



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

Commission moves to boost social security rights for people migrating to and from the EU

Brussels, 30 March 2012 - In today's globalised labour market EU workers often spend part of their careers working outside the EU. In the same way, non-EU nationals make up around 4% of Member States' workforces. Yet, despite effective social security coordination system within the EU, there is a fragmented approach to social security coordination as regards the rest of the world. This is why the Commission is putting forward fresh ideas to clarify the social security rights of people migrating into and out of the EU. The aim is to ensure better protection of workers' rights, in particular acquired state pension rights.

"Increased globalisation of labour markets raises new questions about the social security rights of people moving in and out of the EU" said László Andor, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. He added: "Today's proposal aims to help EU nationals working abroad and to provide a clearer framework of rules for businesses and migrants from third countries" .

The policy communication stresses how migrants and businesses from third countries (who generally see the EU as a single entity) often face fragmented social security systems which create obstacles in terms of entering, moving within and leaving the EU. To address this difficulty, the Communication sets out how EU rules currently impact on the external dimension and gives clear guidance on the legal relationship between EU law and national bilateral agreements. It also suggests different ways to encourage cooperation between the Member States in the field of social security coordination with third countries and emphasises the need for strengthened Member State cooperation on bilateral social security agreements made with non-EU countries. In addition, the Communication calls for the development of a common EU approach. One concrete measure proposed is the possible conclusion of EU-level social security agreements with selected third countries.

As part of the package, the Commission has also proposed closer social security coordination with four countries: Albania, Montenegro, San Marino and Turkey. The proposed Council decisions would give both EU workers in these countries and Albanian, Montenegrin, San Marino and Turkish workers in the EU the right to equal treatment in defined areas of social security and to the full export of state pensions where the qualifying conditions have been met. The proposed decisions are based on obligations contained in existing EU Association Agreements with these four countries (in the case of San Marino it is based on a Customs and Cooperation Agreement) where there is a commitment to implement a set of limited social security coordination rules with EU Member States.

Background

In a globalised economic environment, labour mobility both within the EU and between the EU and the rest of the world is a growing reality and necessity. Social security coordination is a system of rules aimed at facilitating such mobility. The EU has had a system of social security coordination rules for mobility within the EU for over 50 years. More recently, these rules were extended to cover Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland

Social security coordination between the EU and the rest of the world is dealt with in two ways. On the one hand, there is the national approach, whereby Member States make bilateral agreements with selected third countries. This approach is patchy: there is an incomplete network of agreements, and agreements tend to have differing content from country to country.

On the other hand, a common EU approach to social security coordination with third countries is now developing.

The proposal for the EU position concerning social security coordination with Turkey is intended to replace and modernise the existing Decision 3/80 of the EEC-Turkey Association Council on social security coordination. The latter Decision has never been legislatively implemented, despite having been given partial effect as a result of judgments of the Court of Justice.

For more information

Communication on external dimension on social security coordination :

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7549&langId=en>

Website of DG EMPL on social security coordination:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=849>

Legislation on social security coordination :

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=867>

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