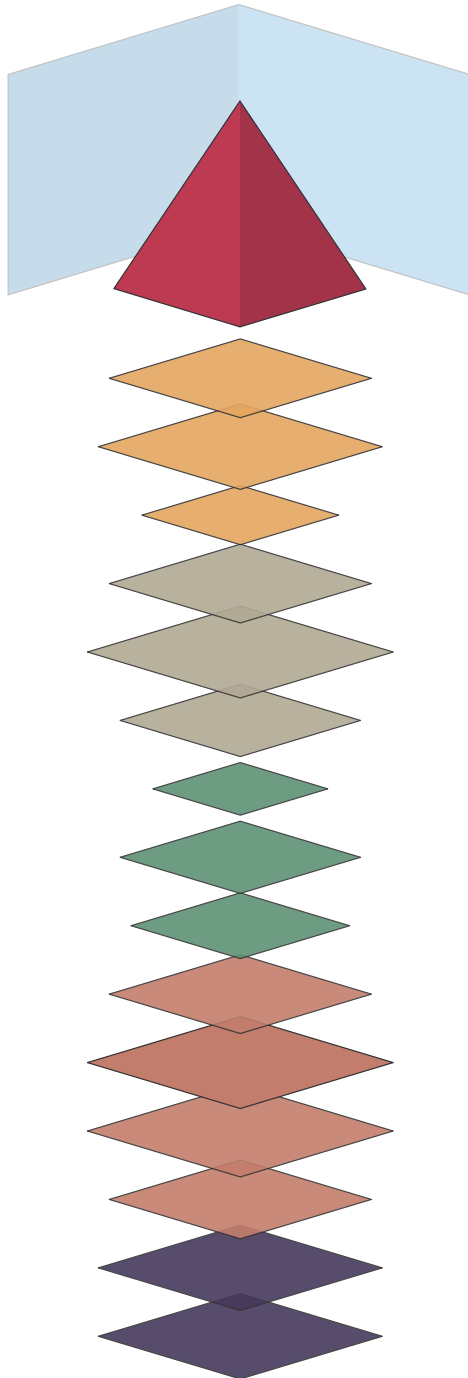


# FRANCE



5.82

## CRIMINALITY SCORE

58<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries

9<sup>th</sup> of 44 European countries

1<sup>st</sup> of 11 Western European countries



### CRIMINAL MARKETS

5.93

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	6.50
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	4.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	6.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	7.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	5.50
FLORA CRIMES	4.00
FAUNA CRIMES	5.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	5.00
HEROIN TRADE	6.00
COCAINE TRADE	7.00
CANNABIS TRADE	7.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	6.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	6.50
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.50



### CRIMINAL ACTORS

5.70

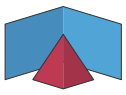
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	6.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	3.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	7.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	5.50



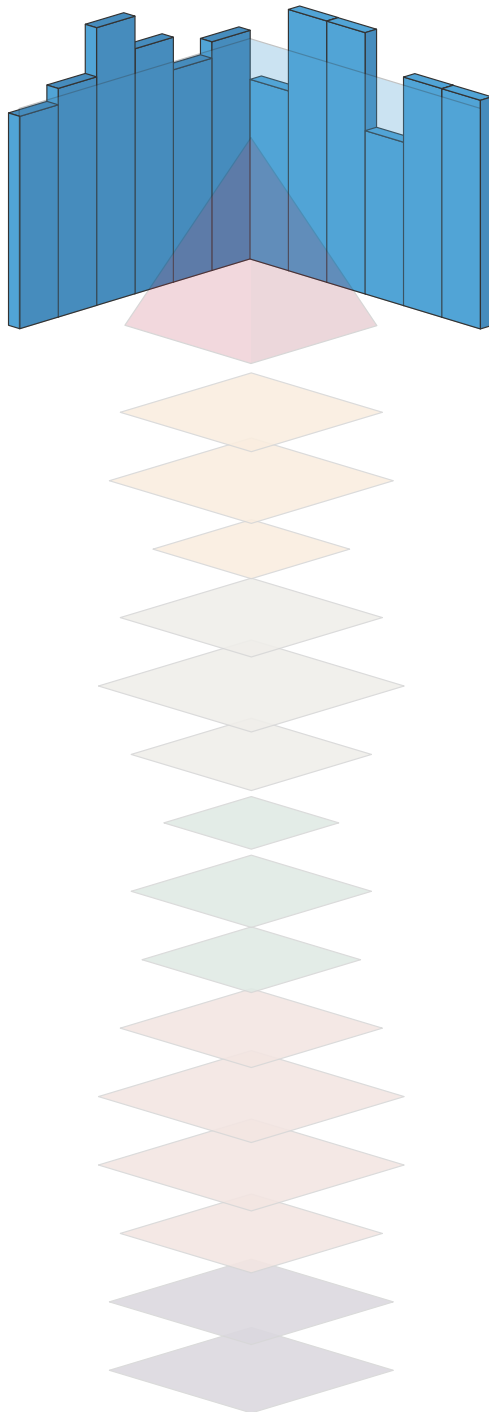
6.96

## RESILIENCE SCORE





# FRANCE



## 6.96

### RESILIENCE SCORE

27<sup>th</sup> of 193 countries

19<sup>th</sup> of 44 European countries

11<sup>th</sup> of 11 Western European countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	6.50
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	7.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	8.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	6.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	7.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	8.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	8.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	5.00
PREVENTION	7.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.00



## 5.82

### CRIMINALITY SCORE



**CRIMINAL MARKETS** 5.93



**CRIMINAL ACTORS** 5.70



# CRIMINALITY

## CRIMINAL MARKETS

### PEOPLE

France is predominantly a destination country for human trafficking, with victims vulnerable to sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced begging, and slavery, but it also serves as a source and transit country, albeit to a lesser extent. Women and girls are primarily trafficked for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and other forms of forced labour, along with men. Child victims are also increasingly targeted by traffickers for forced begging and theft. Criminal networks often use online platforms to recruit victims, making it easier for them to reach more people and more difficult for investigators to track. France has seen a sharp rise in sex trafficking, especially in suburban areas, and victims have been increasingly lured by the use of different methods, including sham romantic relationships, debt bondage and physical force. Women and children fleeing Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine are also vulnerable to trafficking in France. Undocumented workers as well as seasonal workers already in the country have also been trafficked into forced labour, especially in construction, small commerce, agriculture and fishing industries, with fraudulent economic promises.

France is a significant transit and destination country for human smuggling, with Algeria and Morocco common countries of departure. Human smuggling has increased in northern France since the closure of migration camps in Calais. A significant portion of human smuggling transiting through France is intended to reach the UK. The port city of Ouistreham in Normandy is a major hot spot. Smuggling across France's borders with Italy is also a cause of concern, with micro-militias pushing people back to Italy. France's overseas territories, particularly Mayotte and Guyana, are entry points for human smuggling activities. French intelligence services have reported an overlap between human smuggling, drug trafficking, sex trafficking, and arms trafficking.

There is scarce evidence of extortion or racketeering committed by organized groups in France, except for a few instances of criminal groups involved in extortion practices along with other crimes, including theft and sale of stolen goods, smuggling of tobacco, drug trafficking and laundering of criminal assets. In Corsica, cases are reportedly more common and generally involve racketeering and threats linked to tensions regarding property. In the context of financial subsidies from the state and the EU, local elected representatives are potentially more exposed to Corsican criminal groups who interfere in the awarding of public contracts in the construction sector, agricultural activities, and waste management.

### TRADE

The illicit weapons trade in France is primarily fueled by organized crime, particularly drug trafficking networks. Kalashnikovs and submachine guns from World War II are the most commonly found weapons on the illicit market. Converted and reactivated firearms are also increasingly available and used in crimes. There is a worrying trend in the number of weapons entering France, particularly from the Balkans, and disputes are increasingly being settled through physical violence and the use of illegal firearms. The use of war weapons, such as AK-47s, has enabled terrorist groups to attack civilians and fuels violence in suburbs where young people have easy access to such weapons. New trends in arms trafficking include the sending of arms by post and the emergence of new customers with unclear motives.

Counterfeit goods are a significant problem, with products ranging from luxury items to everyday goods being affected. The rise of e-commerce has made it easier for counterfeit goods to be sold, with China being the main source of these products. Counterfeit cigarettes are among the most traded counterfeit goods and have a significant impact on the economy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increase in the market for counterfeit masks and medicine, prompting the government to launch an action plan to combat counterfeit goods. France is the second-largest country, after the US, in terms of the percentage of customs seizures of products infringing intellectual property rights.

The illicit trade in excise goods, particularly cigarettes, is a sizeable market that has been increasing in France in recent years. This may be due to the country's new tobacco legislation, which has raised the price of tobacco products, creating more opportunities in the market for smugglers. French police have conducted numerous operations and seized large quantities of smuggled cigarettes, many of which are destined for the UK.

### ENVIRONMENT

The illegal timber trade has some influence in France, with the country being a destination for illegally sourced timber from Southeast Asia, Central Africa, and Latin America. Illegal logging for timber and mining is also prevalent in French Guiana, with several organized crime groups involved in these activities. Moreover, France is a destination country for illegal rare orchids and cacti. The country is also a major transit and destination point for the illegal wildlife trade, with connections between France, Africa and Asia. Bushmeat, especially meat derived from monkeys, reptiles, and antelopes, is trafficked into Paris suburbs for the African diaspora, while live monkeys and

reptiles are smuggled from Morocco to France via Spain. A range of live wild animals is trafficked, and France is a large importer of reptile skins and tigers. Glass eel trafficking is another issue of concern. In terms of non-renewable resource crimes, France is an important destination country for the criminal market, particularly illegal gold from French Guiana. Illegal gold mining in French Guiana is widespread and has led to the destruction of thousands of hectares of rainforest, negatively impacting entire ecosystems. Gold trafficking from France to other European countries also takes place. There are numerous instances of metal theft in France and these are often large-scale operations carried out by foreign criminal groups.

## DRUGS

The illegal drug trade is a growing problem in France, with various substances being smuggled into the country through different routes. Heroin trafficking is prevalent in the country, with networks involved in the trade buying the drug from neighbouring countries. Heroin is mostly produced in Afghanistan and transported to France via Belgium or the Netherlands before being redistributed across the country. The Northern Department of France, especially the city of Lille, is a major hub for heroin trafficking, while the traffic in the Alps region is controlled by Albanian mafias. The decrease in heroin prices has led to an increase in consumption, with sniffing and smoking replacing traditional injection. The cocaine market is the second-largest drug market in France, with most of the cocaine arriving through two primary entry routes. The first route is through the port of Le Havre, where the drug arrives in containers from Ecuador or Brazil. The second route is via French Guiana, where cocaine is transported by road from Suriname and then flown to Paris using human mules or sent in cans through postal parcels. France also serves as a transit country for the cocaine trade, as some of it is transported to the UK or the Netherlands. While the COVID-19 pandemic has not had a significant impact on the wholesale market's supply, it has accelerated the use of social networks for the purchasing of such substances.

Cannabis is the most widely consumed illegal drug in France, and its market has grown considerably in recent years. Although controlled by a few kingpins, the market is difficult to detect as it is fragmented and transnational. Cannabis mainly comes from Morocco, transiting through Spain to reach France and the rest of Europe by car, bus, or truck. Tackling cannabis trafficking remains the primary law enforcement priority for French authorities. The pandemic has confirmed the trend towards the development of domestic cannabis production. France is also a transit and destination point for methamphetamine and MDMA (Ecstasy), mainly produced in Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands and sold in France, Spain, and the UK. The use of new psychoactive substances has been on the rise, with most being purchased online and produced in India and China. The market in France is dominated by

cathinone-type substances, followed by ketamine and synthetic cannabinoids. Synthetic cannabinoids have been found to pose significant health risks to consumers, and there is evidence of illicit laboratories in France. The use of the online black market has become more prevalent, especially for rare products such as illicit fentanyl and related fentanyl-based drugs.

## CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

France has been the victim of numerous cyber-attacks perpetrated mostly by groups based in foreign countries, such as China and Russia. These cybercriminals are becoming increasingly organized and professional, and they are usually motivated by financial gain, espionage, and sabotage. One type of cyber-attack that has increased in frequency is ransomware, with legal entities from various sectors being the primary targets. In fact, French companies were the second most targeted by cybercrime in Europe, with around half of companies established and operating in France becoming victims of cyber-attacks. Telecommuting has revealed many vulnerabilities in digital services, leaving people unprepared for this kind of crime. France has observed cyber-attacks emanating from Russian actors, especially in the context of recent events in Ukraine, which have opened the door for an online aspect of the conflict.

## FINANCIAL CRIMES

With regards to financial crimes, cases of financial fraud and tax evasion are frequently detected in France. These incidents of financial fraud can cost hundreds of millions of euros and may be carried out on behalf of criminal organizations. Examples of such fraud include false transfer orders and fraud to benefit from state aid. Furthermore, tax abuses by multinational corporations account for millions in losses to the state. Currently, there are two emerging forms of financial fraud: learning account fraud and post-COVID-19 aid fraud.

## CRIMINAL ACTORS

The organized crime landscape in France is dominated by foreign actors. North African diasporas are known to harbour organized crime members in French criminal markets. Algerian criminals operate primarily in the poorer areas of Marseille, while the Italian mafia is prevalent in France's Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, due to geographical proximity, legislative shortcomings and the presence of the Italian diaspora. West African and Eastern European groups control sexual exploitation and arms trafficking markets, respectively. Russian and Balkan organized crime groups exert control over France's private security sector, while Asian organized crime groups are active in various sectors, including wholesale trade, logistics, and cybercrime. Nevertheless, criminal networks composed of French citizens exist in France and they are active in

various criminal markets such as drug trafficking, arms trafficking, violence, and corruption. They use the dark web and encrypted technology to avoid police detection, but means of detection and repression are being adapted.

Local mafia-style groups operate discreetly and are often overlooked, with a high rate of infiltration in legitimate businesses, such as bars, restaurants, hospitality, construction, waste management, public and commercial services, and agriculture. These groups tend to be involved in poly-criminality and are often characterised by ethnicity or loyalty to a specific city, and often have links to drug trafficking groups. Corsican mafia-style groups also engage in a high level of violence, usually due to competition, which leads to revenge killings. The government's reach on the island remains limited. Criminal organizations need a legal 'façade' to launder the proceeds of their crimes, so they often work with private sector actors, including lawyers

and accountants, to maintain their legal appearance. Specialized private companies contribute to the capacity development of organized groups by providing legal structures abroad, shell companies, and bank accounts in countries with a low level of cooperation on tax matters. Corsican criminal groups, in particular, invest in the hotel industry and casinos in the south of France.

State-embedded actors, including government elites, politicians, civil servants, and police officers, exist and mostly engage in money-laundering, tax evasion, and corruption in France. Corrupted state-embedded actors have been charged with these crimes at all levels of seniority and position within the state. While it is difficult to estimate their degree of control over criminal markets, some politico-financial affairs linking state-embedded actors to criminal activities have transnational components.

# RESILIENCE

## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

French citizens have shown a lack of trust in their government, as evidenced by multiple demonstrations and strikes in recent years. This phenomenon could be attributed to lack of transparency, tax evasion issues, and controversial political decisions. Despite this, the country itself is stable. The fight against organized crime remains a secondary priority behind the fight against terrorism. The country has two independent authorities that oversee government action, handle corruption cases, raise public awareness regarding ethics in politics, and make proposals for legal improvements. However, citizens are calling for more transparency in different areas of government business. The fight against corruption lacks resources and political will, and the focus is mainly on international corruption rather than national corruption. International organizations have called on the national government to reinforce its anti-corruption policies, expressing concern over the proximity of France's executive with lobbies.

France is a party to all major international treaties and conventions on organized crime, including drug trafficking, and the arms trade as well as corruption and has played an active role in negotiations and implementation. France also has a number of bilateral and multilateral security cooperation agreements and is one of only a few countries that have been and continue to be involved in subregional, regional and global initiatives. The country does not have a specific definition of organized crime in its legislation but lists various offences that constitute organized crime when committed by organized gangs. France now has a global law on the social use of confiscated assets which

is based on the Italian model. However, no confiscation is possible without a criminal conviction of the perpetrator.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

France has established specialized inter-regional jurisdictions with competencies in various organized crime markets, including drug trafficking and financial crimes. Furthermore, institutions have been put in place to adapt the judicial system to new trends in transnational organized crime. However, the lack of independence of the public prosecutor, who is appointed by the minister of justice, has been regularly criticized. France's prisons have also been criticized for overcrowding, disrepair, lack of hygiene, absence of intimacy, lack of activities, and the alleged risk of radicalization. The French police and gendarmerie, with various specialized units dedicated to specific criminal markets, as part of the ministry of interior are responsible for combating various crimes, including organized crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, human smuggling, and cybercrime. While the country has strong law enforcement against crime, the lack of transparency in the operation of many agencies remains an area for improvement.

France's territorial integrity is compromised by various factors, including porous borders with Italy and Spain that are exploited by traffickers and drug smugglers. French territories abroad, particularly French Guiana, are also used as entry points for drug traffickers. Additionally, failed integration policies have resulted in lawless areas in the suburbs of major cities where crime rates are high, and police often do not stay long enough to establish

community policing. Criminal networks continue to use various routes to enter France and they are increasingly influential, often working with local officials. Essential infrastructures also remain inadequately protected against cyber-attacks. However, in the last few years, operations conducted by the National jurisdiction in charge of the fight against organized crime (Junalco) have showed some positive results, especially in the areas of drug trafficking, human trafficking and cybercrime.

## ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

France has implemented strict measures to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. However, criminal organizations are known to be involved in money laundering through the betting and gambling industry, and white-collar crimes are also utilized to recuperate funds lost to tax evasion. With criminal networks increasingly operating online, France aims to quickly regulate these new activities. Overall, France is considered a resilient country to money laundering offences and is constantly taking measures to improve its capabilities.

Compared to other EU countries, the French economy is more regulated, particularly in network industries such as transport, communications, and energy. The French government has made efforts to reduce regulatory burdens, including launching a regulatory reform agenda. However, there is a tension between economic fluidity and security concerns. France's GDP per capita is above the euro area and OECD averages, indicating a strong economy. The country's informal economy accounts for a small share of its GDP, which is relatively low compared to other European countries.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

France has a department responsible for access to law, justice, and victim support, and a federation of victim support associations. However, there is no legal definition of a 'victim of crime'. NGOs identify a significant number of

victims of human trafficking, but they are not adequately funded, which slows the identification process. Victims are entitled to special protection as well as support, including legal aid, psychological and medical assistance and housing. However, there have been shortcomings in providing the aforementioned support mechanisms, owing to a lack of resources and identification issues. Even after identifying victims, obtaining a refugee status that would offer appropriate protection can be difficult, and not all victims have access to shelters. France has met its fast-track targets to end HIV/AIDS by 2030 through prevention efforts for illicit drugs and has provided needle and syringe distribution as well as treatments. Associations that help young people who are victims of extortion and racketeering are available. France has also made efforts to prevent human trafficking by adopting a national action plan against it and establishing an inter-ministerial mission for the protection of women against violence and the fight against human trafficking.

Regarding civil society, most NGOs do not receive government funding and rely on other sources, such as private funding, which has an impact on their sustainability. The law allows funds raised from selling confiscated assets to be directed to finance associative projects against human trafficking, compensate victims of crime, or fund law enforcement agencies and addiction prevention institutions. Additionally, while police violence against journalists has declined, there has been a reported increase in violence against journalists, including verbal and online attacks, as well as lawsuits. This tension is fueled by the use of social media and has resulted in a worsening trend in civil liberties.

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