, and Free Mobile.

ACTIVITIES

Access to sports or other leisure activities:

- Depends on the area, but most do offer a wide variety. English might be limited.
- A social group that other spouses have attended is ANFEM (Accueil - ANFEM) Contact email: anfemlille@gmail.com

Availability of playgrounds:

- Yes. Many parks in residential areas also have walking parks.

RESTRICTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are common-law relationships recognized? Yes.

Are same sex-couples recognized? Yes.

Medications that are illegal in the country:

- Cannabis is illegal in France.

Other Considerations:

- Pharmacy has most medications. Sometimes language might be an issue.
- Difficult finding distilled water for CPAP machines.
- Animals entering France need to be microchipped and have a valid rabies vaccine.
- Some dog breeds are banned, such as Staffordshire Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier (Pit Bull Terrier), Japanese Tosa Inu, Boerbull Mastiff, or will have restrictions imposed. It is the member's duty to verify.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- European Commission Country Reports (2023)
https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/2023-european-semester-country-reports_en
- Canadian Travel Advisories
<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- CIA World Factbooks (One Pagers from the US)
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/france>
- Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france>

For more comprehensive information, please feel free to reach out to the resources below

- MFS(E) Social Worker: MFSSocialWork@cfmws.com
- CAF Social Worker: GKMedicalClinic@forces.gc.ca
- MFS(E) Team: MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com
- MFS(E) Regional Office: +49 (0) 2451 717 173, MFS.Europe@cfmws.com