

Information about Switzerland

Gende

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1 Women* and girls*

According to Swiss law, gender-specific reasons for flight must be taken into account. However, asylum applications by women which claim gender-specific reasons for their flight are often declined because the authorities deem the reasons implausible. It is therefore important that you are as clear as possible about your experiences from the beginning of the interviews. If you do not feel comfortable during the interview or if you feel like you cannot talk about certain things, you have the right to say so. You also have the right to ask to conduct your interview with a person of the same gender. The Swiss immigration authorities accept, in theory, the following seven points as women-specific reasons for granting asylum. Nevertheless, in practice, they often do not believe reasons for flight due to gender-based persecution or consider them incredible:

- Fear of Female Genital Mutilation (this is only accepted if you are in danger of being mutilated, not if it already has been done – but might be relevant if your daughter is in danger of FGM).
- Domestic violence
- Forced marriage
- Victims of discriminatory law (high threshold)
- Victims of forced abortion or sterilisation if the person was a vocal critic
- Victims of honour killings and victims of persecution because of their sexual or gender identity

Often traumatic experiences that women make during their flight are not being considered by the migration authorities. They only take into account experiences that caused someone to flee. However, if you have survived traumatising experiences during flight, you are entitled to psychological care. For this it is useful to contact one of the organisations below.

If you suffer domestic violence, you can go to a women's shelter. There is a list of women's shelters



[here](#). There is also a shelter for girls in Zurich: www.maedchenhaus.ch.

If you experience forced marriage, there is a list of organisations in each canton [here](#). For all of Switzerland you can call the hotline 0800 800 007 of the Fachstelle Zwangsheirat (specialist agency for forced marriages). If you are or have been forced to marry someone it is important that you get in contact with one of these organisations as early as possible and before your asylum interview.

If you are a survivor of human trafficking, you should contact the organisation FIZ in Zurich, they can help you find safe shelter and specialised legal advice:

FIZ Fachstelle Frauenhandel und Frauenmigration

Badenerstrasse 682, 8048 Zürich
[044 436 90 00](tel:0444369000), www.fiz-info.ch, contact@fiz-info.ch

2 LGBTQIA+

Identifying as LGBTQIA+ is in itself not yet a reason to receive protection. However, if you are being persecuted or subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment due to belonging to such a “social group” (meaning people identifying as LGBTQIA+), there is the possibility to claim asylum, assuming there remains no possibility to flee to safety inside your own country of origin.

You will have to explain your own experiences living as an LGBTQIA+ person. What are the risks you face? In what ways have you been persecuted? What do you fear if returned to your home country?

You might be able to underpin your case with background information. You may yourself see if you can find reports, articles or testimonies from organizations about the situation of LGBTQIA+ people in your country. Especially, you might be able to find relevant information in your own language. Give the information to your legal representative, so she or he can add the papers to

your asylum claim. But remember: You typically will not receive asylum because of the general situation in your country, but because of your personal persecution in your country.

You do not have to be persecuted due to your sexual or gender identity by a state actor. It is enough that the state actors (i.e. the police) are not able or unwilling to protect you from persecution on the basis of your gender identity or sexual orientation. The bar for proving that your state of origin is unable or unwilling to help you is very high.

Even though it is still used, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) has decided already in 2013 that asylum cannot be denied simply on the basis of you being able to live your gender identity or sexual orientation only in private. If this argument is used in your case, draw your legal representative's attention to this court decision.

The fight for the extension of Human Rights to LGBTIQ+ people is old and slow. However, important documents to consider might include the joint statement on human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity ([link](#)) and the Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity ([link](#)). In any case, claiming asylum on the basis of your gender identity or sexual orientation is complicated, and it is much advised to seek legal assistance early.

It is important that you explain about your sexual orientation or gender identity from the beginning of your case, and it is safe to do so. If you wait until later in your case, the State Secretary for Migration (SEM) might not believe you. These interviews can be intimidating, and you might be asked very intimate questions, and they might not believe your story or not believe that you are LGBTIQ+. Remember that you can have a second person with you during the interviews and that you are entitled to be interviewed by person of your gender identity.

Family reunification is possible in Switzerland with a spouse, registered partner or cohabiting partner regardless of their sex or gender identification.

In the asylum centres you can tell the staff about your special needs as LGBTIQ+. They are bound by a duty of confidentiality meaning that they cannot tell others.

3 Some contacts that support women:

The following is just a selection of organizations that support women*. You can find more extensive lists [here](#) or [here](#).

3.1 General

Terre des femmes Schweiz

Support and advocacy for migrant women in Switzerland.

Standstrasse 42, 3014 Bern, 031 311 38 79, www.terre-des-femmes.ch, info@terre-des-femmes.ch

Fachstelle Zwangsheirat

Supports victims of forced marriage.

079 911 00 00 or 0800 800 007, www.zwangsheirat.ch, info@zwangsheirat.ch

3.2 Central&Northern Switzerland

3.2.1 Berne

Lantana – Fachstelle Opferhilfe bei sexueller Gewalt

Supports survivors of sexual and domestic violence

Aarberggasse 36, 3011 Bern, 031 313 14 00, www.lantana-bern.ch, info@lantana-bern.ch

Vista – Fachstelle

Supports survivors of sexual and domestic violence.

Bälliz 49, 3600 Thun, 033 225 05 60, www.vista-thun.ch, info@vista-thun.ch

Frauenberatungsstelle Infra Bern

Support for women.

Zentrum5, Flurstrasse 26b, 3014 Bern, 031 311 17 95, www.infrabern.ch

XENIA – Fachstelle Sexarbeit

Supports sex workers in Bern, Thun and Biel.

Langmauerweg 1, 3011 Bern, 079 511 97 20 or 031 311 97 20, www.verein-xenia.ch, info@xeniabern.ch

3.2.2 Zurich

FIZ Fachstelle Frauenhandel und Frauenmigration

Support for migrant women and in particular

survivors of sexual violence.
Badenerstrasse 682, 8048 Zürich
[044 436 90 00](tel:0444369000), www.fiz-info.ch, contact@fiz-info.ch

Frauenberatung sexuelle Gewalt

Support for women who survived sexual violence.
Langstrasse 14, 8004 Zürich, 044 291 46 46,
www.frauenberatung.ch, info@frauenberatung.ch

Beratungsstelle Frauen-Notteléfono

Phone Hotline for women affected by violence.
Technikumstrasse 38 (1st floor), 8401 Winterthur,
052 213 61 61, www.frauennotteléfono.ch,
info@frauennotteléfono.ch

3.3 Eastern Switzerland

3.3.1 Frauenfeld

Beratungsstelle für Gewaltbetroffene Frauen Thurgau

Supports women survivors of violence
Oberstadtstrasse 7, 8500 Frauenfeld, 052 720 39 90,
www.frauenberatung-tg.ch,
kontakt@frauenberatung-tg.ch

3.4 Western Switzerland

3.4.1 Geneva

f-information – Espace d'accueil et d'orientation pour femmes et familles

Space that supports women and organises many activities with and for women
67, rue de la Servette, 1202 Genève, 022 740 31 00,
www.f-information.org, femmes@f-information.org

3.4.2 Lausanne/Vaud

Bureau Information Femmes

Supports women in Lausanne, Vevey, Morges and Yverdon.
Maison de la Femme, Avenue Églantine 6, 1005
Lausanne, [021 320 04 04](tel:0213200404), www.bif-va.ch,
info@bif-va.ch

3.4.3 Fribourg

Frauenraum/EspaceFemmes

Room for meeting and counselling for women from all social and cultural backgrounds.
Mo – We: 9am – 12am and 2pm – 5pm

Rue Saint-Pierre 10 (1er étage), 1700 Fribourg,
info@espacefemmes.org, 026 424 59 24

3.4.4 Valais

Freuw – Frauenberatungsstelle Visp

Supports women.
Bahnhofstrasse 17, 3930 Visp, 027 946 50 59,
www.freuw.ch, info@freuw.ch

4 Some contacts that support LGBTIAQ+ people:

Queeramnesty

Supports LGBTIAQ+ asylum seekers.
Postfach, 3001 Bern, www.queeramnesty.ch

Pink Cross Schwulenorganisation Schweiz

Advocacy for gay people.
Monbijoustrasse 73, 3007 Bern, 031 372 33 00,
www.pinkcross.ch, office@pinkcross.ch

Transgender Network Switzerland

Support and advocacy for transgender persons.
Monbijoustrasse 73, 3007 Bern, www.transgender-network.ch, legal@transgender-network.ch

LOS – Lesbenorganisation Schweiz

Advocacy for homo- and bisexual women.
Monbijoustr. 73, 3007 Bern, 079 259 39 47,
www.los.ch, info@los.ch

LGBT Hotline

Hotline for survivors of homo- or transphobic violence.
0800 133 133, www.lgbt-helpline.ch, hello@lgbt-helpline.ch