



AS/Mig/Inf (2017) 10 REV 3
21 March 2017

Programme

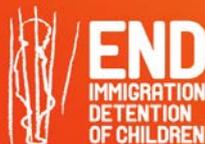
Parliamentarian visit to the residential home “Bäregg” and the Zentrum Bäregg GmbH (ZB)

**In the framework of the
*Parliamentary Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children***

**Residential home “Bäregg”, Bärau, Switzerland
Friday 24 March 2017
from 9.30 am to 2:00 pm**



**Adopt alternatives
that respect a
child’s right
to liberty and
family life**



**Parliamentary Assembly of
the Council of Europe
Campaign to End Immigra-
tion Detention of Children**

Friday, 24 March 2017

- 10.20 Statement by **Ms Doris Fiala**, the General Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Campaign to End Immigration Detention of Children
- 10.25 Presentation of the Zentrum Bäregg GmbH
- **Ms Annie Ortelli**, Director of Zentrum Bäregg GmbH
 - **Mr Alexander Maurer**, Migration authorities of the Canton of Bern
 - **Mr Tino Göhler**, Migration authorities of the Canton of Bern
- 11.15 Round tour through the residential home “Bäregg”
- Insight into the young migrants’ daily structure
 - Exchange with **Ms Florence Reichmuth**, the responsible care giver of the residential home Bäregg
- 12.10 Lunch in the residential home
- 13.10 Transferral to Bern (arrival 14:00)

Information provided by Zentrum Bäregg GmbH (ZB)

The Zentrum Bäregg GmbH

The Zentrum Bäregg GmbH (ZB) is unconditionally responsible for the placement and care of all unaccompanied minors who have applied for asylum in Switzerland and who are assigned to the Canton of Bern. At the moment the ZB is in charge of 425 children. They are between 3 and 17 years old and live in residential homes, accompanied or assisted living situations, with relatives, in foster families or other specialised facilities. In addition, the ZB is responsible for the supply of individual welfare benefits for the children.

(Directors: Ms Annie Ortelli & Mr Stephan Zihler)

Residential home “Bäregg”

The “Bäregg” in Bärau was the first of seven residential homes to be established for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers run by the ZB (including the clearing and reception centre in Huttwil). It hosts 42 children between the ages of 15 and 18 years old– 12 girls and 30 boys – coming from Eritrea, Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia and Guinea.

Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers – what does that mean?

The term UMA describes children and adolescents under the age of 18 who have entered Switzerland 'unaccompanied', i.e. without a parent or a legal guardian. This usually means that they do not have any personally attached figure by their side during an important period in their life, which represents a difficulty in this crucial development phase.

The experiences the children have endured in their home country as well as during their escape and the process of migration vary. Still, all of them are considered as being part of a group in our society that is particularly in need of protection due to those difficult experiences as well as their lack of parental supervision. It is essential to keep in mind, however, that these children and adolescents possess manifold resources, strengths and important personal coping mechanisms. During this phase of life, the children's identity is formed, which includes the discovery and development of their abilities, skills and interests.

Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers have a right to protection and age-appropriate care. In order to meet these fundamental requirements, the Swiss asylum law and especially the child protection law provide particular measures in their procedures for people under the age of 18.

In order to examine the possibility of a legal long-term stay in Switzerland, the unaccompanied minors have to follow an asylum procedure. Since the interrelationship between the asylum system and the protection of children and adolescents is not regulated at federal level in Switzerland, the 26 cantons have different systems.

Against this background, the Canton of Bern has opted for a specialized concept regarding unaccompanied minor asylum seekers that has been authorised by the Great Council. The work of ZB is based on a service level agreement with the Migration Authorities of the Canton of Bern. As the ZB is an institution that pursues common welfare and public purposes, it is tax-exempt.