

## Partnership

In Switzerland, there are many different ways in which people live together. If you want to get married, you need to be at least 18 years old. Both spouses have equal rights.

### Living Together

Much has changed in Switzerland over the last few decades. Many unmarried couples live together (cohabitation, Konkubinats). The couples may also have children together. There is no set division of roles between the partners. This means that men and women do not have to handle certain tasks in the relationship.

Same-sex couples may also live together, for example a man with a man or a woman with a woman. They have the same rights as other couples and can also get married.

### Marriage

In Switzerland, you must be 18 years old in order to get married. Same-sex couples can also get married: a man can marry a man and a woman can marry a woman. If you wish to get married, you need to contact the registry office of Basel-Stadt (Zivilstandsamt). The registry office then initiates the "marriage preparation procedure". For example, the office examines whether both partners meet the requirements for marriage. 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 partner still lives abroad, it is possible to file a request for the partner to enter Switzerland (marriage preparation). You can then both get married here in Switzerland. The registry office might suspect that you are engaging in a marriage of convenience (Scheinehe). A marriage of convenience is when you get married only in order to enable one of the partners to live in Switzerland. The registry office can deny the marriage. If you have already got married, the office can declare the marriage invalid. The marriage will then be rescinded. You may also lose your residence permit as a result of the marriage of convenience.

## **Rights and Duties**

Spouses have equal rights and duties by law. They have equal status in the marriage. Both spouses must marry by choice. A forced marriage (Zwangsheirat) is when someone is compelled into a marriage. If the authorities discover a forced marriage, they can declare the marriage invalid. People who force others to get married are prosecuted.

Do you believe that you are being forced into a marriage? The counselling centre [zwangsheirat.ch](http://zwangsheirat.ch) can support you. It is free to call. The telephone number is: 0800 800 007.

## **Family Planning**

Do you have questions about family planning, pregnancy and sexuality? There are counselling centres for this purpose in Canton Basel-Stadt. These centres provide information on various topics, such as contraception, sexual problems, sexual health, sexual diseases or if you have an unwanted pregnancy. They also advise you if you are expecting a child or already have children.

## **Divorce**

Are you married and do you want to get divorced? In that case, you can request the divorce at Basel-Stadt civil court (Zivilgericht). You can request the divorce alone. Or you can request the divorce together with your spouse.

Did you get married abroad? You can also get divorced according to Swiss law. However, you will need to have lived in Switzerland for at least one year, and Switzerland must be your main domicile. If you get a divorce, your residency status may be affected. Perhaps you will no longer be allowed to live in Switzerland after the divorce. Are you currently undergoing naturalisation? You might no longer be able to become a Swiss citizen after the divorce.

Can you stay in Switzerland after the divorce? It is best to ask a counselling centre for marriage and families or a centre for legal advice. Special rules apply if you are a victim of domestic violence.

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

[www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/partnership-and-children/partnership](http://www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/partnership-and-children/partnership)