

# GUIDE FOR NEW ARRIVALS

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01.

# GLOSSARY

## **CGRA/CGVS**

= The Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons. The CGRS (known under the acronym CGRA in French, and CGVS in Flemish) is an independent federal administration. It is the central asylum authority in Belgium.<sup>1</sup>

## **LGBTQIA**

lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, intersex, asexual.



Check out the Swipe tool  
made by Pixiels and Crible

## **LGBTQIA+friendly**

A person who is “LGBTQIA+ friendly” expresses – a form of acceptance, understanding, and sympathy – towards LGBTQIA+ individuals. The word “Friendly” can be used to show a welcoming attitude toward any stigmatized group –for example, “lesbian-friendly”, “gay-friendly”, “bi-friendly”, “trans-friendly”, etc.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cgra.be>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fiertespdc.org/lgbt-lexique>

02.

# INTRODUCTION



This brochure was created to provide information for LGBTQIA+ newcomers residing outside of immigration facilities. It is the result of discussions of participants in the 'MAC autour du monde' ('around the world') group, which is intended for LGBTQIA+ members of migrant communities.

This provides an introductory information pack targeted to member of LGBTQIA+ community. It also includes recommendations from the individuals who were involved in its creation.

We would like to thank the members of  
'MAC autour du monde' ('around the world')  
who participated in its development.



## 03.

# LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS IN BELGIUM

## What are my rights as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community in Belgium?

You have the same rights as cisgender,<sup>3</sup> heterosexual and dyadic<sup>4</sup> individuals in terms of conceiving or adopting a child. In general, Belgian laws, although imperfect, aim to achieve equality between cisgender, heterosexual and dyadic individuals and members of the LGBTQIA+ communities.

As an LGBTQIA+ adult (aged 18 or over), you have the right to become a “legal cohabitant” (in other words a living together contract) or marry your partner, regardless of their gender.

**As a transgender person, you can change your gender marker as soon as you are registered in the foreign nationals register. To change your first name on your identity card, you must have<sup>5</sup> a refugee or a stateless status.**

<sup>3</sup> A person whose gender identity corresponds to the gender they were assigned at birth.

<sup>4</sup> A person who is not intersex.

<sup>5</sup> [https://justice.belgium.be/fr/themes\\_et\\_dossiers/personnes\\_et\\_familles/personnes\\_transgenres](https://justice.belgium.be/fr/themes_et_dossiers/personnes_et_familles/personnes_transgenres)

## **Can I find protection if I experience discrimination based on my sexual/romantic orientation or gender (identity)?**



**In Belgium, there are laws protecting LGBTQIA+ communities and granting them rights.**

**There are “protected criteria” under the law, which include sexual orientation and everything related to gender (sex, pregnancy, gender identity, gender expression, sexual characteristics, social and medical transition, etc.).<sup>6</sup>**

**If you experience discrimination based on any of the protected criteria, you can contact Unia (regarding sexual/romantic orientation) or the IEFH, the Institute for Equality between Women and Men (regarding gender), for support.**

**The “Maison Arc-en-Ciel de Liège” can provide you with support if you experience discrimination. We can help you report it, file a complaint or provide you with support, including personal accompaniment.**

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.unia.be/fr/discrimination-comprendre>

04.

## PROCEDURE



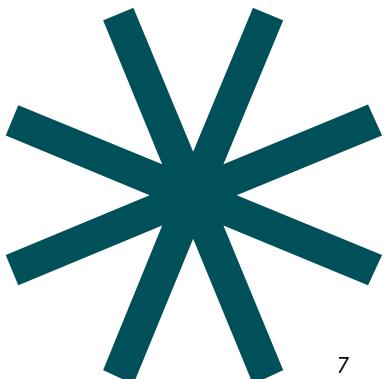
### What is an application for international protection?

According to the **Geneva Convention**,

"Any foreigner arriving in Belgium may apply for asylum and request international protection from the Belgian authorities.

Asylum seekers, also called applicants for international protection, go through several steps - from submitting their application to receiving the final decision.

This is known as the international protection application procedure. The Belgian State will examine whether the foreign national meets the criteria set out in the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees." <sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> <https://www.fedasil.be/fr/asile-en-belgique>

## Who can apply for international protection?

### Refugee status – Geneva Convention<sup>8</sup>

"For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "refugee" shall apply to any person who: (...) owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."

This definition is precise: being ill, for example, and unable to receive treatment in one's own country does not fall within the scope of the Geneva Convention.

Similarly, fleeing a country at war does not fall within the scope of the Convention unless it can be proven that the person is personally targeted by persecution.

For these specific cases, Belgium introduced the subsidiary protection status in October 2006.

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.cgra.be/sites/default/files/content/download/files/convention\\_de\\_geneve.pdf](https://www.cgra.be/sites/default/files/content/download/files/convention_de_geneve.pdf)

## **Subsidiary protection – Article 48/4 of the Law of 15/12/1980 on the access to the territory, residence, establishment and removal of foreigners<sup>9</sup>**

**"§ 1.** Subsidiary protection status shall be granted to a foreign national who cannot be considered a refugee and who cannot benefit from Article 9ter, and in respect of whom there are serious grounds for believing that, if returned to his country of origin or, in the case of a stateless person, to the country in which he had his habitual residence, he or she would face a real risk of suffering serious harm as referred to in paragraph 2, and who cannot or, given that risk, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, provided that he or she is not covered by the exclusion clauses referred to in Article 55/4.

**§ 2.** The following are considered as serious harm:

- a) the death penalty or execution; or
- b) torture, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment of the applicant in their country of origin; or
- c) serious threats to the life or person of a civilian due to indiscriminate violence in the event of internal or international armed conflict."

## **Where can I apply for international protection?**

To apply for international protection, you must go to the following address: **Rue Belliard, 68, 1000 Brussels.**

It is best to arrive early as there are often many people queuing and you may be asked to come back the next day if the daily quota has been reached.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/eli/loi/1980/12/15/1980121550/justel#Art.48/5>

## Am I entitled to legal assistance?

Anyone seeking international protection is entitled to free legal assistance. If no solicitor has been designated for your case, you can ask the 'Maison Arc-en-Ciel de Liège' to help you find one.

You can also go directly to one of the immigration law clinics at the Liège division's "legal aid office" (bureau d'aide juridique), which is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 2pm to 4:10pm.<sup>10</sup>

Here are their contact details:

**Address:** Palais des Prince-Evêques –  
1ère cour, Place Saint-Lambert, 16, 4000, Liège

**Telephone:** +3242221012

**Email:** [info.baj@barraudeliège-huy.be](mailto:info.baj@barraudeliège-huy.be)

Consult the CGRA's  
procedure for applying for  
international protection.



<sup>10</sup> <https://barraudeliège-huy.be/fr/aide-juridique/aide-juridique>

## Where can I find reliable information about applying for international protection?

There are several places:

- The **CGRS** on the following website: [www.cgrs.be/en](http://www.cgrs.be/en)
- You can also find a wealth of information about the procedure and the Belgian register for reception on the following website: [www.fedasil.be](http://www.fedasil.be)
- For more detailed and comprehensive information on the international protection application procedure, Ciré offers a comprehensive guide to help you better understand this procedure. However, we would like to highlight that the laws are currently changing, and the guide is being updated. The guide is outdated as the information dates back from 2019, meaning that some of the information is no longer relevant. Even so, but it does provide an initial overview of the main points of the procedure.



Consult the guide to the international protection procedure in Belgium by Ciré

## Where can I find legal assistance in addition to that provided by my solicitor?

- **Nansen:** "NANSEN is a non-profit association created in 2017 by a group of lawyers and academics with experience in the field of refugee, human rights and migration law. By combining legal expertise with an interdisciplinary approach to asylum, we strive to develop high-quality legal aid and make it available for all persons in need of international protection. That way, we contribute to rendering their fundamental rights fully effective."<sup>11</sup>
- **The Liège-Huy Bar Association** (bureau d'aide juridique) has a legal aid office that offers services in immigration law several days a week. You can find their contact details on page 20.
- **Point d'appui:** is a non-profit association, whose mission includes providing "specialised legal support to foreign nationals, particularly undocumented migrants and people in precarious situations, including applicants for international protection. These people live in Belgium in a state of great insecurity in all matters (legal, social, medical, educational, housing, food). In addition, their association has been providing weekly legal advice at the Vottem detention centre since 2001."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <https://nansen-refugee.be/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://pointdappui.be/>

## 05.

# HOUSING

In theory, anyone seeking international protection in Belgium must be given a place in a reception centre.

However, immigration policies do not give access to a reception centre to all persons seeking international protection due to the limited availability of places.

## What should I do if I have not been given a place in a centre?

- **Register on the waiting list:** Fedasil provides an online form that you can use to register on the waiting list for a place in a reception centre.
- **Night shelters:** There are several night shelters in Liège where you can spend the night. Depending on the time of year, you can consult the "cold weather plan" or the "summer plan" to find all the addresses that are useful for homeless people.

How to register for a reception place, according to Fedasil?



To obtain an orange card (registration certificate), you need an address. Having an orange card allows a work permit to be issued, four months after submitting an application for international protection and once the file has been forwarded to the CGRS by the immigration office.

## 06.

# HEALTH

## What am I entitled to as a person seeking international protection?

**Whether you live in a reception centre or outside of one, when you make an appointment with a healthcare professional, you must submit a request for a requisition form to Fedasil in order to benefit from financial coverage.**

### What is a requisition?

This is a form that you must complete when you have made an appointment with a healthcare professional, and which is then sent to Fedasil. If your request is approved, Fedasil will email you a document to show to the healthcare professional so they can be paid by Fedasil.

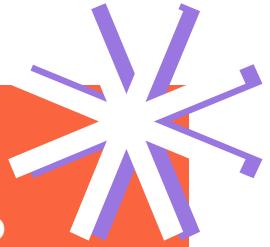
**If it is a health emergency, you can go to the emergency department without a requisition form and the medical team will take care of submitting the request to Fedasil.**

### Can I register with a medical centre?

Yes! There are many medical centres divided up by geographical areas.

You can therefore register with the one closest to your home.

Being registered enables you to benefit from multidisciplinary support, i.e. from several types of professionals, such as social workers who can help you with your requests for medical certificates.



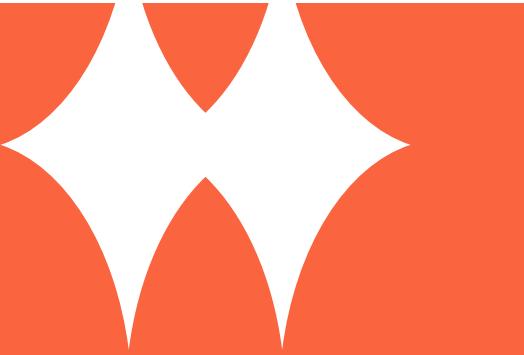
## Where can I find professionals who are known to be LGBTQIA+ friendly?

In Brussels, you can find MACS, 'Maison Arc-en-Ciel de la Santé', a medical centre primarily intended for members of the LGBTQIA+ communities, that takes an inclusive approach.

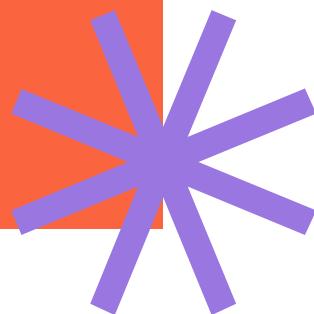
There are also online platforms available to help you find professionals who are knowledgeable about LGBTQIA+ issues:

1. **Très très bon médecin' (Very very good doctor): helps you find a gay-friendly and HIV-friendly doctor or therapist.**
2. **'Go to gyneco': "focuses on lesbian, bi and other communities, providing them with information, awareness-raising stands and events, and responding to requests for recommendations for safer healthcare professionals."<sup>13</sup>**
3. **'PraTIQ': helps transgender, intersex and queer people find lots of information on TQI issues and includes a directory to help them find professionals who are knowledgeable about these issues and located near them.**

<sup>13</sup> <https://gotogyneco.be/projet/>



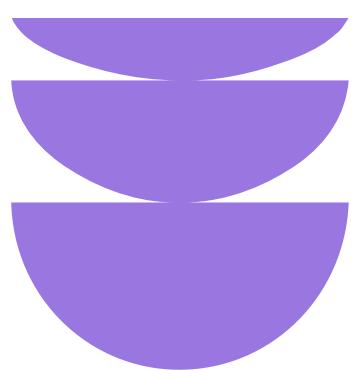
## I am in the Dublin procedure, what am I entitled to in terms of healthcare?



If you are in the **Dublin procedure** (see the 'Procedure' section for more information), access to healthcare is the same. You are entitled to requisitions all along your procedure, whether you are in a center or not.

## 07.

# EMPLOYMENT



How can you have access to employment in Belgium when you are seeking international protection?

To obtain a work permit, you must have an orange card (registration certificate). You will automatically receive your work permit four months after submitting your application for international protection and forwarding your file to the CGRS. You only need to go to the foreign office of your municipality of residence to have the work permit registered on your orange card.

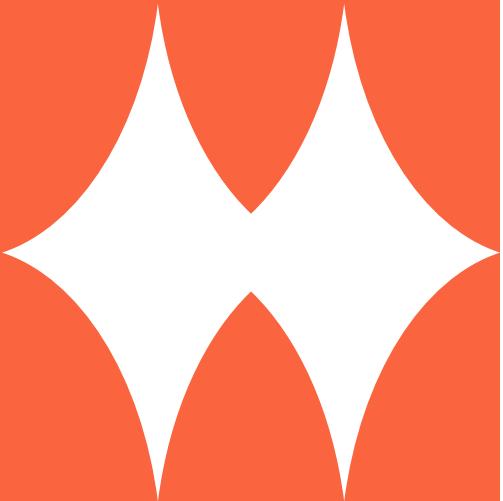
**If you are in the Dublin procedure, you are not entitled to a work permit during its duration.**

Where can I find support for my job or training search?

To receive support in your job or job training search, you can register as a job seeker with the 'Forem'. You can receive support from the "support for foreign nationals" service (accompagnement des ressortissants étrangers).

You can also find support from the non-profit organisation '**Le Monde des Possibles**' which offers training courses, or from the non-profit organisation '**Live in Color**'.

There are also many temporary employment agencies where you can register to receive job offers.



08.

## FOOD AID

Food parcels are available from the 'Croix-Rouge'<sup>14</sup> or 'St Vincent de Paul'.

Access to these may be granted by a social service for a limited period, until the situation improves.

If you are in need, you can contact a social worker to obtain access to food parcels.



# 09. WORDS OF ADVICE

Here you can find various advice from people who were involved in developing this brochure...

**"Go to organisations that are well qualified to support LGBTQIA+ people."**

**"Belgium is a country of rights, feel free."**

**"Be brave and speak up."**

**"Go online to find information about your problem."**

**"Get a lawyer"**

**"Talk to a social worker, either at the centre or elsewhere."**



# USEFUL CONTACTS

## **Maison Arc-en-Ciel de Mons**

Boulevard Kennedy 7  
7000 Mons  
0493 48 16 35  
[info@mac-mons.be](mailto:info@mac-mons.be)

## **Maison Arc-en-Ciel de Verviers**

Rue Xhavée 21  
4800 Verviers  
0495 13 00 26  
[contact@ensembleautrement.be](mailto:contact@ensembleautrement.be)

## **Maison Arc-en-Ciel du Brabant Wallon**

Rue des Deux Ponts 15  
1340 Ottignies  
0478 15 45 79  
[info@macbw.be](mailto:info@macbw.be)

## **Maison Arc-en-Ciel du Luxembourg**

Avenue Bouvier 87  
6762 Virton  
063 22 35 55  
0471 49 80 53  
[courrier@lgbt-lux.be](mailto:courrier@lgbt-lux.be)

## **Fédération Prisme**

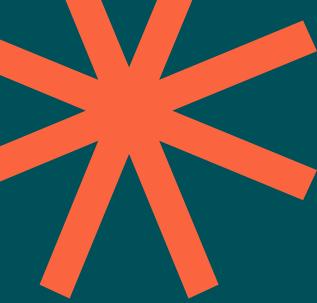
+32 4 222 17 33  
Rue Sainte-Marie 15  
4000 Liège  
[info@federation-prisme.be](mailto:info@federation-prisme.be)

## **Maison Arc-en-Ciel de Namur**

Rue Eugène Hambursin 13  
5000 Namur  
0471 52 44 21  
[nomi@macnamur.be](mailto:nomi@macnamur.be)

## **Maison Arc-en-Ciel de Charleroi**

Rue Prunieau 1  
6000 Charleroi  
0472 38 12 45  
0472 99 17 03  
0470 39 17 30  
[info@maccharleroi.be](mailto:info@maccharleroi.be)



### **Point d'Appui asbl**

Legal support specialized in  
immigration law

ONLY by appointment

Rue Maghin, 33 – 4000 Liège

04/227.69.51

info@pointdappui.be

### **Le Monde des Possibles ASBL**

Potierue 10 - 4000 Liège

www.possibles.org

04 232 02 92

Du lundi au vendredi

De 9h à 16h

Groupe WhatsApp :

0483 58 95 76

### **Socio-legal support Wallonia**

Hélène Deltour

[Helena.deltour@fedasil.be](mailto:Helena.deltour@fedasil.be)

+32 478 34 17 50

### **Centre S**

Sexual health center

Quai Godefroid Kurth 45

(1er étage)

4020 Liège

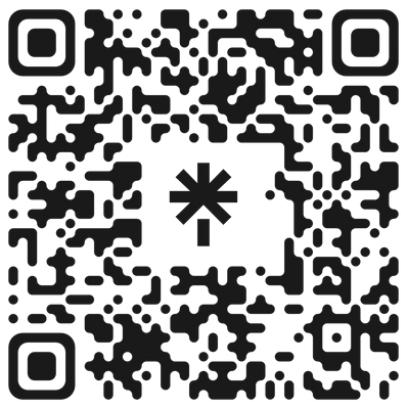
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# LINKTREE

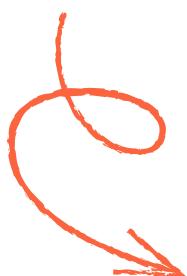


For more informations...

Linktree of the MAC



Linktree for "MAC autour du Monde"



### **Address**

Maison Arc-en-Ciel de Liège  
rue Hors-Château, 7  
4000 Liège  
Belgique

### **Contact**

Tel : +32 (0)4 223.65.89

Our telephone line is available,  
Monday to Friday,  
from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.  
and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

General address: [courrier@macliege.be](mailto:courrier@macliege.be)

### **Social service**

[servicesocial@macliege.be](mailto:servicesocial@macliege.be)  
+32 (0)4 75.94.05.83

 [www.maciege.be](http://www.maciege.be)

 [/maciege.be](https://www.facebook.com/maciege.be)

 [/maciege.be](https://www.instagram.com/maciege.be)

# **MAISON ARC-EN-CIEL DE LIÈGE**

This guide is funded by

