



Zürich, 4. September 2023

Zurich's Pledge to the European Pillar of Social Rights

Even though Switzerland is not a member of the European Union, Zurich is a European city nonetheless. As such, we can certainly identify with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the efforts towards a sustainable, fair and inclusive social Europe. In this pledge, we would like to focus on «Equal Opportunities» as we believe that, according to the preamble of the Swiss Constitution, the strength of the people is measured by the well-being of the weak.

As a European city, we are convinced that cities have a particular responsibility for all their inhabitants, and especially for the most vulnerable among them. This is not least a matter of fundamental and human rights.

Commitment to principle 3 «Equal Opportunities»

The City of Zurich is committed to equal opportunities in various areas. This means that the entire population should have access to all municipal services. Thus, enabling access and increasing participation are two of the five main integration policy targets of the city government. In recent years, Zurich has promoted access to affordable childcare for everybody, all-day schools or full refunds for German course costs for migrants with low income, among other things. In this vein, Zurich is committed to continuously improve access to all its services with a special focus on vulnerable groups. Limited access can affect people with disabilities, older people, people experiencing poverty, refugees or migrants, for example. Among those, migrants with irregular status have exceptionally poor access to public services.

For this reason, the city has invested CHF 4.5 million in a pilot project that aims to ensure secure medical care for all persons without health insurance (including migrants with irregular status). The pilot ends in 2024 and the city plans to transfer the measures that by then will have proven successful into regular operation.

Furthermore, the City of Zurich has allocated CHF 3.2 million in 2022 for preparatory works for the introduction of a Zurich City Card in the coming years, which should enable all Zurich residents (including migrants with irregular status) to have access to municipal services, but also to



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some private services, that are not open to migrants with irregular status (bank account, mobile phone subscription etc.). At the same time, the City of Zurich is implementing «practice tests» with representatives of vulnerable groups to improve the accessibility of municipal services.

Efforts have also been made to improve equal opportunities in the labour market for people with low or medium qualifications and limited financial resources. With the introduction of new labour market scholarships in 2023, they can receive financial support to further their professional development. No one should forego further education because of financial constraints.

Two upcoming pilot projects will provide temporary financial assistance for migrants in emergency situations. This concerns migrants who do not dare to apply for social aid due to the fear of losing their permit (budget: 3 million over 3 years) and migrants who cannot apply for social aid because they do not have a residence permit (budget: 2.4 million over 3 years). Implementation will begin as soon as (and only if) the appeal filed against the projects is rejected.

The City of Zurich is committed to working towards better accessibility for all vulnerable groups to all its services. Access to municipal services for the entire city population is an important contribution to equal opportunities.

Corine Mauch
Stadtpräsidentin