Welcome to the canton of Neuchâtel
Welcome to the canton of Neuchâtel
We are pleased to extend our welcome to you, whether you are arriving from another region of Switzerland, from a neighbouring country or from further afield.

The Neuchâtel region, with its lake and high valleys, its magnificent countryside and well-preserved nature, offers a high-quality living environment. Thanks to the advanced technology of its industries and the professional competencies of its labour force, it has earned an enviable reputation. A product made in Neuchâtel is always synonymous with quality anywhere throughout the world.

The canton of Neuchâtel generates a spirit of tolerance and open-mindedness. The diversity of nationalities, religions and cultures is an enriching source for the canton and its population.

With this brochure we would like to wish you a warm welcome and provide you with addresses and information that should be useful to you.

Today we are neighbours; tomorrow we will hopefully be friends.

Government of the Republic and Canton of Neuchâtel
(Gouvernement de la République et canton de Neuchâtel)
Community for the integration and multicultural cohesion
(Communauté pour l’intégration et la cohésion multiculturelle)
Welcome to the canton of Neuchâtel
NEUCHÂTEL
A surface area of 803 km².
A total population of nearly 175,000, including about 45,000 foreigners (~25%) from more than 153 different countries.
37 communes divided into six districts.
Is one of the 26 cantons and semi-cantons that together make up Switzerland. It is French-speaking.
Above all, a canton with a guest-receiving tradition and whose economic, social and cultural history was often influenced by frequent immigrations.

IF YOU REQUIRE ASSISTANCE OR INFORMATION

First contact the commune where you are living.
To obtain information, it is advisable to visit the commune’s offices in person.
It is also possible to contact the permanent telephone line for social assistance, advice and guidance:
Social information from Monday to Friday, from 14.00 to 17.00 hrs, tel. 0800 123 456 (toll free).

THE CANTON OF NEUCHÂTEL FEATURES

OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL COHESION

The service of the Multicultural Cohesion office is a cantonal service. Its main assignment is to enhance contact and mutual understanding between the native population and immigrants. It is actively involved in the prevention of racial discrimination. Its purpose is also to advise and give support to projects set up by associations whose aim is the integration of foreigners. It provides the following services:

A point of contact and information in different languages, open to all, where competent staff provide sound advice regarding the main issues of life here, while guaranteeing professional discretion;
A list of possibilities for learning French;
A list of language and cultural courses concerning different countries;
An address list of the foreign communities in the canton;
A list of translators and socio-cultural mediators;

For all questions and information, contact:
Office of Multicultural cohesion (Service de la cohésion multiculturelle)
Avenue Léopold-Robert 90
2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds
Rue des Beaux-Arts 13
2000 Neuchâtel
www.ne.ch/cosm
032 889 74 42
032 889 48 50

USEFUL INTERNET SITES

The canton of Neuchâtel’s site offers useful information as well as links to towns, communes and Federal agencies: www.ne.ch.
The following pages www.ne.ch/migrationsetintegration will provide you with detailed information concerning questions regarding immigration, integration and naturalisation.
The website of the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) www.sem.admin.ch provides you with information on the issues of migration, integration and naturalisation at federal level.

THE CANTON OF NEUCHÂTEL FEATURES

Information contacts

WELCOME TO THE CANTON OF NEUCHÂTEL
EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police 117
Fire (Feu) 118
Traffic emergencies (Secours routier) 140
Samaritans (La main tendue) 143
Ambulance 144
Poisoning (Intoxications) 145

LEGAL ADVICE

Rue des Beaux-Arts 11, 1st floor (Wednesdays from 16.00 to 19.00 hrs.)
2000 Neuchâtel  www.oan.ch

Rue du Parc 65, 1st floor (Thursdays from 16.00 to 19.00 hrs.)
2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds  www.oan.ch

Advice given by a lawyer is free of charge. However an amount of CHF 30.- will be asked to cover administrative fees. An appointment is made directly for the same day.

INFORMATION DESK: “EUROPE” INFORMATION

This information desk provides you with information on all questions relating to the free movement of persons, goods and services in Europe:
Douane du Col-des-Roches Tél: 0033 3 81 68 12 13 / Fac 0033 3 81 68 10 64
25310 Villers-le-Lac (France)  www.douane.gouv.fr

Useful information

FOREIGNER’S VOTING RIGHTS

To take up residence in the canton of Neuchâtel means involving oneself actively in public life and the political environment or show one’s feeling of allegiance by acquiring Swiss citizenship. Presently, all foreigners with a residence permit (C permit) and aged over 18, may:
- Vote and be elected on communal level after being resident in the canton for at least one year;
- Vote on cantonal matters after being resident in the canton for at least five years.

Contact the commune in which you live for any further information.

NATURALISATION

Swiss nationality is acquired by parentage, adoption or naturalisation. It is an important step towards full integration within the life of the country. The law sets out two procedures:
- Simplified naturalisation applies to those who have direct family relationship with a Swiss citizen. The deadline for applying varies from case to case.
- Ordinary naturalisation is the process that must be followed by all those who do not have a direct relationship with a Swiss citizen as well as by those who are part of a registered partnership with a Swiss citizen. An application may be presented (except special cases) after twelve years of residence in Switzerland, of which three have been in the canton. Years spent in Switzerland between the ages of 10 and 20 count double.

The law also stipulates other criteria and provides for several specific cases. The administrative process for obtaining naturalisation may take up to two years.

For details:
- From the commune in which you live
- From the Cantonal Justice Service (Service de la justice) – Citizenship Sector  032 889 41 14
  Rue de Tivoli 22, 2000 Neuchâtel  www.ne.ch/servicejustice
- From the Service of multicultural cohesion (Service de la cohésion multiculturelle)  032 889 48 50
  Rue des Beaux-Arts 13, 2000 Neuchâtel  www.ne.ch/cosm
WELCOME TO THE CANTON OF NEUCHÂTEL

Useful information

RESIDENCE PERMITS

You can obtain information concerning residence permits from the commune in which you live or from:

Immigration Department (Service des migrations)
Rue de Tivoli 28
2003 Neuchâtel
www.ne.ch/smig

The Office of Multicultural Cohesion (Service de la cohésion multiculturelle) will be pleased to inform you on the different types of permits for resident foreign nationals and for settled foreign nationals.

SCHOOLS

All children are eligible for compulsory schooling in the canton of Neuchâtel. You can obtain further information from your commune’s administration. Compulsory education starts at the age of 4 and lasts eleven years. Your child can also follow language and cultural courses from your country of origin, organized by consulates and foreign communities. At the end of compulsory schooling, your child may continue studies or enter into an apprenticeship.

You can obtain all the details you need from the following address:

Department of Compulsory Education (Service de l’enseignement obligatoire)
Rue de l’Écluse 67
2003 Neuchâtel
www.ne.ch/seo

Useful information

CAREER OPTIONS

Professional, educational and career orientation (Centre d’orientation professionnelle, universitaire et de carrière) (OCOSP):
students, young people and adults who wish to start or reorganize their professional future
032 889 20 20
OCOSP-INFO
www.ne.ch/ocosp

Regional Employment Office Neuchâtel (Offices régionaux de placement neuchâtelois) (ORPN):
Persons who are in search of employment
032 889 68 13
ORPN
www.ne.ch/orp

STUDIES AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Service of post compulsory training and guidance (Service des formations post-obligatoires et de l’orientation)
Espacité 1, 2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds
032 889 69 40
www.ne.ch/sefpo

Interregional Training center – Neuchâtel Mountains (Centre interrégional de formation des Montagnes neuchâteloises (CIFOM))
Rue de la Serre 62, 2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds
032 886 30 00
www.cifom.ch

Professional Training center – Neuchâtel Littoral (Centre professionnel du Littoral neuchâtelois) (CPLN)
Rue de la Maladière 84, 2000 Neuchâtel
032 717 40 00
www.cpmb.ch

Professional Centre for the construction trade (Centre professionnel des métiers du bâtiment) (CPMB)
Les Longues-Raies 11, 2013 Colombier
032 843 48 00
www.cpmb.ch

University
Av. du 1er Mars 26, 2000 Neuchâtel
032 718 10 00
www.unine.ch

Scholarships and Grants Office (Office des bourses)
Espace de l’Europe 2, 2002 Neuchâtel
032 889 69 02
www.ne.ch/bourses
Useful information

ADULT EDUCATION /TRAINING

Alliance of Adult Training Centers
(Alliance des Centres de formation professionnelle du canton de Neuchâtel) (CEFNA)
Rue de la Serre 62
2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds
032 886 31 00
www.cefna.ch

Office (Service de l’emploi)
Rue du Parc 119
2301 La Chaux-de-Fonds
032 889 69 12
www.ne.ch/semp

Center for professional integration – Neuchâtel
(Centre neuchâtelois d’intégration professionnelle) (CNIP)
Site Dubied 12
2108 Couvet
032 889 69 25
www.cnip.ch

Neuchâtel Open University (Université populaire neuchâteloise)
Rue de la Maladière 84
2000 Neuchâtel
032 725 50 40
www.upn.ch

Reading and Writing Association (Association Lire et Écrire)
Rue du Doubs 103, 2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds
032 914 10 91
www.lire-et-ecrire.ch

FRENCH COURSES

A list of French courses available in the canton of Neuchâtel is obtainable from the Office of Multicultural Cohesion at 032 889 74 42.