



## Integration—a key component of a successful life in Germany

In Germany integration is an important but controversial issue. Deutschland-Begleiter.de can only provide you with some advice, because there is no simple set of instructions on how to become successfully integrated in German society. Whether or not you end up feeling at home in Germany depends to a large degree on how curious you are about this country and the people who live here. It is important to get to know Germany and its culture.

What integration means cannot be explained in a few words. Basically integration is about people coming to a new and (for them) strange country with the clear intention of living there permanently. It's about feeling you belong in a country and becoming an accepted part of society. But it also involves the people in a country accepting and appreciating newcomers as an integral part of their culture.



Whether or not integration succeeds depends on many factors, some of which you can influence yourself. For a start, you must want to become part of German society with its specific lifestyle, language and culture. But that's not all. People living in Germany have to be ready to welcome you as refugees or immigrants, and invite you to become an integral part of society. It isn't easy for either side; both have to work together to achieve successful integration.

### So how can integration succeed?

For all these reasons it is important for you to try and understand Germany better. If you make a real effort to become integrated, people here will respond positively and respect your efforts. But the theoretical side of integration, for example taking an integration course, is only one side of the coin. The other side is what happens in practice. We recommend you try to engage with Germans in conversation. Maybe there's an initiative or a Christian church in your area that offers specific activities for refugees. Or you could ask the person who told you about Deutschland-Begleiter.de.



Our most important recommendation is that you and your whole family learn German as quickly as possible. So why not join a football club, or another type of club, to get to know the people in your neighbourhood better?

You could also try to get some work experience at a firm in your area. But don't wait until somebody makes you an offer. The best idea is to look for opportunities yourself to get to know the area you live in better. Immigrants who've already lived for a while in Germany say the same.



## **Why is integration so important?**

Integration has become an increasingly important issue in recent months because Germany is taking in so many refugees, and doesn't just see them as guests. After all, quite a lot of the refugees will end up living in Germany for a long time, and maybe even permanently. That's why major social and financial efforts are needed to find a good common path to integration.



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People in Germany are glad to help, as has been evident in the heartfelt welcome given to most refugees. But if people get the feeling they are being exploited, their willingness to help can easily change to rejection. There are people in Germany who don't want any refugees in this country. Some are afraid that there may be dishonest people or even criminals among the refugees who have arrived—people who only want to exploit German hospitality and don't want to become integrated here.

## **Integration and Germany's Christian roots**

If you gradually become part of German society, if you stay curious and find out how people live in Germany, you will be able to find a job, become independent and see your living standards rise. That won't happen within a few days, weeks or even months, but people in Germany will respect and support your efforts.



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One aspect of Germany's Christian roots is the desire to play an active role in society and to help the weak. "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city" is the kind of advice you find in the Bible (in the prophet Jeremiah, chapter 29, verse 7). Germany is well known all over the world for the quality of the products it manufactures, its strong economy and its innovative people. One of the reasons is that for many centuries, German society was shaped by Christian values such as honesty, commitment and reliability. These can be a special blessing for you!

But you, too, can become a blessing for this country. After all, you will enrich Germany with your culture. But integration can only succeed if you do not insist on maintaining all of your traditions. That's why we recommend that you find out how German society works, so you can more easily become part of it.