

Etablissement du Simplon - Switzerland

Introduction



Etablissement du Simplon, also referred to as "Simplon 43," is a detention facility situated in Lausanne, the fourth largest city in Switzerland. It was founded in April 2012. As a public institution, it is owned by the State Penitentiary Service (SPEN) of the canton of Vaud, which is located in the French-speaking region of the country. Administratively, Simplon is connected to the neighboring Bois Mermet prison. Etablissement du Simplon is mostly a halfway house but it also acts as a prison for a very limited number of residents.

The primary purpose of the Simplon facility, assigned by the SPEN, is to carry out custodial sentences in the form of semi-custodial and work release programs. The institution aims to achieve two specific objectives: Firstly, to prevent a complete disconnection from society and maintain professional integration for individuals serving semi-custodial sentences. Secondly, to facilitate the professional reintegration of convicted individuals through work release programs, following the principle of "work outside, free time in custody."

Scale

At opening, Etablissement du Simplon was initially accommodating 46 male residents in closed, opened or semi-opened regimes. The facility now houses 40 residents only, of which six places are for semi-open detention and 34 places for open regime. In addition, there are also two persons who carry out a sentence at Etablissement du Simplon. The facility falls only just above the recommended number of 30 to be considered small-scale.

RESCALED-principles in practice:

- Small scale
- Differentiated
- Community-integrated

Differentiation

Target group:

Etablissement du Simplon is a mixed facility, housing adult people above 24. People in detention up to the age of 24 who are first-time offenders are generally incarcerated in another establishment (specifically for young adults).

The Simplon facility accommodates four categories of residents. Firstly, there is semi-detention. These residents are allowed to continue their work, training or occupation outside the prison and spend their rest and leisure time in the detention facility. Secondly, they have an external work regime. For this, people in

detention need to have already served a part of their sentence. The resident will work outside the facility but spend their leisure and rest hours in the facility. Thirdly, Etablissement du Simplon has an external work and accommodation regime. If the resident is satisfied with external work, the sentence is continued in the form of external work and accommodation. The person in detention will live and work outside the facility, but remains subject to the enforcement authority. The ordinary regime is the last category of residents in the Simplon facility. This is dedicated to very short sentences where the person in detention works in the facility and spends their leisure and rest time in the facility.

Since Etablissement du Simplon does not have a medical service, individuals with pre-existing medical conditions are excluded. Additionally, individuals who require support with daily activities such as bathing or eating, those struggling with drug addiction or undergoing substitution treatment, and those who are unable to independently manage their medication are generally excluded as well.



Forms of security:

All types of security are combined at Etablissement du Simplon. However relational security is predominant allowing the staff to know each resident quite well. The philosophy of life at Simplon 43 is centered on empowerment and the establishment of a bond of trust. There are eighteen members of staff, most of them full-time, eleven of whom are guards, which means that residents can be closely and individually supervised especially with the support of a social worker dedicated to the institution.

In addition, Etablissement du Simplon has a few static security measures. The X-ray scanner attracts the most attention upon entering. They also have a few cameras. But besides these measures, static security is quite low. The building is not fenced and neither are the windows. Inside the building, the rooms are open during the day; at night, the rooms remain open, but the hallways leading to them are locked. The building itself remains locked with controlled access from both sides.

Finally, procedural security is also present. When checking in, each resident is given the keys to their room and is interviewed, a sanction implementation plan is imposed and regular follow-up reviews are held. Time schedules are regularly updated with the residents and cross-checked with employers or outside activities.

Activities:

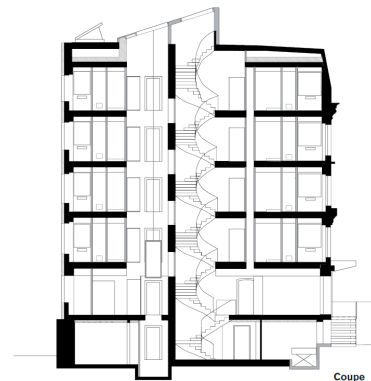
The residents are in charge of their own schedules and they have to make their appointments themselves. Few activities are offered at "Etablissement du Simplon" because most residents have to work. How much time a resident spends and what activities they do depends on the category they belong to. Residents with an ordinary regime are kept busy with housework and maintenance chores. Other residents work outside. Furthermore, the institution has recently been qualified to provide vocational training in cooking. Finally, the

institution has a small workshop where manual labour is done, such as making paper bags. Residents who are paid for their work are expected to help pay for accommodation costs.

Community-integration

Location and architecture:

Etablissement du Simplon is located in the city center of Lausanne, behind the central train station. Lausanne is located in the district of Vaud, Switzerland. It is the fourth largest city in Switzerland with a population of approximately 141 355 (2022).¹ The city is located near Lake Geneva. The neighbourhood of the facility combines housing, shops and offices like any standard urban district.



The facility consists of private bedrooms, although a few residents have to share a bedroom. There are

First impression of a visitor: "The building, bourgeois style, is located along a narrow street behind the main railway station. It is so close to the railway station that it can't really be noticed. Access to the entrance is possible by stairs after passing through a tiny garden. The entrance of the building itself is surprising. The lobby is stuffed with a welcome counter and a huge X-ray scanner which are both giving a kind of suffocating impression unbalanced by any specific homely decoration one would expect. The contrast between the exterior and interior is striking."

shared bathrooms, a shared living room, dining room, a lounge and garden. A sports room and laundry room are offered as well. The interior is nicely decorated, but there is no room for personal decoration. Residents are only allowed a small square on the wall next to their bed to stick pictures, drawings, notes or anything else.

Interaction with the community:

Before being an open detention house the building was an open place for refugees/foreigners seeking permits to stay in the country. It naturally became what it is today without any NIMBY conflict. In accordance with the highly developed democratic practices in Switzerland, everything possible was done at the time the project was launched to ensure its success. Both upstream and downstream, using the tools of Swiss democracy, the authorities are continually ensuring, as closely as possible to the citizens, that a broad consensus is maintained around the project. However, in practice, the institution poorly interacts with the community.

Etablissement du Simplon

Founded: 2012

Capacity: 40

Security level: Low - Medium - High

Nearest city/town: Lausanne
(Switzerland)

Nature of interaction: Visited by
FARAPEJ (02/09/2023)

¹Lausanne (District de Lausanne, Vaud, Switzerland) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map, Location, Weather and Web Information. (n.d.). City Population, retrieved June 26th, 2023, from https://www.citypopulation.de/en/switzerland/vaud/vaud/5586__lausanne/

Publicity/ read more

- About Etablissement du Simplon at the official website of the Prison and Probation Service in the district of Vaud:
Etablissement du Simplon. (n.d.). *État de Vaud*. Retrieved June 26th, 2023, from <https://www.vd.ch/themes/securite/service-penitentiaire/etablisements-penitentiaires/prison-du-bois-mermet/etablissement-du-simplon>
- A brochure about Etablissement du Simplon including pictures and floor plans of the building at the official website of the Prison and Probation Service in the district of Vaud:
Etablissement pénitentiaire Simplon 43 - Lausanne. (2012). *Canton de Vaud*. Retrieved June 27th, 2023, from https://www.vd.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/organisation/dinf/sipal/fichiers_pdf/94_Simplon_43.pdf