



## OUTCAN Info | Stuttgart, Germany

### LOCATION

**Country:** Germany

**Town:** Stuttgart

**Base:** 5 US Army Garrison (USAG)

**Other info to consider:**

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

### POPULATION

**Size:** over 635,000 (2019).

**Ethnicity:** Majority German. 40% of the city's population is of foreign background, with only 39% of those coming from EU countries. The largest immigrant groups are Turkish, Croatian, Greek, Italian, Romanian and Serbian.

Germany is the second most popular country in the world for immigrants. Also, there are a large number of Syrian refugees (estimated 700,000) in Germany.

**Religion:** The majority religion in Germany is Christianity, with two-thirds of the population adhering to Protestantism and one-third to Roman Catholicism.

### LANGUAGE(S)

**Official language:** German.

**Prevalence of French or English:** English as a second language.

- Most establishments will have an English-speaking employee. However, English is not spoken freely and commonly. Limited to no French.

### 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:**

- Mild winters, and hot, humid summers. Air conditioning is not common.

**Laws and culture:**

- Germans are traditional and pride themselves on being organized, professional, and having a good work/life balance. Germans enforce laws (for example - a ticket on the spot for jay-walking). Germans are known to be rule followers and do not take kindly to those who don't adhere to rules and social norms.
- Customer service can be lacking.
- The drinking age for beer and wine in Germany is 14 with parents present, and 16 without parents. The drinking age is 18 for all other alcohol (i.e. spirits). Alcohol is sold in grocery stores; public alcohol consumption is allowed. Smoking is much more common in Germany than in Canada (in general and in public places).
- Cigarettes are available in vending machines on street corners.
- Germans LOVE their dogs and they are welcome everywhere (restaurants, some stores, bars, festivals, and malls) if behaved properly. However, if a dog is aggressive or disruptive, it will not be welcome to enter businesses.
- You must be at least 18 years old to drive a vehicle in Germany. An International Driving Permit is recommended. You should apply for one before leaving Canada.
- Penalties for drinking and driving are severe. The legal blood alcohol limit is 0.05%. Convicted offenders can expect heavy fines, and your driver's licence may be confiscated immediately.

**Safety and security:**

- Violent crime is rare but does occur.
- Exercise normal security precautions and be particularly vigilant if attending large events.

- 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. Their methods include distracting a victim who is boarding or exiting a train or surrounding a victim in line-ups or at check-in counters.
- Individuals have been harassed or attacked for reasons of race or foreign-looking appearance.
- Ensure that personal belongings, including passports and other travel documents, are secure at all times.
- 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.
- Demonstrations may occur. Even peaceful demonstrations can turn violent at any time. They can also lead to traffic and public transportation disruptions.

#### Level of isolation:

- French-speaking spouses may feel very isolated if they don't speak English at all.
- There are five Canadian families posted to Stuttgart.

## HOUSING

- Very low vacancy rate and high rents. Due to the large US military population
- CFSU(E) Housing Officer needs to be in contact with the local agencies used to discuss requirements and lease conditions.
- Pets might not be accepted.
- Families with children will need to consider schools when choosing a home. The International School is in the Stuttgart-Degerloch area, with no school bus, so parents either drive or students take public transit. There is bussing to the DoDEA schools, but care is needed to be sure the home is in the bus zone. The balance between a reasonable commute and the size of the home will need to be carefully weighed.

## EMPLOYMENT

**Are there employment opportunities for spouses?** Due to tax and legal implications, spousal employment in Germany is not a realistic option.

- There are very limited employment opportunities available through CFMWS, so families should be prepared to be a single-income family for the duration of the posting.
- Many opportunities are available on the American base, but you must be US Citizens or hold a Green Card

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

## HEALTH CARE

**Access:** The German healthcare system is fast and effective.

- USAG Stuttgart Health Clinic will treat members and dependents.
- English services are widely available, but French is very limited
- The CFSU(E) Canadian Medical Clinic in Geilenkirchen (435 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.

#### Special needs:

- Depending on the language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed, but very limited.
- It may be a wait before finding an appropriate match and at times may not be possible based on the availability of English/French providers or resources.
- 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.
- Access to USAG Stuttgart Health Clinic

#### 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 through the Patch Elementary and Middle School for grades K-8 (DODEA), Robinson Barracks Elementary School for grades K-5 (DODEA), Stuttgart Elementary School for grades K-5 (DODEA), Kaiserslautern Middle School for grades 6-8 (DODEA), or Stuttgart High School for grades 9-12 (DODEA)
- No French schools

### Curriculum vs. Canadian curriculum:

- Curriculum varies depending on the choice of school.
- Canadian history or geography is not available.
- Most curriculums are American - DODEA

### 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, it may be very limited.
- Consult with CEM and the school before making any commitments.

## CHILDCARE

- Long waiting lists for space on the US base.
- Local German childcare is available.
- Eligibility for German childcare is based on geographical location, and families must live within the same designated area as the childcare provider.
- Families can visit their local town hall to find out what childcare providers are open to them.
- When choosing local childcare there is no guarantee that staff will speak English or French.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Airports: Stuttgart (STR)
- Public transit in Stuttgart is reliable
- The 5 USAG Stuttgart bases are not well served by public transit. There is an inter-base bus between the base locations, but it runs infrequently and it can take up to an hour to get from one base to the other.
- Traffic is extremely bad in Stuttgart, and long delays during rush hours are common.
- The city is very spread out and it is not uncommon to need 45 minutes-1 hour to get where you're going.
- Parking is difficult and rarely free (but not usually expensive). Parking spots are very small.
- Stuttgart is a low-emission zone and cars must have a green sticker to drive in the city.
- A road-worthy vehicle is needed, as car safety checks are mandatory.
- Germany has excellent train and bus services.
- 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?

- No, but remote services are available under MFS(E) Niederheid, Germany

### Psychosocial/mental health resources:

- Not at the post, and MFS(E) SW is for dependents only. The CAF SW/Mental Health Team for members and families is 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
- Hook-up can take up to six weeks and scheduling appointments is difficult for non-German speakers.
- German house construction makes getting Wi-Fi in all parts of the house difficult, so boosters are necessary.

## ACTIVITIES

### Access to sports or other leisure activities:

- Good access. Many sports are offered in the community with excellent facilities. Clubs and activities are also on the US base.

### Availability of playgrounds:

- Yes

## RESTRICTIONS TO CONSIDER

### Are common-law relationships recognized?

- Yes, a registered partnership offers many of the same rights as marriage except in the areas of taxation and adoption.

### Are same sex-couples recognized?

- Yes, Germany does not recognize same-sex marriages as marriage, but it does recognize it as a registered partnership.

### Medications that are illegal in the country:

- Cannabis is illegal in Germany.
- While not illegal, medications that would be available over the counter in Canada (such as aspirin, ibuprofen, cough syrup, etc.) must be obtained from a pharmacist in Germany.
- Stores will typically only carry vitamins and not any medication.
- Canadian over-the-counter medication can be obtained from the CFSU(E) Canadian Pharmacy at Selfkant Kaserne(CFSU(E)) in Niederheid, Germany.

### Other considerations:

- Pharmacy has most needed medications. Sometimes language might be an issue.
- Difficult finding distilled water for CPAP machines.
- Banned dog breeds: American Pit Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, and English Bull Terrier.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- European Commission Country Reports (2022)  
[https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2022-european-semester-country-reports\\_en](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/germany>
- Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-germany>
- 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](mailto:liss.andrea@cfmws.com)
- CAF Social Worker: [GKMedicalClinic@forces.gc.ca](mailto:GKMedicalClinic@forces.gc.ca)
- MFS(E) Niederheid: + 49 (0) 2451 717 500, [MFSE.Selfkant-Kaserne@cfmws.com](mailto:MFSE.Selfkant-Kaserne@cfmws.com)
- MFS(E) Regional Office: +49 (0) 2451 717 173, [MFS.Europe@cfmws.com](mailto:MFS.Europe@cfmws.com)