

Asylum in Switzerland

Were you in danger in your country? Did you leave your country to seek asylum? In Switzerland, the Asylum Act (AsIA) defines the rules of asylum. The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) examines each application carefully. This law states: every person in danger in their country because of their origin, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion, has the right to seek asylum in another country.

What is asylum?

Around the world, people have to leave their country and seek help in another country. Some people are at risk in their country for the reasons described above. Other people have to leave because of war. Switzerland grants asylum (the refugee B permit) to people recognised as refugees. This means: people who are personally targeted and in danger of their lives. Switzerland gives protection for a limited time (temporary F or S permit) to persons who are not recognised as refugees but who need protection.

Asylum policy in Switzerland

The SEM (State Secretariat for Migration) decides who can be refugees and be granted asylum in Switzerland. To do this, the SEM analyses each request. It follows rules laid down in the Asylum Act (AsIA), the Geneva Convention and the Dublin Agreements.

A refugee is a person who is at risk in their country because of: their origins, religion, nationality, social group or political opinions.

People are recognised as refugees if they are:

- threatened and in great danger for one of the following reasons:
- not being protected by their country
- not being able to take refuge in another part of their country

The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) examines each asylum application carefully. The Swiss Asylum Act explains how the asylum procedure works. It also explains several aspects of life in Switzerland such as accommodation, residence permits, family reunification, access to work, social assistance, health insurance and integration.

Switzerland also follows the rules of the Dublin Agreement. These rules define which country should consider the asylum application. In general, this is the country where the person first applied.

The Jura Association for Welcoming Migrants (Association Jurassienne d'Accueil des Migrants) (AJAM)

The AJAM welcomes people who have come from asylum (N, F, S and B refugee permits).

The AJAM supports them in their new life in the Canton of Jura.

This association helps people:

- receive medical care
- find a job
- find accommodation
- integrate into the social life of the Jura.

The Canton of Jura has delegated this work to the AJAM.

The AJAM also manages the Animation and training centre for women and families (Centre d'Animation et de Formation pour Femmes et Familles) (CAFF) and the Community Health Centre (Maison de Santé Communautaire) (MdSC).

Integration of persons who have come from asylum (N, F, S and B refugee permits)

Integration of these people takes place in three steps:

1. The first welcome: arrive and see their needs

People arriving in the Canton of Jura first go to a collective centre.

Social workers look at and assess the needs of each person. Together, they make an integration plan, with personal objectives.

This step lasts two weeks.

2. Socialisation: getting to know life in Switzerland

This step helps people integrate into life in the Jura (engaging in activities and having friends). Social educators and social workers help people build their new lives in Switzerland.

This stage lasts from six months to 1.5 years.

3. Professional integration: finding a job

Labour specialists offer help in finding and keeping a job.

These specialists are called: "job coaches". They also help people to have their foreign credentials recognised or to take vocational training.

This stage lasts several years, until the end of the support by the AJAM.

How long does the AJAM support last?

In general, the AJMA supports people until they are employed and independent.

The AJAM's integration offerings for people who have come from asylum

There are integration offerings for adults and young people

1. Offerings for adults

These are the offerings for adults:

- Information workshops

After arriving in Switzerland, people take part in several information workshops.

These workshops are mandatory.

The workshops are held in French and in the language of origin. They cover different topics such as health, life in the Jura, work, housing.

- French courses

Different French courses are offered to all people: young and old, with or without family, with or without work.

These courses are of different levels: from Beginner (A1) to Advanced (B2).

2. Offerings for young people

Children up to the age of 15 attend school in their municipality.

Generally, from the age of 16, young people undergo vocational training.

But young foreigners can first take special training to improve their French and other skills (e.g. mathematics).

These are the offerings for young people:

- Bravo

For young people between the ages of 16 and 25, who have no training and who are starting to learn French.

This programme helps these young people reach level A1 in French. It also offers the basics in mathematics and computer science.

- PréFor (for pre-training)

For young people aged 16 to 25 with level A1 in French.

This programme helps these young people to enter vocational training.

It teaches French up to level B2.

It also provides mathematical and computer skills.

- PAI+ (for pre-apprenticeship integration)

For young people aged 16 to 25 with level B1 in French.

This programme helps these young people enter the world of work. It prepares young people for an apprenticeship (federal certificate of vocational education and training (AFP) or federal vocational diploma (CFC)).

The programme lasts 1 year.

Different permits in the field of asylum

After arriving in Switzerland, people will change their permit several times.

This depends on the steps and results of their asylum application.

The permit that a person receives (N, F or B refugee) is the sign of their legal status.

The legal status shows how the person is recognised in the asylum system in Switzerland.

Different legal status (or permits) do not give the same rights in a person's life.

For example, depending on the permit, it is different for:

- the right to family reunification (bringing your family to Switzerland)
- the right to work
- the right to social assistance
- the right to travel

Here is a table that explains the different permits, depending on legal status

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.bonjour-jura.ch/en/integration/asylum-in-switzerland