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Handbook Germany Artikel: Registration as an asylum seeker

How do I register as an asylum seeker in Germany?

Every refugee who comes to Germany has to go to the relevant German authorities and register- this is called "Asylgesuch". "Asylgesuch" is an initial -but necessary- registration to notify the German state that you want to apply for asylum in Germany. Then, you should go to BAMF and officially apply for asylum. It is after submitting this application that your asylum procedure will start.

Where and how can I register as an asylum seeker?

You can register as an asylum seeker at a border authority, police station, foreigner's registration office ("Ausländerbehörde") or an initial accommodation centre for refugees ("Erstaufnahmeeinrichtung"). You just need to say the word "asyl" (or "asylum"), and the staff would know what you mean. After announcing that you want to apply for asylum, you would be considered an asylum seeker. Then you would be taken to an initial accommodation centre for refugees to register. Or, you may receive a document and a ticket to go to such facility on your own. The document mentioned above is called "Anlaufbescheinigung", and it shows that you have done the initial registration as an asylum seeker.

How does the registration process work?

The registration takes place in an initial reception centre. That means a photo of you will be taken and recorded along with your fingerprints. You will also be asked for your name, date of birth, country of origin and maybe even your flight route. All these information is stored. After the registration, you will receive a so-called proof of arrival or "Ankunftsnachweis".

The proof of arrival tells all the relevant German authorities that you are allowed to stay in Germany for a certain period of time. This document is considered to be a kind of initial ID, so it is very important and you need to always carry it with you. When you submit your application for asylum, you will be issued a [temporary residence permit \("Aufenthaltsgestattung"\)](#).

Why are my fingerprints recorded?

All the individuals who have fled to Europe have to have their fingerprints checked and recorded. This is necessary for the implementing of the so-called "Dublin III Regulation". According to this regulation, the EU Member State where you were fingerprinted first is responsible for your asylum case. So if you have given your fingerprints in another European country first, Germany can send you back to that country. In principle, you must then submit your asylum application there. You can learn more in our chapter [Dublin Procedure](#).

Your fingerprints are stored in the Foreigners Central Register (AZR). The AZR is a database that contains information about people from abroad who have lived or are living in Germany. It is administered by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).

If you intentionally manipulate your fingertips, your asylum procedure can be stopped by authorities. If you have been fingerprinted in another EU member state, but do not want to return there, contact a lawyer specialised in refugee laws or a counselling centre. In some cases, there are ways to prevent your transfer to the other EU country. You can find counselling centres nearby on our [Local Information page](#). Enter the name of your city and search for asylum, residence or legal advice services in your area.

What happens after registration?

Whether you can reside at the initial reception facility where you registered is not clear beforehand. You may stay there, in case there is a spot available and the initial reception facility is assigned to house refugees from your country of origin. Otherwise, you will be sent to another initial reception facility in another German city. But it is not the staff who decide where each asylum seeker should be sent- this decision is made by a computer system called EASY ("Erstverteilung der Asylbegehrenden" or First Distribution of Asylum Seekers).

Once you arrive at your designated initial reception centre, you will be given a place to sleep. In principle, only the refugees who have recently arrived in Germany live in initial reception centres. After a few weeks or months, asylum seekers are usually transferred to another place of residence. This can be another shared accommodation centre or an apartment. Such accommodation centre may also be located in another city nearby.

It is very difficult to oppose and change the decisions made regarding your place of residence. You can learn more in our chapter [temporary residence permit \("Aufenthaltsgestattung"\)](#).

Where can I obtain food, clothes and money?

Immediately after registration, you are entitled to the German state's assistance. Such aids are called "Asylbewerberleistungen" or asylum seeker's benefits. You will receive food and drink, clothes and shoes, toiletries and household items directly in the initial reception centre. In addition, you will receive a "pocket money", with which you can cover the costs of a SIM card, public transportation tickets or other things.

When can I apply for asylum?

In some cases, you can immediately apply for asylum. But sometimes you have to wait for an appointment to do so. You will receive an invitation for this appointment either during the registration or later per post. Your asylum procedure starts as soon as you submit your asylum application. Learn more in our chapter [Asylum procedure](#).

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