

Partnership

Many different forms of living together are accepted in Switzerland. In order to get married one must be at least 18 years old. Both spouses have equal rights.

Living Together

The forms in which people live together have changed greatly throughout the past centuries in Switzerland. Many unmarried couples live together (cohabitation, Konkubinat) and have children together. There is no set division of roles between the partners (male/female). Same-sex partnerships are accepted and treated as legally equivalent.

Marriage

In Switzerland, one must be 18 years old in order to get married. Same-sex couples can also get married. People wishing to get married must contact the registry office (Zivilstandsamt). The Basel-Landschaft registry office is located in Arlesheim. It initiates the marriage preparation procedure. This involves examining whether the requirements for marriage are met. After the procedure has been completed, the wedding must take place within three months. The registry office offers more detailed information on the procedure and the necessary documents. If one person still lives abroad, it is possible to file a request for entry so that he or she can take part in the marriage preparation procedure. If there is suspicion of a marriage of convenience (Scheinehe), the registry office may deny the marriage. In this case, even a marriage already completed can be declared invalid or the residence permit withdrawn.

Rights and Duties

Spouses have equal rights and duties by law. Both spouses must marry by choice. If authorities discover that a person has been forced into marriage (Zwangsheirat), the marriage may be declared invalid and the person who exercised coercion may be prosecuted. People who feel forced into marriage should ask for help. The counselling centre zwangsheirat.ch offers a free telephone hotline (0800 800 007) for this purpose.

Family Planning

For questions about family planning, pregnancy and sexuality, there are special advisory centres in Liestal and Binningen in Canton Basel-Landschaft. The centres offer anonymous and, in some cases, free information on topics such as birth control, sexual issues, unwanted pregnancy, or sexually transmitted diseases. They also consult future parents and people with children.

Divorce

A divorce can be requested by both spouses or by one spouse alone. The district courts (Zivilkreisgerichte) are responsible. Marriages that have been performed abroad can also be divorced in accordance with Swiss law. In order to do so, you must have lived in Switzerland for at least one year and Switzerland must be your main place of residence. Divorce may have an impact on residency status or on an ongoing naturalisation process. Whether or not non-citizens may remain in Switzerland after the divorce depends on several factors. Special rules apply to victims of domestic violence. A marriage and family counselling centre or a legal service provide further information on divorce.

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

www.hallo-baselland.ch/en/partnership-and-children/partnership