

Zurich, March 2017

Have your say – your chance to participate

Opportunities for political participation in the City of Zurich – whether you are Swiss or a foreign national.

There are a number of different ways to get involved in the City of Zurich's opinion-building and decision-making processes. By taking an active role in these, you have the chance to make a positive contribution to the city we all share, and to help shape its development in the future. Your involvement would be most welcome.

- ***Making a suggestion to improve life in the/your community***

Various municipal departments, such as Neighbourhood Co-ordination and the Integration Office of the City of Zurich, are able to offer advice on implementing suggestions. Projects and **commitments** for the improvement of neighbourhood life made by private individuals and associations are particularly welcome.

- ***Having your say on the development of your local area***

Development/Construction work on streets, squares and buildings is transforming the city. When the City of Zurich carries out this work, it takes an active interest in the wishes of the local population. To this end, the City will often implement what are known as **participation procedures**, where affected communities are invited to have their say.

- ***Getting involved at your child's school***

Schools in the City of Zurich collaborate with the pupils' parents. If you are the mother or father of a child at school, you can get involved through a **parents' council** or parents' forum. Schools will keep parents informed of the possibilities for involvement.

- ***Joining the conversation in your neighbourhood***

There are 25 neighbourhood associations in the City of Zurich, responsible for maintaining and improving the quality of neighbourhood life. Joining a **neighbourhood association** provides a good opportunity to have your say on important issues in your neighbourhood. Neighbourhood associations are open to all interested parties.

- ***Presenting an issue to the authorities***

Everyone has the right to present a request, a query, a suggestion or a complaint to the authorities. One way of doing this is to submit a **petition**. This involves conveying the issue in written form and collecting signatures from other individuals who support your appeal. You can then hand the petition in to the authorities responsible.

- ***Getting involved with like-minded people***

People with similar interests often join forces as part of an **association**, party, society or other shared-interest group. These help to foster a sense of community as well as representing the interests of their members. Membership of an association, party or other shared-interest group also means that your own voice will carry more weight.

- ***Raising an integration issue***

Generally speaking, you have the option to ask a question or raise an issue directly with the authorities responsible. On matters relating to integration policy, you can contact the City of Zurich's Integration Office. Together with the Foreigners' Advisory Council, the Integration Office organises a **yearly meeting** to exchange ideas with representatives of migrant organisations and religious communities. The meetings provide you with a chance to raise specific issues related to integration directly with representatives of the City of Zurich.

- ***Getting involved with the Foreigners' Advisory Council***

The Foreigners' Advisory Council of the City of Zurich conveys the foreign residential population's concerns and needs to the City Council. **Council members** are appointed by the City Council for a period of four years. Councillors must be residents of the City of Zurich and must not have Swiss citizenship.

- ***Participating in popular votes***

In order to take part in votes and referendums on a federal, cantonal and communal level in the City of Zurich, you must have **Swiss citizenship**, and be of full legal age and sound judgement. You will need to meet a number of conditions to become a naturalised citizen. The Naturalisation Department of the Zurich City Chancellery can provide you with information on these.

What are the language requirements for political participation?

Fundamentally speaking, all residents have the right to have their say, regardless of their language skills. In our experience, however, a **basic knowledge of German** is an advantage when it comes to getting involved in politics. The City of Zurich's Integration Office can provide help in finding a **suitable German course**.

We welcome your involvement. You can find more information on opportunities for participation, points of contact and practical examples at:

www.stadt-zuerich.ch/partizipation