



Horizon 7

Information bulletin
for migrants in Geneva

After 9 February

The acceptance of the initiative « against mass immigration » on 9 February has caused concern and distress. For the time being, the rules haven't changed for EU citizens and their families but they probably will in the future. CCSI recommends that EU citizens make use of their rights as soon as possible – to obtain a work permit or family reunification. This applies to all EU nationals regardless of their family members' nationality (except for citizens of Croatia, to whom the agreement on the free movement of persons does not apply).

Children (0-4y)

Three places where you can meet other parents and their children, as well as childcare experts (all free and no registration needed):

Cerf-Volant Bd Carl-Vogt 82

Monday to Friday 2.30 – 6.30 pm
Tuesday & Thursday 9 – 12 am
Saturday 2 – 6 pm

Espace parents-enfants rue du Temple 10

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
10 am – 1.30 pm
Wednesday 10 am – 4 pm

UPA ch. de Surinam 7

Monday & Thursday
9 – 11.30 am

CCSI

Route des Acacias 25
022/304.48.60

08.30-11.30 am Tues. to Fri.
1.30-4.30 pm Mon. to Wed.

If you have an appointment outside of these hours, please wait in the hall, someone will come to get you.

A yearly contribution of 50.- is requested for each case followed by CCSI (don't hesitate to negotiate if you have financial difficulties).

Your participation is very important to CCSI because our funding Thank you very much in advance!

Important: Please let us know if you are leaving Switzerland or the canton of Geneva, and if you have changed phone numbers and/or address.

National campaign

Between 90'000 and 200'000 persons without residency permits (also called undocu-

mented migrants or "sans-papiers") live in Switzerland. Roughly half of them, mostly women, work in the domestic sector, taking care of children, old or dependent persons.

Their working conditions are often very difficult. Their work is nonetheless very important for the well-being of local society, as there is a shortage of workers in the sector.

The national campaign "No domestic worker is illegal" focuses on bettering their working and living conditions. A petition, signed by 21'875 persons, was handed in to the federal authorities in March 2014. It demands residency permits for undocumented domestic workers, better social protection, and access to labor courts without risking removal.

The campaign's poster exhibit will be shown at the Cinémas du Grutli during the film festival organized by CCSI (see p. 3).

The campaign, which ends in December 2014, has underlined the importance of the domestic sector and denounced the working conditions in the field.

For further information, articles, videos, events and position papers: www.aemni.ch



1974 The CCSI

40 years of utopia and commitment

In the 1970s, Switzerland is shaken by the Schwarzenbach initiatives, which seek to drastically limit immigration. Tens of thousands of immigrants live in fear of having to leave the country. Anti-foreigner sentiments are raging: Switzerland's identity is said to be threatened by an invasion of foreigners who are incapable of fitting in.

In contrast to this alarmist discourse, other voices strive to be heard: no, immigration is not a danger for Switzerland; it rather contributes to the incredible economic growth. The men and women who came here to work build roads, buildings, scientific reputation and prosperity. Above all, they bring with them a part of the world, giving this small alpine country novelty, difference, a new breath of energy, and broader horizons.

The Centre Social Protestant puts Berthier Perregaux in charge of analyzing the migrants' situation. Foreigners do not have the right to speak in public; it is not easy for them to make their demands heard; there are few occasions

to really engage with the local population. Beyond individualized help, the associations of the three main immigrant communities in Geneva call for a more collective form of action. Created in 1974, CCSI is an answer to these findings. Thanks to this new structure, migrants' associations have access to an office space, better collaboration, the ability to express their opinions in public, and opportunities of building relations with the Swiss and their political representatives.

In addition to the collective aspect, CCSI offers very concrete help: guidance to navigate the legal maze in which many migrants get lost trying to obtain a permit or family reunification, assistance for administrative processes, appeals against negative decisions from the authorities, etc. As the years go by, thanks to public funding, the consultations flourish. CCSI can now advise disabled migrants on the process to claim insurance benefits, or help undocumented families to assert their rights.

For several years, CCSI and its partners fight for undocumented children to be able to attend school – the Center

even created a clandestine school just for them! In 1991, the battle was won: the Geneva authorities accepted to take the children into regular public schools. CCSI kept the pressure up until the children could get health insurance and benefit from state subsidies for health costs, as well as accessing after-school activities and school restaurants.

At CCSI, we are celebrating 40 years of beliefs. The belief that every person has a right to equal opportunities, regardless of where he/she was born. The belief that diversity is a chance and that migration constitutes a major human asset for our country.

While the vote on 9 February represents a painful episode, it is only one step in a struggle that has seen many more, both forward and backwards. Today, as it always has, CCSI will resist those who want to treat people differently depending on their country or continent of origin, according to a vision that is both divisive and discriminatory. We are all part of the same world, and we move forward – or backwards – together. Our humanity cannot be divided.

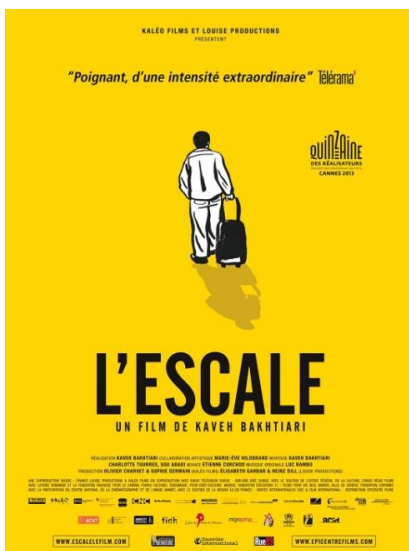
2014 turns 40 !



An interesting programme

To celebrate its 40th birthday, CCSI has created a series of events to which you are most heartily invited. First, there will be a party on **10 October** at the Espace Solidaire Pâquis, rue de Berne 49. As of 6.30 pm, you are welcome to join us for the presentation and a discussion of our new publication, *Migrant words*, a collection of texts and testimonies.

As of 7.30 pm, there will be a show prepared by the migrants from the EPER theatre group. Here again, the participants express their views on – and invite you to reflect upon – the multiple aspects of experiencing migration. The play will be followed by a buffet, before giving way to music and dancing.



CCSI Film festival

Migrations yesterday, migrations today: that is the common thread to the films presented at the CCSI festival at the Cinémas du Grutli. We propose two movies around one theme every evening, the first screening at 7 pm and the second one at 9 pm – except for the opening night.

31 October, as of 6.30 pm : official opening evening with *Lo Stagionale*, a film from 1971 on a clandestine child and his father, followed by a round table discussion on migration policies.

1st November: the journey
Voyage vers l'espoir (1990)
A Turkish peasant sells all his possessions to emigrate to Switzerland. But the journey turns to hell...
L'escale (2013)

In Athens, the odyssey of those who are ready to risk everything to reach Europe. Kaveh Bakhtiari, director: "They have this contagious strength that one also finds in the eyes of survivors."

2 November: "welcome"
Siamo italiani (1964)
The first documentary on foreigners in Switzerland.
Terraferma (2011)
The reactions of islanders off the coast of Sicily to the arrival of migrants from Africa.



3 November: work

Pane e cioccolata (1974)
The difficult working conditions of an Italian migrant in Switzerland who has just lost his residency permit.
Aux frontières de la nuit (2008)
In Geneva, two policemen cross paths with an Algerian migrant, an undocumented migrant from Mali and a young woman roaming through the city.

4 November: naturalization

Les Faiseurs de Suisses (1978)
A comedy on the long, complicated – and sometimes absurd path to Swiss citizenship.
Citoyens ou étrangers ? (2011)
A documentary on the different immigration and citizenship policies in various countries, seen through the eyes of a family from Somalia disseminated throughout Europe and North America.

School, school meals and health insurance

All children born before 1 August 2010 living in Geneva have a right and an obligation to go to school. In order to attend school, your child needs to have health insurance. CCSI takes care of the proceedings for undocumented children. Please make an appointment or come to the reception at CCSI with your ID and that of your child, so that he/she can start school as soon as possible.

For undocumented children, it is also possible to get school meals for free or for a reduced price, depending on the parents' income and place of residency. Make an appointment at CCSI and come with the following documents:

- inscription for school meals
- copy of the health insurance subsidy for 2014
- valid ID
- salary slips, if possible

Subsidy 2015

The health insurance subsidy must be requested every year. To renew the subsidy, you must make an appointment in December at CCSI. The subsidy is granted according to your income. It is a right. Requesting it will not harm other administrative processes you might undertake.

Health insurance

Never sign a health insurance contract with an agent who comes to your home! Contact CCSI before signing any documents related to health insurance.

Insurance card

All children and adults who have health insurance must get an insurance card with a micro-chip. If you haven't received yours, please mention it to CCSI.

Brochures and advice



Knowing what administrative processes to undertake upon arrival in Geneva, discovering free concerts and exhibits, finding out what kind of children's activities your neighborhood offers, knowing where to look for French courses or the nearest sports club, having a list of addresses for second-hand clothes and furniture: all this information and other are available at the Bureau de l'Intégration des Étrangers (Bureau for the integration of foreigners), route de Chancy 88 - tram 14 or bus K or L, stop at Bandol. The brochures exist in several languages and can be downloaded from the website:

www.ge.ch/integration

Collectif de Soutien aux Sans-Papiers

The Collectif de Soutien aux Sans-Papiers (CSSP) fights for the rights of undocumented persons and pursues collective and political action to that end. It cannot take on individual requests for residency permits. However, it holds an open consultation (no appointment needed) in its offices on Tuesdays (2-5 pm) and Thursdays (9-12 am). Outside of these hours, you can make an appointment by calling 022 301 63 33. The CSSP can inform you on the request for collective regularization, how to react if you are arrested or controlled by the police, voluntary or involuntary return to your country, labor issues, general conditions to obtain a residency permit in Switzerland, marriage procedures, family reunification, paternity tests, health and insurance, etc.

CSSP

Collectif de Soutien aux Sans-Papiers

Route des Acacias 25

022/301.63.33

collectifsanspapiers@ccsi.ch

www.sans-papiers.org

The brochure *Vivre à Genève*, published by CSSP, contains lots of useful information for daily life in Geneva. It is available in French, English, Spanish and Portuguese, and can be found at CCSI or CSSP. It can also be downloaded.