



OUTCAN Info | Brunssum, Netherlands

LOCATION

Country: Netherlands

Town: Brunssum

Base: Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFC Brunssum)

Info to Consider:

- Family (non-dependents) can visit and stay 90 days **without a visa** (Schengen Area)

POPULATION

Size: The municipality of Brunssum has 28,064 residents as of Jan 2019

Ethnicity: Mostly nationals

Religion: Roman Catholic, Protestants majority

LANGUAGE(S)

Official language: German.

Prevalence of French or English speaking: Dutch is the only official language of the Netherlands, although several dialects are spoken. English, German, and French are widely understood by the majority of the Netherlands population. Most people will understand and speak English.

COST OF LIVING

Exchange rate to consider: Euro

- Groceries and restaurants are typically cheaper in Germany than in Canada.
- Clothing and furniture are often more expensive.
- Gas is more expensive; however, Aral fuel cards allow members and their dependents to purchase gas tax-free from Aral stations.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Climate and potential for severe weather, natural disasters:

- The average temperature varies from 1.2°C (34F) in January to 17°C (63F) in July and August; however, snow in the winter and extreme heat in the summer sometimes occur. Statistics show that Brunssum has 130 hours more sunshine compared to the rest of the Netherlands. The climate is oceanic, humid and temperate.
- Good and bad weather occurs in all seasons. At any time of the year, large temperature changes can occur within a few hours. The weather is largely governed by the series of depressions that move from the Atlantic Ocean across northwestern Europe in an easterly or north-easterly direction so that the area experiences frequent southwesterly winds.

Laws and culture:

- You must carry valid identification at all times if you are over the age of 14. Law enforcement authorities may fine you if you fail to show them appropriate identification upon request.
- Penalties for possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs are severe. Convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.
- Despite a common misconception, soft drugs like marijuana are controlled substances. Some establishments (locally known as coffee shops) are allowed to sell soft drugs for personal use, but there are restrictions in place.
- You must be at least 18 years old to drive a car in the Netherlands.
- You should carry an international driving permit. Apply for an international driving licence before leaving Canada.
- Penalties for drinking and driving are severe. The legal blood alcohol limit is 0.05 per cent.
- Traffic offences and parking violations can carry heavy, on-the-spot fines. If you are fined, always ask for a receipt.

Safety and security:

- Petty crime (pickpocketing and purse snatching) occurs in major cities, train stations, airports and Christmas markets.
- Pickpockets often work in teams and target people on trains and at railway stations and airports.
- There is a threat of terrorism in Europe. Terrorists have carried out attacks in several European cities. In Germany, previous incidents have resulted in injury and death. They include random violent assaults in public areas and a truck driven into crowds at a Christmas market in Berlin. Further attacks in Europe are likely.

Level of isolation:

- French-Speaking spouses may feel very isolated if they don't speak English at all.

HOUSING

- Members rent housing in the area. There is a variety of housing within a few kilometres from JFC Base or in a more private area if requested.
- It is recommended that you ask your sponsor, during your HHT for a list of all the points of contact at CFSU(E) in Geilenkirchen so you can call if you encounter any support issues as you transition to your rental property.

EMPLOYMENT

Are there employment opportunities for spouses?

- Due to tax and legal implications, spousal employment in Germany is not a realistic option.

Op tempo: The op tempo will vary greatly depending on the position. TD is possible.

HEALTH CARE

Access: The health care system is fast and effective.

- English services are widely available, but French is very limited.
- The Canadian Medical Clinic in Geilenkirchen (15 km) is responsible for the healthcare of all Canadian military members in Europe and can be accessed.
- All bills associated with the care of dependents are the member's personal responsibility and are to be claimed through PSHCP for private services.

Special needs:

- Depending on the language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed, but very limited.
- It is highly advised that the family consult with Medical Screening Officer in Canada and/or the Canadian Element to ensure that the required services are readily available in either English or French before accepting a posting.

Consideration for pregnancy/birthing:

- Members and their dependents will be referred to a local doctor (English-speaking) to monitor them throughout their pregnancy.

Dental:

- Dental care can be accessed in town. You are required to pay upfront, and you can then claim your expenses.

SCHOOLING

- Schooling is typically at the AFNORTH International School – Canadian Section for grades JK-12.
- Limited French (first language classes) are available depending on grade, with the majority of classes being taught in English.

Curriculum vs. Canadian curriculum:

- Canadian (Ontario) Curriculum varies depending on the choice of school.
- Canadian students enrolled in the Canadian-British system will meet Ontario curriculum requirements.

Resources for special needs children:

- Access to special needs services depends on the choice of school, language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed, so it may be very limited.
- Consult with CEM/GAC and the school before making any commitments.

CHILDCARE

- Local childcare is available.
- Childcare is available at the Child Development Centre on JFC Brunssum in the Netherlands and is run by the United States. Spots in this daycare are very limited and families are only able to be added to the waiting list if both parents are employed.



TRANSPORTATION

- Airports: Dusseldorf International Airport (DUS), 57 km.
- Germany has excellent trains and bus services.
- A road-worthy vehicle is needed, as car safety are mandatory.
- As bicycles are a common form of transportation, bike paths and lanes are common, and bicycles are treated as a vehicle when driving on roads.

RESOURCES AND AMENITIES

Is there a **Military Family Services centre** available in that location?

- Yes, under MFS(E) Niederheid, Germany

Psychosocial/mental health resources:

- Yes at the post. MFS(E) SW is for dependants only. The CAF SW/Mental Health Team for members and families are located in Geilenkirchen, Germany. The chaplain is located in Belgium.

Communications (e.g. quality of Internet connection):

- Good, depending on the provider and location.
- High-speed internet is not consistently available.
- Fiber-optic might not be available

ACTIVITIES

Access to sports or other leisure activities:

- Many sports available in Brunssum.
- Plentiful. Local sports teams are available for children and adults; however, there is no guarantee that participants will be English or French speaking.
- Some English sports teams and activities are available on the Brunssum NATO base

Availability of playgrounds:

- Yes, many

RESTRICTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are common-law relationships recognized? Yes

Are same-sex couples recognized? Yes

Medications that are illegal in the country:

- Cannabis is illegal but decriminalised.
- Canadian over-the-counter medication can be obtained from the CFSU(E) Canadian Pharmacy at Selfkant-Kaserne(CFSU(E)) in Niederheid, Germany

Other considerations:

- Banned dog breeds: Pit Bull Terrier, Pit Bull Cross Breeds and Rottweilers.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- European Commission Country Reports (2022)
https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2022-european-semester-country-reports_en
- Canadian Travel Advisories
<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- CIA World Factbooks (One pager from the US)
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/netherlands>
- Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-the-netherlands>
- Consumer Price Index (CPI)
<https://data.imf.org/?sk=4FFB52B2-3653-409A-B471-D47B46D904B5>

For more comprehensive information, please feel free to reach out to the resources below

- MFS(E) Social Worker Andrea Liss: liss.andrea@cfmws.com
- CAF Social Worker: GKMedicalClinic@forces.gc.ca
- MFS(E) Niederheid: + 49 (0) 2451 717 500, MFSE.Selfkant-Kaserne@cfmws.com
- MFS(E) Regional Office: +49 (0) 2451 717 173, MFS.Europe@cfmws.com

