

UPR 28: SWITZERLAND November 2017

FACTSHEET

ASYLUM

BACKGROUND

During the past decade, Switzerland has adapted its laws and policies concerning refugees and asylum seekers multiple times. To this day, various issues around the asylum procedure and the accommodation of asylum seekers remain problematic, or have become even more so. The Swiss Human Rights NGO Platform is particularly concerned about the Dublin returns, a practice part of the EU's "Dublin System", under which a person who enters Switzerland from a third country considered "safe" will be issued with a no-entry decision and returned to the country in question. The asylum seekers concerned are systematically held in detention awaiting their return, and little flexibility is shown in the application of the process.

The accommodation of asylum seekers, some of which are run by the state, others put in the hands of for-profit organizations, is highly problematic and does not pay sufficient attention to unaccompanied child asylum seekers, families, women, and LGBTI people. The Swiss Human Rights NGO Platform would like to briefly elaborate on this issue here.

THE PROBLEM

The infrastructure of the five registration and processing centres at which an asylum application can be submitted is currently insufficient to adequately accommodate all asylum seekers. The military or civil defence facilities used due to a lack of appropriate infrastructure are not appropriate for long stays. Access to basic medical care and the possibility of early detection of illness cannot be fully guaranteed. Both occupational programmes and day facilities are also lacking. The situation is particularly difficult for vulnerable individuals, women and children. In the cantons, asylum seekers continue to be housed in underground civil defence shelters with often unreasonably restricted freedom of movement. There is a lack of gender and family sensitive guidelines to support the most vulnerable group throughout the procedure.

UPR CONCERN

Human rights of asylum seekers need to be guaranteed on all levels of the procedure as well as during the accommodation. Switzerland must demonstrate more flexibility in its application of the Dublin Convention and put in place a specific asylum procedure for unaccompanied minors.

Some recommendations concerning the accommodation of asylum seekers have been made in the past, which the Swiss Government rejected. The Swiss Human Rights NGO Platform estimates it is necessary to remind Switzerland of her duty to respect the human rights of all and guarantee safe and adequate living conditions to all asylum seekers.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION

Switzerland must guarantee asylum seekers living conditions in line with international standards. To do this, it must ensure that the infrastructure of the Confederation's asylum centres and the cantons' reception centres are designed in such a way as to guarantee these standards, even in case of a significant increase in the number of asylum requests.