



GUIDE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS AND
FOREIGN REFUGEES

Welcome to Ratingen



Herausgeber:



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Kreis Mettmann
Kreisintegrationszentrum

Dear Sir or Madam,

Welcome to Ratingen, your new home for the moment.

You have been assigned to the City of Ratingen as part of your asylum proceedings or as a foreign refugee. Therefore I grant you accommodation and if necessary, also assistance with living expenses.

Whatever the reasons that caused you to come to Germany, I assume that you will become accustomed to the local living conditions despite the many great changes. Therefore, I hope that you will very soon find helpful contact with fellow compatriots and German residents. You can receive professional support for the integration from the staff of the Refugee Assistance [Flüchtlingsbetreuung] and the various agencies and authorities.

To help you get oriented at the beginning of your stay, you are receiving this brochure with many important tips and addresses.

(Klaus Pesch)
Mayor of Ratingen

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ARRIVAL IN RATINGEN

• **Accommodation/Furnishings**

Accommodation in Ratingen is mainly in shared accommodations. Your personal needs and vulnerable interests are taken into account here as far as possible.

Living together in the accommodation requires a high degree of mutual tolerance and consideration of all residents as well as the responsibility of each individual for the community facilities. You will receive a list of house regulations that I ask you to observe.

An initial supply of furniture and household goods will be issued to you by the respective facility manager of your accommodation.

Application and further information:

→ Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration]

• **Registration and re-registration**

Upon your arrival from abroad, you are obliged to register at the Citizens' office [Bürgerbüro] of the City of Ratingen. When registering, all of your family members accompanying you must also appear in person. If you have already registered in another German city and have now moved to Ratingen, please remember to re-register at the Citizens' office in Ratingen. In this case, only one adult from the family need appear in person. If you are assigned living quarters by the City of Ratingen, registration and re-registration will be carried out by the municipal housing department.

Registration and further information:

→ Citizens' office [Bürgerbüro] of the City of Ratingen

To ensure that you can be contacted, you are obliged to inform the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge] of any changes to your address during the asylum proceedings.

• Living allowance

If you are an asylum seeker and do not have sufficient funds to support yourself, you will receive financial assistance by applying to the Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration] of the City of Ratingen; recognised refugees, and those refugees admitted by German authorities on the basis of an admission program, must apply to the Integration Point Mettmann.

Application and further information:

- Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration]
- Integration Point Mettmann

• Residence permit [Aufenthaltsgenehmigung]

To certify your registration as asylum seeker, you were issued a so-called proof of arrival [Ankunftsnachweis]. When the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees initiates your asylum proceedings, this document will be cancelled and you will receive a temporary residence permit [Aufenthaltsgestattung] from the Aliens' Authority [Ausländerbehörde] that is responsible for you.

Upon your registration in Ratingen, the Aliens' Authority of the Mettmann District will be responsible for the issue and renewal of your residence permit. For more information, please contact the Ratingen District Service Centre [Kreis-Service-Center].

If you received a visa to enter Germany as part of a humanitarian integration program by the Federal Republic of Germany or the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, please contact Ratingen District Service Centre [Kreis-Service-Center Ratingen] directly in a timely manner before the expiry of the visa to receive a residence permit [Aufenthaltserlaubnis].

Application and further information:

- Aliens' Authority [Ausländerbehörde] of the Mettmann District
- District Service Centre [Kreis-Service-Center]

PUBLIC TRANSPORT / SOCIAL TICKET

The use of public transport is subject to charge. Before each ride, you need a valid ticket. Only children under the age of six years are allowed to use buses, trams and commuter trains free of charge.

There are single tickets, 4x multi-tickets, day tickets and additional tickets. In addition, there are monthly tickets. Prices are scaled according to the distance to the destination in price levels. Here, a 4x multi-ticket is cheaper than four individual tickets. Tickets are available in the customer centres of the transport companies, in private outlets, at ticket machines as well as from the drivers.

Please do not forget to stamp your ticket before departure, because it is only valid when stamped. Validating machines for this can be found in all buses and trams, on platforms or platform ascents.

People who receive living expense assistance can receive a reduced social ticket. This is a monthly ticket for trips throughout the entire area of the Mettmann district. For journeys beyond, such as to Düsseldorf, you will need an additional ticket. In order to obtain the social ticket, you must show proof of entitlement. The issuance of the card is carried out by your benefits agency, the Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration] or the Jobcentre.

Tickets and further information:

- Rheinbahn Customer Centre [Rheinbahn-Kunden-Center]

MEDICAL CARE

• Doctor's visits / Health insurance

If you fall ill, have pain or require medication and want to see a doctor, you will need a health insurance card. The health insurance provides its members with an electronically readable insurance card which must be presented when visiting a doctor.

Asylum seekers are not immediately absorbed by the health insurance if they are not in insurable employment. They receive medical assistance through the Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration] in the first 15 months of their stay in Germany. As proof of this, the physician requires a valid health insurance certificate [Krankenschein]. For visiting a dentist, there is a special health insurance certificate [Krankenschein]. Both health insurance certificates are only valid for a quarter of a year. If you receive living expense assistance from the Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration], you receive the health insurance certificate [Krankenschein] from there.

Anything above acute medical care, the necessary medications and the general preventive measures, more extensive medical services are generally subject to approval. Please submit the physician's prescriptions well in advance for approval by the Office for Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration] or your health insurance.

Issuance of health insurance certificates and further information:

→ Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration]

• Emergency

In a medical emergency, doctors treat without proof of health insurance card or a health insurance certificate. Has the resident doctor does not have office hours, such as on Sundays or bank holidays or at night, please contact the emergency medical care service:

Emergency medical practice
Mülheimer Straße 37
40878 Ratingen

Telephone number of the central medical
emergency service 116117

In life-threatening illnesses and serious injuries, call the emergency/rescue services in any case at

Emergency telephone number 112.

The emergency numbers can be called without charge from your mobile phone!

• Psychological and socio-medical facilities

Once in Germany, you are now safe and do not need to worry about your live any more. But sometimes the memories of terrible events or the concern for relatives in the homeland are such a burden that you may become mentally ill and can only cope with the greatest effort. Do not be afraid to accept help in such a situation. Talk to your doctor about it or contact a competent counselling facility:

→ Psychosocial Centre for Refugees

There are other socio-medical facilities that offer you help and advice in special situations.

→ Social-medical facilities

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION / LANGUAGE LEARNING

Language is the key to integration. Knowing that language acquisition is not easy for everyone, you are still expected to make an effort to learn the German language. For this, the necessary time should be available especially at the beginning of your stay.

Children learn the German language relatively quickly. This occurs easily if they have a lot of contact with German children. Already before the start of school, there are several different opportunities for this, ranging from playgroups to membership in a sports club to attending kindergarten.

For adults, free language courses are specially organised for foreign refugees. In addition, you will find a varied and fee-based offering of integration courses. Integration courses are aimed at a higher level language certificate and also convey culture and knowledge of the country.

For further details:

- Refugee Assistance [Flüchtlingsbetreuung]
- Adult Education Centre Ratingen (VHS) [Volkshochschule]

With little or no knowledge of German, you should take a person who you trust to translate when meeting with authorities, doctor visits and appointments in counselling centres. In important matters, you and the authorities have the option of requesting a language facilitator.

For further details:

- Refugee Assistance [Flüchtlingsbetreuung]

KINDERGARTEN / SCHOOL / EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION PACKAGE

The education of your children is probably as important to you as it is to the City of Ratingen.

The Municipal School Administration Office [Schulverwaltungsamt] has an overview of which school still has capacity for pupils and makes every effort to give you an appropriate school space for your child(ren) as soon as possible. You will need to register your child(ren) at the school personally.

Before starting school, a medical school entrance examination at the Regional Health Office [Kreis-Gesundheitsamt] is required. You will receive written invitation for this.

The physical examination as well as school attendance is a legal requirement in Germany. Compulsory education starts in August of the year in which your child turns six years old by September 30.

For further details:

- Office of School Administration and Sport [Amt für Schulverwaltung und Sport]

Attending a kindergarten is advisable for your children who are not yet of school age as a preparation for school. There, they are encouraged pedagogically in their individual development and learn the German language. The kindergartens accept registrations. We recommend that you register early.

For further details:

- Youth welfare office [Jugendamt]

To equip your children for school attendance and their participation in community activities of the school and kindergarten, recipients of living expense assistance can also receive financial assistance. The funding of the so-called education and participation package (BuT) [Bildungs- und Teilhabepaket] include subsidies for

- materials to attend school
- pupil travel costs
- community lunch
- day trips and multi-day group trips
- additional learning support (short-term tutoring)

The participation in the social and cultural community life such as membership in a sports club, or attendance at the music school are also subsidized monthly according to the BuT.

Application and further information:

- Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration]
- Ratingen Jobcentre
- Youth welfare office [Jugendamt]

BEGINNING WORK / RECOGNITION OF EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Asylum seekers may not, in principle, take up gainful employment within the first three months of their stay in Germany. After this, the immigration office will grant a work permit for a specific job with an employer upon request. A permit is only available if no German or privileged foreign workers can be found for this activity, which is called priority check. Furthermore, the working conditions must comply with legal and contractual provisions.

At present, the aforementioned priority check is generally waived for positions of employment in the District of Mettmann, in Düsseldorf and in other cities. After a 15-month stay in Germany, the priority check is no longer in effect, which significantly improves your chances of finding a job and having it approved.

Foreign refugees who have arrived as part of an integration programme, usually have immediate and unrestricted access to the labour market.

Please note the information on your residence permit [Aufenthaltserlaubnis].

Application and further information:

- District Service Centre [Kreis-Service-Center]
- Integration Point Mettmann

If you receive assistance with living expenses, the earned income will be credited in part to those benefits.

For further details:

- Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration]
- Ratingen Jobcentre

With the submission of proper documents and proof under certain circumstances, a full or partial recognition of your school or university degree is possible. The same also applies to professional qualifications acquired elsewhere. The complicated procedure which is subject to charges is worthwhile to improve your chances on the German labour market or if you wish to obtain further qualifications.

For further details:

- Integration Point Mettmann
- Youth Migration Service [Jugendmigrationsdienst]
- Migration consulting for adults
- Integration officer [Integrationsbeauftragte] of the City of Ratingen

MOVING INTO A PRIVATE APARTMENT

After a 15-month stay in Germany, asylum seekers are permitted to move into a suitable private apartment. Recognised refugees are also entitled to do so, even if they have not yet stayed in Germany for 15 months.

• Allocation and fixed domicile

Once asylum seekers are allocated a fixed domicile in Ratingen, they must remain there and are not permitted to move to another city for the duration of their asylum proceedings, and in the event of a negative outcome, thereafter as well.

As of mid-2016, recognised refugees are also subject to a fixed domicile. They are obliged live in a certain location for a maximum period of three years. The location will probably be in Ratingen as they will have registered there for the duration of their asylum proceedings.

Upon application, the allocation and fixed domicile may be changed, especially in cases of family reunification or when taking up a job, training or a place at a university.

For further details:

- Refugee Assistance [Flüchtlingsbetreuung]
- Youth Migration Service [Jugendmigrationsdienst]
- Migration consulting for adults
- Integration officer [Integrationsbeauftragte] of the City of Ratingen

• Consent required for moving

If you are offered an apartment and regularly receive a living allowance, you must ensure that the size of the apartment and the rent are suitable to your financial circumstances, i.e. that they fulfil certain criteria. In order to ensure that the rent is paid in full by the funding agency, you must obtain their consent prior to signing the tenancy agreement.

For further details:

- Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration]
- Ratingen Jobcentre

• Certificate of eligibility for a council flat [Wohnberechtigungsschein]

If you wish to live in an apartment built with state subsidies, which is therefore cheaper, you require a so-called 'Wohnberechtigungsschein' (WBS). For asylum seekers to be issued with a WBS, they need to receive a certificate from the Aliens' Authority first, attesting to a prospective residence period in Germany of no less than one year. For recognised refugees, a residence permit of a minimum of one year is sufficient to satisfy this requirement. In addition, certain income limits may not be exceeded. Any individual regularly receiving a living allowance will fall below these income limits.

Application and further information:

→ Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration]

Please ensure that you re-register, and that your surname, as well as your wife's and/or children's surname (if different), are clearly displayed on your apartment's letterbox.

CONCLUSION OF CONTRACTS

Concluding a private law contract may be necessary in several circumstances, for example, when renting an apartment or when purchasing a mobile phone or other products. Individuals unfamiliar with German contract law and business practices should observe certain basic rules before entering into a contract:

- Do not sign any contracts unless you understand its content in full. If in doubt, seek advice from an independent third party.
- Take the time to check the offer carefully and, if possible, compare it with offers by other providers or suppliers.
- In deciding whether to conclude a contract or not, don't let anybody pressure or persuade you if you are still uncertain.
- Do not disclose your personal data or banking details without prior consideration.

Take particular care when contacted by phone or by an unsolicited visit from a doorstep seller, as you might be bound by contract upon verbal agreement. However, as a customer you are protected against unpleasant surprises by exercising your opt-out right within a certain period of time prescribed by law. Unfortunately, this does not apply in all cases. Even if you are certain that you have not having ordered anything, do not ignore any letters sent by companies, and if in doubt, seek the advice of an independent third party.

Moreover, you should pay close attention to the duration of contracts. Some contracts are renewed automatically without your active involvement. If you do not wish to renew them, you must terminate them within a certain period of time. The specific conditions can be found in the terms of the contract.

For further details:

- Refugee Assistance [Flüchtlingsbetreuung]
- Youth Migration Service [Jugendmigrationsdienst]
- Migration consulting for adults
- Consumer Advice Service [Verbraucherberatung]
- Integration officer [Integrationsbeauftragte] of the City of Ratingen

BROADCASTING FEE

For the reception of radio and television programmes, a broadcasting fee is charged in Germany for each flat. This is done regardless of whether actual receivers are present.

Regular recipients of a living allowance are exempt from paying the broadcasting fee upon request, even retroactively. For this, the respective benefits provider issues a special confirmation which can be used to apply for an exemption.

Exemption applications and further information:

→ Citizens' office [Bürgerbüro] of the City of Ratingen

Asylum seekers who live in the urban community accommodation, are not required to pay the broadcasting fee. Nevertheless, it may happen that you will be contacted by ARD-ZDF-Germany radio fee service. Please submit this letter to the Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration [Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration] to clarify the facts.

REALLOCATION / RESETTLEMENT / RETURN ASSISTANCE

Have you been separated from your family or have a job in a different location and want to move for this reason? Or do you want to leave Germany again and look for opportunities in another country?

The situation in your country has changed for the better and you want to go back there or your presence there is urgently needed. Or your asylum proceedings have ended negatively and you have to leave Germany.

You can receive expert advice and, where appropriate, support for reallocation, resettlement or return to your homeland in these cases from the Refugee Assistance [Flüchtlingsbetreuung].

For further details:

→ Refugee Assistance [Flüchtlingsbetreuung]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information can be found using the „Ankommen App“ for your smartphone, provided by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. It offers you important information regarding your asylum proceedings as well as daily life in Germany. You can access it via the Internet as well (<https://ankommenapp.de/>).

ADVICE AND SUPPORT

• Facility manager

The caretaker is your first contact for all accommodation relevant matters. In some units, the mail distribution is also done by the facility manager.

• Refugee Assistance [Flüchtlingsbetreuung]

The employees of the Refugee Assistance [Flüchtlingsbetreuung] advise in questions regarding your stay and your rights as well as personal difficulties. They are responsible for all asylum seekers and foreign refugees housed in the shared accommodations of the City of Ratingen. Refugees living in apartments should contact the Office of the Integration Officer [Integrationsbeauftragter].

• Youth Immigration Service [Jugendmigrationsdienst] and Immigration Counselling for Adults

The Youth Immigration Service advises and supports teenage and young adult immigrants up to the age of 27, irrespective of their residency status. Immigration Counselling for Adults deals with newly arrived immigrants and refugees who have a good chance of gaining permanent residency and hold an appropriate residence permit [Aufenthaltsgenehmigung].

• Integration officer [Integrationsbeauftragte]

The Integration officer [Integrationsbeauftragte] provides open consultation hours for all immigrants regardless of their residency status.

• Attorneys at law

Especially, with asylum proceedings, decisions are of existential importance so that it may be advisable to have an attorney. You will have to pay for their services in contrast to the aforementioned public counselling centres. Find out when you need legal counsel and what it will cost.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

These emergency numbers can be called free of charge from any phone and also without funds from your mobile phone:

- Police	110
- Rescue service / Fire / Emergency physician / Ambulance	112
- Central Emergency Medical Service	116117

ADDRESS DIRECTORY

Adult Education Centre Ratingen (VHS)

Stadt Ratingen
Volkshochschule
Lintorfer Straße 3
40878 Ratingen

- Course information
Mr. Lehr, room 104, Tel.: 02102-550-4301

Aliens' Authority of the Mettmann District

Kreis Mettmann
Ausländerbehörde
Kreis-Service-Center
Düsseldorfer Str. 47
40822 Mettmann
Tel.: 02104-99-1616

Citizens' office of the City of Ratingen

Stadt Ratingen
Bürgerbüro
Peter-Brüning-Platz 3
40878 Ratingen
Tel.: 02102-550-3222

District Service Centre Ratingen

Kreisverwaltung Mettmann
Kreis-Service-Center
room 2.45 / 2.46
Eutelis-Platz 3
40878 Ratingen
Tel.: 02104-99-1540

Consumer Advice Service [Verbraucherberatung]

Verbraucherzentrale NRW
Beratungsstelle Düsseldorf
Immermannstr. 51
40210 Düsseldorf
Tel.: 0211-7106490

Integration officer of the City of Ratingen

Stadt Ratingen
Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration
Eutelis-Platz 3
40878 Ratingen

- Mrs. Yetik, room 2.55, Tel.: 02102-550-5096

Integration Point Mettmann

Jobcenter ME-aktiv
Integration Point
Ötzbachstraße 1
40822 Mettmann

Office of Social Affairs, Housing and Integration

Stadt Ratingen
Amt für Soziales, Wohnen und Integration
Eutelis-Platz 3
40878 Ratingen

- Accommodation
Mr. Baumann, room 2.36, Tel.: 02102-550-5015
- Certificate of eligibility for a council flat
Mrs. Zeletzki, room 2.52, Tel.: 02102-550-5037
- Education and participation package
Mrs. Blesch, room 2.50, Tel.: 02102-550-5036
- Financial assistance
Different persons, room 2.61 - 2.66, Tel.: 02102-550-5013

Office of School Administration and Sport

Stadt Ratingen
Amt für Schulverwaltung und Sport
Minoritenstr. 3
40878 Ratingen

- Compulsory education control
Mrs. Engelhardt, room 0.05, Tel.: 02102-550-4025

Migration consulting for adults

- Caritasverband für den Kreis Mettmann e.V.
Turmstr. 5a
40878 Ratingen
Telefon: 02102-1004970
- Diakonie im Kirchenkreis Düsseldorf-Mettmann GmbH
Maximilian-Kolbe-Platz 18b
40880 Ratingen
Tel.: 02102-579-9067

Psychosocial Centre for Refugees

Psychosoziales Zentrum für Flüchtlinge
Benrather Straße 7
40213 Düsseldorf
Tel.: 0211-54417322

Ratingen Jobcentre

Jobcenter Mettmann-aktiv
Nebenstelle Ratingen
Stadionring 16
40878 Ratingen

Refugee Assistance

Caritasverband für den Kreis Mettmann e.V.
Grütstr. 3-7
40878 Ratingen
Tel.: 02102-929153-13 / -14

Rheinbahn Customer Centre

Rheinbahn-Kunden-Center
Düsseldorfer Straße 47
40878 Ratingen

Social-medical facilities

- AIDS-Hilfe Düsseldorf e.V.
Johannes-Weyer-Straße 1
40225 Düsseldorf
Tel.: 0211-770950
 - Kreis Mettmann
Gesundheitsamt
Nebenstelle Ratingen
Philippstraße 21
40878 Ratingen
Tel.: 02102-92917-0
 - Kreis Mettmann
Sozialpsychiatrischer Dienst Ratingen
Erfurter Straße 33 a
40880 Ratingen-West
Tel.: 02102-445762
 - Stadt Ratingen
Psychologische Beratungsstelle
(Educational and family counseling)
Philippstraße 21
40878 Ratingen
Tel.: 02102-550-5160
- ### **Youth welfare office**
- Stadt Ratingen
Jugendamt
Minoritenstr. 3 / 3a
40878 Ratingen
- Day care facilities for children
Mrs. Litchfield, room 3.07, Tel.: 02102-550- 5133
Mrs. Nippeßen-Schürmann, room 3.05, Tel.: 02102-550- 5136
 - Education and participation package
Mrs. Matzat, room 3.12, Tel.: 02102-550- 5178

Youth Migration Service

Diakonie im Kirchenkreis Düsseldorf-Mettmann GmbH
Maximilian-Kolbe-Platz 18b
40880 Ratingen
Tel.: 02102-579-9067

