



# Europe Handbook

Military Family Services Europe (MFS[E])

<https://cfmws.ca/europe/your-posting-to-europe>



**MFS(E) does not endorse or promote any of the companies listed herein nor does it benefit financially from distributing the following information to families and members of the military community. The information was current at the time of printing.**

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This guide is an ongoing work in progress, and we need your help.

- Please let us know if you see any errors or omissions, and we will update them in the next edition.
- If there is a topic you'd like added that is applicable Europe-wide, do not hesitate to let us know.

**DISCLAIMER:** As rules and regulations frequently change, please research and consult the resources provided for the most up-to-date information before making any assumptions or relying solely on the information provided here. This document is a guide rather than your definitive source for the most up-to-date policies and procedures.

Welcome to Europe!

# 1

## Greetings from your MFS(E) Team

Your Military Family Services Europe (MFS(E)) team wishes to congratulate you and your family on your OUTCAN posting. Welcome to Europe! Your MFS(E) team supports members, spouses and children posted to countries throughout Europe.

MFS(E) helps facilitate a smooth integration for you and your family into your new posting, whatever your family unit may look like. We serve everyone from single members to blended families and empty nesters, so please ask how we can best help you. MFS(E) programs differ from those of MFRCs in Canada. Staff are throughout Europe, and our programs are offered virtually or from one of six European centres.

This “Europe Handbook” is a living document. We welcome your input to keep it relevant and current. We would like to extend our sincerest THANK YOU to families for sharing their experiences and suggestions on how to make the guide as complete as possible.

Our website (<https://cfmws.ca/europe/locations>) can be a helpful resource for your transition overseas, as it provides location and country-specific information and provides links to current MFS(E) programming, and even overseas job postings for spouses.

There are also numerous other supports offered by Personnel Support Programs (PSP) and Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS). Take time to look through <https://cfmws.ca/europe> to find what’s available.

Now is also your opportunity to connect with other Canadian families going through a similar transition to Europe. If there is any wisdom we can pass along to you from the get-go, we encourage you and your family to build a strong support network while you are in Europe. MFS(E) is your resource for connecting with others and sharing your experiences.

Once you have arrived and settled at your new location, MFS(E) will provide a welcome package containing location-specific information. You can pick it up at your local centre, or if you are remote, it will be mailed once you have secured living accommodations. Please let us know when you are settled and ready to receive mail. Also, please keep your contact information updated. A valid telephone number and e-mail address ensures you have the information you need for your OUTCAN posting.

If you have any questions about living in Europe or wish to know what your MFS(E) team can do to help you and your family, connect with us. We look forward to hearing about your adventures and new experiences soon. Let us serve you better, don't be a stranger!

Best Regards,  
Your MFS(E) Team

**Psst! Did you know MFS(E) supports the member and their family? This includes unaccompanied CAF members posted to Europe.**

## MFS(E) Services

MFS(E) supports your transition from one community to another. Some MFS(E) programs include, but are not limited to:

- [Social Worker support](#)
- [Emergency and Respite Child Care support](#)
- [Family Separation & Reunion Support](#)
- [Host Language training](#)
- [In person location-specific and Europe wide virtual activities](#)
- [French Programs](#)
- Outreach and engagement funding for remote locations

Check out our website for programs and services we offer.

<https://cfmws.ca/europe>

## Child and Youth Programs

MFS(E) has a range of programs specifically for kids posted to Europe. Here is a snapshot of these programs with a guide for when to watch for registration.

Find more information about these programs at <https://cfmws.ca/support-services/families/children-youth>

- Friends on a Journey (ongoing)
- Quarterly Craft Program (ages 3-9; ongoing registration)
- Little Cooks Club (ages 4-7)
- Pen Pal Program (ages 5-18; ongoing registration)
- Kids Can Cook (ages 8-12; Fall Intake)
- Home Alone Program (10+; periodically through centres)
- Babysitting Course (at least 12+ by the end of the calendar year; periodically through centres)
- Teens Can Cook (ages 13-18; Fall Intake)
- Youth Leadership Conference (ages 13-18; Fall registration, YLC usually in Feb)
- [Youth Employment Preparation Program](#) (Fall intake)

## Virtual Programs

- MFS(E) regularly delivers free virtual information and social programs. Visit our website for our activities and events at <https://cfmws.ca/europe/events-and-activities>.
- Click on “view more” under upcoming activities and you can filter to see virtual programs or programs in your area. You can also filter programs by audience or topics.

## Military Family Advisory Committee (MFAC)

The MFS(E) Military Family Advisory Committee (MFAC) is a group of volunteers representing Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) families and communities across Europe. The MFAC works to enhance MFS(E)'s capacity to implement family programs and services to all Canadian military families regardless of where they are in Europe. As a group of volunteers, the MFAC is not authorized to act as decision-makers or policymakers. Their primary role is to advise the Senior Manager MFS(E) about community needs and evaluate program effectiveness. For more information, visit [https://cfmws.ca/europe/military-family-services-\(europe\)/european-advisory-committee](https://cfmws.ca/europe/military-family-services-(europe)/european-advisory-committee)

## MFS(E) Centre

You can access both Europe-wide and local MFS(E) Centre services. The Centres provide a variety of programs and services for all CAF members and families. Locations that have centres include Geilenkirchen, Casteau (SHAPE), Naples, Brussels, London and Riga. The Remote Team supports families posted to remote locations. Find your centre at <https://cfmws.ca/europe/locations>

# 2

## Some helpful resources

Please be sure to connect with us online often for the latest programs and services.



### **MFS(E) Website**

<https://cfmws.ca/europe/your-posting-to-europe>



### **MFS(E) Facebook Page**

<https://www.facebook.com/MFSEurope>



### **MFS(E) Blog**

<https://www.outcanhorscan.com>



### **MFS(E) Youtube Channel**

<https://www.youtube.com/@MFSE-SFME>



### **The OUTCAN Experience Podcast**

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/OGSXILqrQcWXvcUDnYAjRD>

Apple: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-outcan-experience/id1497117472>



### **My Voice/Ma Voix**

MyVoice is a place for you to communicate with Military Family Services (MFS). The group is a safe place to discuss your experiences as a military family and offer feedback about your military lifestyle.

Visit: [www.facebook.com/groups/MyVoiceMaVoix](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MyVoiceMaVoix)



### **Family Information Line**

The Family Information (FIL) is a confidential, personal, bilingual, and free service offering information, support, referrals, reassurance, and crisis management to the military community. We serve Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans, and their families - immediate and extended. Find out more at: <https://cfmws.ca/support-services/family-information-line>

# 3

## Emergency Information

### Public Safety and Security

Should you have an issue where the local police have been contacted, please inform the CFSU(E) MP Det. Ensure that you provide the MP's with as many details about the incident. The MP will conduct a police report for your records and loss report.

Here is the link to the Government of Canada's Emergency Assistance info, outside of Canada: <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance>

Registration of Canadians Abroad is a free service that allows the Government of Canada to notify you in case of an emergency abroad or a personal emergency at home. The service also enables you to receive important information before or during a natural disaster or civil unrest. <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>



### Emergency contacts

General Emergency .....	112 (Europe) 999 (UK)
CFSU(E) Duty Officer (Germany) .....	+49 (0) 1725 345 900
CFSU(E) Military Police (Germany) .....	+49 (0) 2451 717 142

For additional emergency contacts: <https://cfmws.ca/europe/your-posting-to-europe/emergency-contacts>

**Look up local and national emergency numbers, as they are different across Europe.**



## CAF Member Assistance Program

Military members and their families can also contact the CAF Member Assistance Program at +1 800 268 7708. It is a voluntary and confidential service, allowing callers to speak with a professional counsellor 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Please note that Canadian toll-free numbers are not free when calling from another country, but the CAF Member Assistance Program will also accept collect calls at +1 613 941 5842.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/member-assistance.html>



## Family Information Line

The Family Information Line offers confidential assistance and supportive counselling 24/7. When you call you will be connected to one of their experienced professionals who can connect you with local and national resources. You can also reach out to the Family Information Line via email at [FIL-LIF@cfmws.com](mailto:FIL-LIF@cfmws.com). Send your phone number with the country code and an FIL counsellor will call you within 24 hours.

1-800-866-4546 (North America)

1-613-995-5234 (Collect calls)

Email: [FIL-LIF@cfmws.com](mailto:FIL-LIF@cfmws.com)

# 4

## Communications

### Calling within Europe

When making a call within your own country, there is no need to include the exit and country code. If you call within the same area code, you do not need to use the area code but add a "0" before the number to call inside Europe.

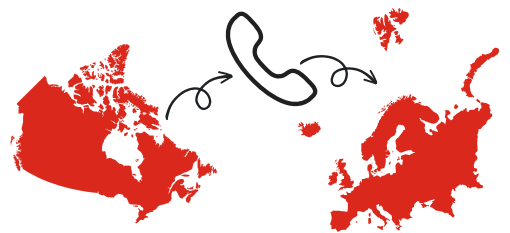
### Calling outside of Europe



To make a call outside of Europe, use the outgoing country exit code, country code where you are calling, area code, and telephone number. When you see the + symbol, it indicates to use the exit code specific to the country you are in. In Europe, the exit code is 00, while in Canada, it is 011. You can use the + on your mobile as the exit code, and your phone should automatically use the correct exit code. To call Canada, the country code is 1. When calling a Canadian number from Europe, follow this format: 00 - 1 - area code - seven-digit number.

### Calling Europe from Canada

The exit code in Canada is 011 followed by the country code, area code and phone number. In Europe, phone numbers vary in format and are seven to 10 digits.



[For more information about country codes click here.](#)



## Sim Cards

Most Canadians will use a mobile phone while in Europe. If your Canadian mobile works on a GSM network, you can use it in Europe. A CRTC law bans cellphone unlocking fees and orders that all new devices be unlocked. Canadians no longer have to pay to have their cell phones unlocked. With an unlocked phone, you can use any mobile company simply by switching the SIM card in the back. Make sure to unlock the phone before moving, as the provider might not assist once the account is closed.



## Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

Numerous Canadian families have opted for a VoIP phone, which is worth exploring before departing from Canada to retain your Canadian phone number. It offers several advantages, such as allowing your family and friends to call you without incurring overseas long-distance charges and vice versa. Additionally, it simplifies communication for individuals unfamiliar with European calling practices, such as elderly parents. Maintaining a Canadian phone number can also make it easier to bank, complete online forms, and register on Canadian websites.



## WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a free, multiplatform messaging app that lets you make video and voice calls, send text messages, and more – all with just a Wi-Fi connection. [www.whatsapp.com](http://www.whatsapp.com)

## Signal

Signal functions like WhatsApp and is the preferred app by some CAF units for end-to-end encryption. This app is available on mobile devices.

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## Housing

### Support

With some families living in local communities while others in base accommodations, families may have different housing experiences. Your posting could be to a remote area or a large city, with vast differences between the two. If you have any questions about housing, do not hesitate to contact your local relocation officer. [www.cfmws.ca/support-services/moving-housing/guide-to-relocating](http://www.cfmws.ca/support-services/moving-housing/guide-to-relocating)

### General

- European houses tend to be smaller than in Canada.
- Public transport availability and access
- You can bring your current vehicle or buy a new or used upon arrival. In some remote locations, owning two cars is suggested to avoid dependant/spouse isolation.
- When house hunting and if you have kids, consider the catchment area of the schools in your neighbourhood, as some of them can be small.



### Canadian Forces Support Unit (CFSUE)

Depending on your location in Europe, you may only visit the Detachment (Det) during In and Out Clearance, or you may visit often. The Detachment is the administrative centre for all CAF members and their families posted to Europe. Please see below for important contact information, or visit:

<https://cfmws.ca>

## Appliances



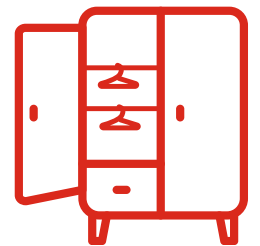
European appliances are usually smaller than what you are used to in Canada. Often, families will need to buy some appliances. Some also find their European fridge insufficient and prefer having a second one.

### Tips!

- North American pans do not always fit in European ovens.
- The washer and dryer are often much smaller and slower. This can pose problems for washing typical Canadian bedding.

## Wardrobes

Most houses do not have closets or other cabinets for storage; instead, they often have wardrobes to store items.



## Beds

You should note bed and bedding sizes differ between Canada and Europe. It may be helpful to purchase extra bedding before your move, or you may need it shipped from Canada.

<https://themattressauthority.net/blogs/guides/complete-international-mattress-size-chart-in-cm>



## Basements

Almost all homes have no cellars or basements due to the extra cost of digging further into the subsoil and the requirement for much deeper foundations and waterproof tanking.



## Electricity

Electricity in Europe differs from Canada with higher voltage and lower frequency. In Canada, electricity is 110V and 60Hz, while in Europe, it is 220-230V and 50Hz. Some electronics are not compatible with European power and require transformers, while others are dual voltage and only require a plug adapter. To find out if an electronic is dual voltage, look for the electronic information on the product. This information is often found on the bottom, back or the battery pack. If the input gives a range such as 100-240V 50-60Hz, the product is dual voltage and works with Canadian and European electricity. If the input does not show a range and only says 110V 60Hz, it is incompatible with European electricity.

## Dual Voltage

If your product is dual voltage, you only need a plug adapter. Since the product is already compatible with local electricity, the adapter allows the prongs to fit the electrical outlets. If you use an adapter with a product that is not dual voltage, you will not only damage your product, but you may also cause electrical damage to the building. Lamps are typically dual voltage; however, replace the light bulbs with European lightbulbs.



## Single Voltage

If your electronics only say 110V 60Hz, it is incompatible with European electricity. To use electronics while in Europe, you will need a transformer. Transformers convert the local electricity to 110V 60Hz, so you can plug devices in as if you were plugging them into a wall in Canada.

## Transformers

Transformers come in various wattage ratings, so use the correct transformer to handle what you are plugging into it. The total wattage of appliances plugged into the transformer must be less than the transformer wattage rating. Find out the wattage of an electronic device, if it is not on the label, by multiplying the item's voltage by the number of amperes (amps). Research before purchasing to ensure it meets your needs.





# Helpful Contacts



## GK Medical & Dental Clinic

+49 (0) 2451-717301 [GKmedicalclinic@forces.gc.ca](mailto:GKmedicalclinic@forces.gc.ca)

+49 (0)2451 717 331 [Gkdentalclinic@forces.gc.ca](mailto:Gkdentalclinic@forces.gc.ca)



## MFS(E) Social Workers

[MFSSocialWork@cfmws.com](mailto:MFSSocialWork@cfmws.com)



## CFSU(E) Chaplain Team

<https://cfmws.ca/europe/mental-health-contacts-in-europe>



## PSP Europe

+PSP.Europe@forces.gc.ca

Chalet Program: <https://cfmws.ca/europe/chalet-program>



## MSH International Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP) Member Portal

<https://www.pshcp-msh.ca>

[assist@pshcp-msh.ca](mailto:assist@pshcp-msh.ca) and [assistance@rssfp-msh.ca](mailto:assistance@rssfp-msh.ca)



## SISIP Financial

<https://cfmws.ca/about-us/cfmws-careers/our-team/sisip-financial>



## Family Information Line

<https://cfmws.ca/support-services/family-information-line>



## Military Family Services (Europe)

For any and all questions - reach out! [MFSE.Europe@cfmws.com](mailto:MFSE.Europe@cfmws.com)

# 7

## Administration

### **CRA, Residency Status and Child Tax Credit**

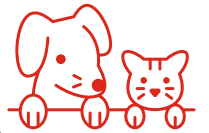
Filing taxes and claiming benefits such as the Canada Child Benefit while OUTCAN requires considerations specific to your circumstances. Military Family Services partners with subject matter experts early in the tax season to offer presentations with the most up-to-date information.



<https://cfmws.ca/europe/resources/filing-taxes-while-outcan>

### **Pets**

Most pets travelling from Canada to another country need an export certificate issued by a licensed veterinarian and endorsed by an official Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) veterinarian.



<https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health>





# Health services

## **Mental Health**

Whether you are facing a recent stressful experience, transitional struggles, relationship, family, or financial issues, we can help you with life's ups and downs.

<https://cfmws.ca/europe/mental-health-contacts-in-europe>

## **Medical Services**

CAF Member

The Canadian Medical Clinic in Geilenkirchen, Germany, is responsible for the healthcare of all Canadian military members in Europe and can be accessed.

<https://cfmws.ca/europe/medical-services-in-europe>

## **Spouses and Dependants**

Canada Life is the PSHCP administrator. It has subcontracted the administration of the Out-of-Province Benefit for members with supplementary coverage and the out-of-country coverage for members living outside of Canada (Comprehensive coverage) to MSH International (MSH).

[Public Service Health Care Plan \(PSHCP\)](#)

[www.pshcp-msh.ca](http://www.pshcp-msh.ca)

Healthcare services will vary based on location. Contact GK medical services for further information.

## **Hospital Comfort Program**

The Hospital Comfort Program supports all hospitalized CAF members and family members in Europe. For more information, please visit

<https://cfmws.ca/europe/hospital-comfort>.



# Employment | Volunteering

## Employment for military and veteran spouses

Employment for spouses is extremely limited. Before applying ensure that you meet all the requirements at your location.

[www.cfmws.ca/europe/civilian-employment-in-europe](http://www.cfmws.ca/europe/civilian-employment-in-europe)



## Employment Support

Explore employment services customized for spouses/partners of CAF members and spouses/partners of Veterans. Search the online job bank, build your business, take a virtual course, access career advice, and get support for job relocation, including to Europe.

<https://cfmws.ca/support-services/employment>

## CareerCoach+

Shape your next career move today. CareerCOACH+ offers personalized career coaching exclusively for military spouses/partners.

[www.cfmws.ca/support-services/employment/career-development/careercoach](http://www.cfmws.ca/support-services/employment/career-development/careercoach)



## Youth Employment Preparation Program

The Youth Employment Preparation (YEP) Program provides real-life workplace training and employment opportunities to the youth of the Canadian Armed Forces members and Canadian Armed Forces support personnel posted in Europe.

[www.cfmws.ca/europe/youth-employment-preparation-program](http://www.cfmws.ca/europe/youth-employment-preparation-program)

# Education



## Educational Supports and Information

Connect for information or queries regarding education; post-secondary pathway planning; SOT Tutoring Program eligibility; & upcoming educational transitions from OUTCAN back to INCAN. [www.cfmws.ca/support-services/education](http://www.cfmws.ca/support-services/education)

## Children's Education Management (OUTCAN)

Learn about the services Children's Education Management (CEM) provides while posted OUTCAN. Find forms and instructions for your child's educational needs. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/pay-pension-benefits/benefits/children-education-management.html>

## European Fund Academic Program

The European Fund (EF) Academic Program recognizes the academic accomplishments of graduating high school students who are EF Member dependents and encourages continuing towards post-secondary studies. [www.cfmws.ca/europe/european-fund-academic-program](http://www.cfmws.ca/europe/european-fund-academic-program)

## National Scholarship Program

Scholarship program for dependents (includes spouse) of a serving or former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada enrolled in an undergraduate, graduate or vocational program at an accredited Canadian college or university, leading to a degree, diploma or certificate.

<https://www.supportourtroops.ca/Get-Support/Education/Scholarships>

## Second Language Training

Our Second Language Training learning resources and tools will allow you to increase your language skills and may help you:

- integrate into your new city,
- add a new language skill to your resume
- assist your child(ren) with their second language learning
- prepare for a posting outside of Canada

[www.cfmws.ca/second-language-training](http://www.cfmws.ca/second-language-training)