

Switzerland

September 2022

Switzerland has a **longstanding humanitarian tradition**, is an important donor and a strategic partner of UNHCR. The country also maintains a **resettlement programme**.

The overall protection rate is high, but many applicants only receive **provisional admission** with restricted rights that impedes their integration.

UNHCR's Office for Switzerland and Liechtenstein (OSL) advocates with government and non-government partners to **include persons of concern** in their planning & projects.

POPULATION OF CONCERN as of 30 June 2022*

Refugees	112,835
Asylum-seekers	8,122
Stateless persons	891

TOP THREE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN*

Refugees		Asylum-seekers	
Ukraine	57,697	Afghanistan	1,768
Eritrea	14,726	Türkiye	1,623
Afghanistan	11,441	Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	661

*Source: UNHCR provisional mid-year 2022 data

UKRAINE REFUGEE SITUATION RESPONSE

As of 30 September, 65,098 refugees from Ukraine are currently present in Switzerland and registered for temporary protection.

Protection: Relevant information has been made available to refugees from Ukraine by phone and through a dedicated section on OSL's [Help page](#). Information has been continuously updated since March and translated to Russian and Ukrainian.

Monitoring: To identify issues of concern to refugees from Ukraine, interviews have been conducted with legal aid services, the Swiss Refugee Council (responsible for the host family program in Switzerland) and refugees from Ukraine. During multipurpose visits to the Federal Reception centres, the response to refugees from Ukraine has been monitored as well as its impact on regular asylum procedures and other refugees.

Advocacy: In March, OSL issued a [statement](#) welcoming the application of S status (temporary protection status), with recommendations. In July, authorities established an expert group to evaluate the S status. OSL's had a hearing at the end of August to share its most important concerns.

HIGHLIGHTS

8th Swiss Asylum Symposium

Around 350 participants attended the 8th Swiss Asylum Symposium, on May 19-20 in Bern. The topic of this year's Symposium was "Access to protection for refugees - challenges, perspectives, solutions".

Community mapping

The mapping of the refugee communities active in Switzerland continued during the Spring 2022. The Refugee Outreach Coordinator leading this project has reached out to more than 40 Refugee-led Organizations (RLOs) and collected detailed data. A mapping report will be published by the end of the year.

New thematic postcards

OSL released in July a new series of 15 postcards ([in French](#) and [in German](#)) about asylum and refugees. These cards provide simple answers to frequently asked questions. So far, more than 8000 have already been sent.

LAUNCH OF A REFUGEE TEAM



OSL officially launched the Swiss and Liechtenstein Refugee Team on World Refugee Day. The group, made of 7 members, is intended to enable refugees to participate in the decision-making processes and projects of the UNHCR office for Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

More information ([in French](#) and [in German](#)).

Key Priorities

- **Protection (monitoring):** A third multipurpose visit took place in Western Switzerland at Federal Reception Centres of Boudry and Giffers in June. So far, four out of six asylum regions in Switzerland have been visited. OSL's intention is to publish a report with recommendations in 2023. Although there is room for improvement regarding several aspects, no serious systematic violations of international or national law have been identified yet.
- **Access to education:** OSL participated in discussions organized by the Federal Commission on Migration and the Swiss Students Union in May, on access to higher education for refugees. Issues such as disqualification and diploma equivalence were tackled. Specific programs fostering integration in some Swiss universities were presented as examples to follow for other institutions
- **Advocacy:** In August, OSL presented its travelling exhibition "Art Stands with Refugees" during the Krebsbachfest in Schaffhausen. Participants attended an interactive visit with art works created by students on the topic of flight. UNHCR's exhibition was picked up in the media [Schaffhauser Nachrichten](#). This was the second presentation of the travelling exhibition after Altdorf in June.

Official events: The city of Geneva invited the High Commissioner to the Swiss National Day festivities on 1 August, while SLO attended a reception by the President of the city of Bern in commemoration of the national day.

Working with Partners

- **Cooperation with academia:** OSL attended a roundtable discussion on the cooperation between asylum researchers and practitioners, organised in July by the University of Neuchatel, and drew attention to the GRF's Global Academic network.
- **Strategic litigation:** OSL and the local NGO [humanrights.ch](#) renewed their cooperation for the establishment of a coordination platform for strategic litigation efforts for refugee rights in Switzerland. By collaborating with [humanrights.ch](#), OSL capacitates the Swiss legal community to use strategic litigation in granting refugees access to their human rights in Switzerland.

Statelessness

- Switzerland acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons in 1972 and has a statelessness determination procedure in place. The relevant procedure is governed by general principles of the Federal Administrative Procedure Act and has no special provisions suitable for the specificities of statelessness determination.
- In a reference judgement published in December 2021, the Swiss Federal Administrative Court adjusted its case law regarding statelessness recognition procedures, since beneficiaries of refugee status were previously found to have no legitimate interest in recognition as stateless persons. OSL repeatedly criticized this practice and welcomed this judgment.

UNHCR Presence in Switzerland

Staff:

7 National Positions
1 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Bern

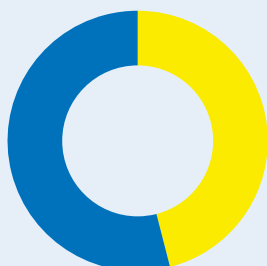
Financial information* (September 2022)

*Information relates to the Representations for Austria and to the European Institutions in Strasbourg, to the Office for Switzerland and Liechtenstein (OSL), the Liaison Office in Vienna and the presence in Portugal.

Financial requirements

USD 5.3 M

Funding gap
54%
2.9 M



Funded
46%
2.4 M

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