



The Swiss Castles Charter of Quality

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The Swiss Castles is a not-for-profit association (hereinafter: association) whose members are Switzerland's leading castles and fortresses. Together, they pursue a mission to conserve, research and promote cultural heritage, taking into account the needs of their visitors from all regions of Switzerland and beyond. Under this Charter, the members undertake to provide visitors with a high-quality experience at every stage of their visit.

1. Pre-visit planning

The member castle will provide visitors with information to assist them in planning their visit, in the form of descriptive brochures, flyers, on the castle's social media, website and through other digital channels.

The information provided will include a description of the site, the visitor experience, the activities offered, opening hours (including the time of last admission), admission fees, site access and contact details (telephone, e-mail). In particular, people with limited mobility and special needs should also find all the necessary information on accessibility and offers in advance.

Details of how to obtain information and make bookings (for guided tours, events, restaurant reservations, etc.) will be clearly displayed in printed documents and on electronic media.

Practical information will be presented in a way that is well organised and easy to understand. The member castle's website will be compatible with mobile devices. It will display the association's logo and include a link to the association's website.

Practical information, on both printed documents and the website, will always be provided in at least one national language plus English, or in two national languages.

2. Arrival of visitors

The member castle will work with the relevant authorities to ensure clear and adequate signage (cultural heritage category) for visitors.

It will provide appropriate signage from public transport facilities and car parks, where possible incorporating the association's logo. Access routes and walking time to the member castle will be indicated by means of logograms and/or in a number of languages in order to assist both Swiss and foreign visitors.

The member castle will work with its partners (municipalities, cities, canton) to enhance public transport facilities and access routes, including ongoing maintenance, clear indications of the areas

provided for different types of vehicles, adequate lighting in parking areas, and signs indicating charging stations for electric vehicles where available. Locations that do not have sufficient parking for all visitors will direct them to the nearest available parking areas.

3. Visitor reception

The reception area of the member castle will be correctly maintained at all times and, as far as possible, accessible to all visitors, including those with reduced mobility. The location of the ticket counter will be clearly indicated, and all admission fees are clearly listed. The reception area will display the association's logo in order to inform visitors that they are visiting a member of The Swiss Castles.

Staff will welcome visitors courteously and will be able to answer them in a number of languages: at least one national language plus English, or two national languages. To assist visitors, the use of badges or signage to indicate the languages spoken by reception staff is recommended.

Adequately trained, reception staff will have a good knowledge of the member castle and the various services on offer. They will also be able to provide information about the local area and nearby museums. As far as possible, reception staff will courteously anticipate visitor requests.

First-aid supplies will be available to visitors at the reception of the member castle. Reception staff are familiar with the measures to be taken in case of an emergency, on the basis of an emergency plan and are trained to evacuate the site if necessary.

Reception staff will wear clean, smart clothing that complies with any dress code drawn up by the member castle. While on duty, reception staff will be clearly identifiable by means of a uniform or badge.

The reception area of the member castle will include a coat rack, cloakroom and lockers for use by visitors. The member castle will make seating available to older visitors or visitors with reduced mobility in its reception area.

4. Visiting

In order to orient visitors as best as possible, the member castle will inform them about the tour and the main points of interest, using various means of communication (map, guide, signposting, etc.). The member castle will offer clear guidance throughout the tour.

It will first and foremost provide basic information about the visit and main points of interest, and also provide further supports for more in-depth information. The information provided is tailored to a broad national and international audience. In conjunction to the exhibitions there are family-friendly offers and ideally also other inclusive offers.

Visitor information will be presented throughout the visitor route in accordance with the member castle's corporate design. The visitor route will be clearly and appropriately indicated using an arrow

system or room numbering with clearly displayed directional instructions or room names. Accessibility of the different areas will be signposted where this could present problems for children or visitors with reduced mobility. Safety advice and restrictions will be repeated along the route as necessary. Sufficient seating will be provided at regular intervals along the tour in order to improve the quality of the visit.

Communication materials and signage will be produced in a professional manner.

5. Complaints handling

Association members will have a complaints procedure and a contact person responsible for dealing with complaints. Upon request, reception staff will advise visitors of the complaints procedure. The member castle will provide a feedback form or contact information on their website.

6. Visitor information

The member castle will make every effort to provide (maximum) as much information as possible to visitors. It will provide an up-to-date bibliography on its website containing useful references that visitors can use to plan or complement their visit.

Visitor information will be tailored to different types of audience (general public, national and international visitors, families/children, experts, people with special needs) and the media are adapted to these. The member castle will present the information clearly and precisely on different types of support, and will pay special attention to the use of easily understandable and non-discriminatory/inclusive language.

Information will be presented in accordance with the member castle's corporate design, with professionally produced materials using a variety of formats (text, photographs, diagrams, audio-visual media).

7. Participation in (a) guided tour(s)

The member castle will provide a high-quality guided tour service to visitors. Guided tours will be offered in at least one national language plus English, or in two national languages.

The member castle guarantees the expertise of the tour guides (provided) and ensures that they receive further training. Tour guides will be able to adapt their tours according to the needs of different audiences (general public, international visitors, families/children, specialists/experts and people with special needs).

Guides will ensure the safety of premises, objects and visitors throughout the tour. Guides will wear clean, smart clothing that complies with any dress code drawn up by the member castle. While on duty, guides will be clearly identifiable by means of a uniform or badge.

8. Maintenance of the areas accessible to visitors

The member castle will ensure that areas accessible to visitors are cleaned and maintained regularly and will guarantee the safety of its installations.

In accordance with its mission, the member castle will conserve, maintain and restore the objects on display to visitors.

9. Monitoring of the areas accessible to visitors

The member castle will arrange for areas accessible to visitors to be monitored. Security staff will oversee the premises and, as far as possible, ensure the safety of visitors, interacting with them in a courteous manner. Security staff will provide information that is useful to visitors and anticipate their needs. If they are unable to answer a visitor's questions, they will direct the visitor to the relevant member(s) of staff.

In the course of their duties, security staff will ensure that the premises are kept well maintained and clean.

Security staff will be trained in managing conflicts and crisis situations, such as theft or damage. They will be trained in first aid and are familiar with the procedure for evacuating visitors if required.

Security staff will wear clean, smart clothing that complies with any dress code drawn up by the member castle. While on duty, security staff will be clearly identifiable by means of a uniform or badge.

10. Toilets

The member castle will provide visitor toilet facilities that are accessible to all, including persons with reduced mobility. To meet the needs of international visitors, male and female toilets will be separated as far as possible. A changing table will be provided for parents in the male and female toilets, or in a dedicated area accessible to both men and women.

The size and equipment of the member castle's toilet facilities will be adapted to the number of visitors. Their location will be indicated by clear and appropriate signage.

Toilets will be cleaned and checked regularly. Checks will be indicated on a log sheet which is clearly displayed. Regular and adequate supplies of materials will be ensured, adapted to the number of visitors on the site.

11. Shop (if applicable)

The member castle's shop will be clearly and appropriately indicated. It will be pleasant, well maintained and adequately lit, allowing visitors to move around freely.

The shop will offer a diverse selection of products linked to the visitor experience as well as different varieties of products, prioritising quality and local production. Products will be available in sufficient quantities and presented in an attractive manner on appropriate, secured displays.

Prices, methods of payment, currencies accepted, exchange rates and taxes will be clearly displayed to visitors. The shop will provide a till receipt for all purchases. Visitors will be advised of the contact arrangements for all after-sales services.

Shop staff will welcome visitors courteously and be able to answer them in at least one national language plus English, or in two national languages. While providing swift service, they will comply with legal restrictions on the sale of certain products (sale of alcohol and dangerous products to minors).

Shop staff will wear clean, smart clothing that complies with any dress code drawn up by the member castle. While on duty, shop staff will be clearly recognisable by means of a uniform or badge.

12. Refreshment facilities (if applicable)

The member castle's refreshment facilities, which are available to the public during opening hours, will be a pleasant, well maintained and regularly cleaned area for visitors. Carefully lit and decorated, they will allow visitors to sit comfortably. Their location will be indicated by clear and appropriate signage. Wherever possible, the refreshment location should also be accessible to people with reduced mobility.

Circulation in the refreshment facilities is easy, in particular between tables, and the way in which the facilities operate table service or self-service will be clearly indicated. Chairs suitable for small children will be made available to visitors.

The refreshment facilities will provide visitors with a clear menu and/or menu board in at least one national language plus English, or in two national languages. The menu and/or board will present the products on offer clearly and in a sufficiently descriptive manner. The origin of meats and the presence of common allergenic products will be indicated.

Products will be prepared professionally and in accordance with Swiss quality and hygiene standards. In addition to typical dishes, the menu will include vegetarian and vegan options and meals for children. The drinks menu will include a number of competitively priced non-alcoholic beverages. The member castle's refreshment facilities will prioritise the use of local and seasonal products.

Prices, methods of payment, currencies accepted, exchange rates and taxes will be clearly displayed to visitors. Upon request, visitors will be advised of the complaint's procedure.

Refreshment facility staff will greet visitors courteously. They will be trained in and comply with safety and hygiene standards. Staff numbers in the refreshment facilities will reflect the number of users and ensure a fast, high-quality service.

Refreshment facility staff will wear clean, smart clothing that complies with any dress code drawn up by the member castle. While on duty, refreshment facility staff will be clearly identifiable by means of a uniform or badge.

13. Environmental protection

The member castle makes every effort to fulfil its mission while respecting the environment. The management of resources respects environmental protection laws and aims to reduce the harmful impact of its activities on nature. All activities in administration, reception, exhibitions, refreshment facilities maintenance/cleaning, garden and park maintenance will be carried out in a sustainable manner.

The member castle favours sustainable technologies as far as possible, while respecting the historic character of the castle. Facilities for disposal and recycling of waste will be provided for employees and guests.

Staff of the member castle will be made aware of environmental protection issues and comply with the measures put in place.