

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, Konkubinats) and have children together. There is no set division of roles between the partners (male/female). Same-sex partnerships are accepted and legally recognised.

Marriage / Same-Sex Partnership

In Switzerland one must be 18 years old in order to get married. Persons wishing to get married must contact the community of residence's registry office (Regionales Zivilstandsamt). The registry office will initiate 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 responsible registry office will offer 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. Same-sex couples can register their partnership. Registered partnership includes rights and duties similar to those in marriage.

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. Persons who feel forced into marriage should ask for help. Opferhilfe SG-AR-AI can clarify what legal and personal options are available to find a solution (+41 71 227 11 00).

Family Planning

For questions about family planning, pregnancy and sexuality there are special advisory centres in St. Gallen. The centres offer anonymous information on topics such as birth control, sexual difficulties, unwanted pregnancy, or sexually transmitted diseases. They also consult future parents and persons with children.

Divorce

A divorce can be requested by both spouses or by one spouse. Divorces can be initiated directly at the cantonal court. Marriages that have been performed abroad can also be divorced in accordance with Swiss law. In order to do so one must have lived in Switzerland for at least one year and Switzerland must be one's main place of residence. Divorce may have an impact on residency status or on an ongoing naturalization 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. For information about divorce, you can contact a marriage and family counseling center. Beratungsstelle für Familien provides information, counseling, and support in difficult life situations as well as for legal and social issues. The service is intended for families, couples, and individuals and is subsidized.

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

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