



IMPEU

Q&A Citizen Toolkit "Know Your Rights as a European citizen"



Improving Inclusion of EU Mobile Citizens



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Improving Inclusion of EU Mobile Citizens

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Introduction

The aim of the Toolkit for EU mobile citizens is to provide one-stop information to support the participation of EU mobile citizens in the political and social life of their host communities. It contains answers on the issues of key importance for EU citizens: travelling to and residing in another EU Member State, finding work and accessing benefits, knowing their consumer rights and participating in democratic life of their host countries.

The Toolkit provides also an advice on EU services which EU citizens can contact in case they experience obstacles to their EU citizens' rights. It also lists various resources available to mobile EU citizens at local level, which can facilitate EU mobile citizens integration in the local host community, such as free or low-priced language courses, cultural workshops, information points, etc.



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TRAVELLING

Travel documents

1. What documents do I need if I want to travel to another EU Member State?

In principle, you will not need to show any ID document to cross a border between Schengen countries.

Schengen countries are all the countries of the EU apart from Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland and Romania, plus the four non-EU countries Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. If you are traveling to or from a non-Schengen EU country, the police will ask you to present a valid ID card or a passport at the border.

Schengen countries can decide to suspend Schengen temporarily or to perform random identity checks at the border for security reasons. In this case, you may also be asked to present an ID card or passport at the border.

Nevertheless, mind that in most EU countries (maybe even yours) you are always supposed to carry a valid ID card or passport with you.

Finally, airlines are obliged to verify the identity of their passengers against an ID card or passport at boarding and luggage drop-off. This applies also to flights within the same country.

2. If I don't have a valid ID card or a passport, can I present my driving licence instead?

Your driving licence is not a valid ID document and it will not be accepted by airlines and at eventual border checks.

3. I live in another EU Member State. Can I use my residence card to travel to another country in the EU?

No, your residence card, even if called an ID card, cannot be used as a travel document. To cross internal EU borders, you need to present either your national ID card or a passport.

4. When I was on holidays in a non-EU country I lost my passport. My home country doesn't have an embassy or consulate in this country, and I don't know what to do to get an emergency travel document and be able to go back home.

If your country doesn't have a diplomatic representation in a third country, as an EU citizen, you have the right to be protected by the diplomatic or consular authorities of any EU Member State, on the same conditions as the nationals of that Member State. This is enshrined in article 46 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Therefore, you can contact a consulate or an embassy of any EU Member State and they should be able to help you.

5. I am travelling with my baby from one EU Member State to another. Does he/she need a travel document?

The same identification requirements described above (see question 1) apply to children. Member States may require additional documents, in particular if the child travels alone or without both parents. There are no EU rules on this matter, therefore, you should check with the authorities of the countries of origin, destination and transit. Mind also that airlines may



impose additional requirements for the identification and travel authorisation of minors and some have their own forms. Check with your airline before you go to the airport.

6. I am an EU citizen living in another Member State with my non-EU spouse. We would like to travel to another EU Member State. What document should my spouse present at the border?

According to EU rules, non-EU family members can benefit from the same rights as family members who are EU nationals. This means they can travel with you to another EU Member State. Your non-EU family members must always have a valid passport and may be also requested to show visa and/or residence document. It is however always advisable to contact the consulate or embassy of the country you are planning to go in order to know which documents your non-EU family member will be asked to present at the border.

Please check this EC website to know whether your non-EU family needs to get an entry visa before going with you to another EU Member State:
https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/entry-exit/non-eu-family/index_en.htm

Please bear in mind: If you have a residence card as an EU national family member and are travelling to another EU Member State without your EU family member, you must apply for a visa to enter that country.

Passenger rights

7. I am travelling to another EU Member State. My plane was cancelled. What are my rights?

In case of flight cancellation, you have the right to reimbursement, re-routing or return. You have also the right to compensation if you were informed about the cancellation less than 14 days prior to the scheduled departure date.

Please bear in mind: Compensation is not due if the airline can prove that the cancellation was caused by extraordinary circumstances which could not have been avoided even if all reasonable measures had been taken (e.g. weather conditions or strikes).

8. Yesterday I travelled to another EU Member State by plane and my flight was delayed for more than 3 hours. What are my rights?

If your flight is delayed at departure, you have the right to assistance, to reimbursement and a return flight, depending on the duration of the delay and the distance of the flight. If due to the delay you arrived at your final destination at least 3 hours later than expected, you are entitled to compensation.

Please bear in mind: Compensation is not due if the airline can prove that the delay was caused by extraordinary circumstances which could not have been avoided even if all reasonable measures had been taken (e.g. weather conditions).



9. My flight to another EU Member State was cancelled or delayed. How should I proceed to make sure that my rights are fully respected?

You should always send your complaint to the airline first. They have 2 months to provide you with their response. If they don't or if you are not satisfied with the reply, you can make a complaint with the relevant national authority. The list of all national contact authorities is available [here](#). You can also use the Alternative Dispute Resolution entity (ADR) or the Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform (if you bought your ticket online). Finally, you can go on a legal action and present a claim for compensation under EU rules using the European Small Claims procedure.

Please bear in mind: You can always contact your local European Consumer Centre for help and advice on problems related to air passenger rights.

If you want to know more on the above options, please check the following EC's website: https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/passenger-rights/air/index_en.htm

Travelling with animals

10. I am travelling to another EU Member State. Can I bring my dog with me?

You can freely travel with your dog if it has a European pet passport. Any authorised veterinarian will be able to provide you with such a document. To be able to travel with your pet, the European pet passport must show that the pet has been vaccinated against rabies and, if travelling to Finland, Ireland, Malta or the United Kingdom, also treated against the tapeworm *Echinococcus*. The passport must also bear the number of your pet's identification microchip

11. I would like to bring my parrot to another EU Member State. Is it allowed? How can I get an EU passport for it?

The EU pet passport is only available for dogs, cats and ferrets. Other animals are covered by national rules which you should check prior to departure in order to make sure you can bring your animal with you. You can find more information on national rules [here](#).

Healthcare and emergencies when traveling

12. I am travelling with my family to another EU Member State. What should we do in case one of us needs emergency medical treatment?

Before you leave, you need to make sure that you have your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). It is usually delivered by the social security institution in your home country. If you get sick or have an accident, you need to present your EHIC card to a doctor or a hospital affiliated to the public health sector in order to be covered by the social security in your home country. If you don't have the EHIC card, you can't be refused treatment, but you might have to pay for your treatment upfront and claim reimbursement once you get home.



Please bear in mind: The EHIC will not cover the rescue and repatriation costs. Before you leave, please consider whether you would need extra insurance for travel risks. In particular, the extra insurance cover would be advisable if you plan to practice action sports, e.g. skiing, scuba diving, mountain biking, parachuting, rafting, etc.

13. I need a medical treatment that is available in another EU Member State. Can I use my European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for this purpose?

You cannot rely on your EHIC if the reason for traveling abroad is to receive a treatment. You need a prior authorisation from a competent institution in your home country to access a specialised treatment abroad.

14. I am travelling to another EU Member State and I would like to know who to call in case of emergency. Is there a unique phone number I can use?

112 is the European emergency number you can use free of charge from fixed and mobile phones in any EU Member State. It will connect you to the emergency services – police, ambulance, fire fighters. Each Member State has also its own national emergency numbers, but it may be troublesome to learn them by heart every time you go to another EU Member State. Therefore, keep in mind 112 as a number you can use to access the emergency services in all EU countries.

Bringing goods from another EU Member State

15. I would like to bring several bottles of wine and liquor from another EU Member State? Is it allowed?

As a private individual you can bring alcohol or tobacco for your own use. The maximum amounts are as follows:

- 800 cigarettes
- 400 cigarillos
- 200 cigars
- 1 kg of tobacco
- 10 litres of spirits
- 20 litres of fortified wine
- 90 litres of wine (including a maximum of 60 litres of sparkling wines)
- 110 litres of beer

Those are the minimum limits, but each Member State has a right to establish higher limits if it wishes so.

Driving in another EU Member State

16. I am moving to another EU Member State. When driving there, can I use the driving licence which was issued by my home country?

If your licence was issued in one of the 28 EU Member States, Iceland, Lichtenstein or Norway, you can use it anywhere in the EU. Once your licence expires, you will have to renew it in the country where you reside (live there for at least 185 days in each calendar year because of



personal or work-related ties). Mind that if your driving licence has already expired, the authorities of your host country will not be able to renew it. Get in touch with them within a reasonable period of time before the expiry date to be sure everything goes smoothly.

17. I have recently moved to another EU Member State and brought my car with me. Can I keep it registered in my home country although I don't live there anymore?

No, you cannot, unless you plan to stay in your host country for less than six months. For periods above 6 months you are obliged to register your car in the country where you reside. However, there is an exception for students. If you move to another EU Member State to study (you are enrolled in an educational establishment and possess a valid enrolment certificate), you can drive your car without having to register it in your host country. Once you start working during your studies, you will have to register your car in that country.



FINDING A JOB AND SETTLING DOWN

18. I would like to move to another EU Member State to look for a job. What practical things do I need to consider beforehand?

Every EU citizen has a right to move to another country to look for a job. Jobseekers cannot be expelled if they prove that they are continuing to seek employment and have a genuine chance of finding a job. To fully enjoy your experience abroad, it is best to be prepared and informed about several things, e.g. the local tax and social security systems, work culture, average salary for the job position you have in mind, etc. You shouldn't also underestimate the importance of having at least the basics of the official language of the host country, as this might be useful when looking for work or settling down.

Some practical information on a number of important issues, such as finding accommodation, finding a school, taxes, cost of living, health, social legislation, comparability of qualifications, etc. can be found in the "Living and Working" database on the [EURES website](#).

19. Where can I look for work in another EU Member State?

There are numerous places and websites which provide you with the information on job opportunities. One of the most known is [EURES](#), which has an extensive list of job openings in the whole EU and in the EEA countries.

Before leaving, you can also visit your local or regional employment office for advice. They may provide you with information on job opportunities available abroad. In each Member State you will find numerous private agencies specialised in finding temporary work abroad. In both your home and host country, you will also find many private recruitment agencies which can include you in their database and suggest different work opportunities.

Finally, in each Member State, you will find various websites listing most recent job opportunities. Please see below examples of those websites in Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Spain:

- Belgium:
 - <https://emplois.be.indeed.com/Emplois-Belgique>
 - <https://be.jooble.org/>
 - <http://jobs.euractiv.com/>
- Bulgaria:
 - <https://www.jobs.bg/>
- Greece
 - <https://www.jobfind.gr/>
 - <https://gr.indeed.com/>
 - <https://www.europelanguagejobs.com/jobs-in-Greece>
 - <https://www.kariera.gr/>



-
- <https://gr.linkedin.com/jobs>
 - <https://www.adecco.gr/>
 - Italy:
 - This link helps to find the addresses of all employment centers and agencies for work in Italy: <https://www.anpal.gov.it/cerca-sportello>
 - <https://it.indeed.com/>
 - <https://www.infojobs.it/>
 - Spain
 - <https://www.infoempleo.com/>
 - <https://www.infojobs.net/>
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/>
 - <https://www.sistemanacionalempleo.es/OfertaDifusionWEB/busquedaOfertas.do?modo=inicio>

20. I don't speak the language of the country I would like to move to. What are my options?

It is recommended to have at least the basics of the official language, as this would significantly improve your chances of getting a job and facilitate the whole process of settling down (getting your residence documents, opening a bank account, finding a flat).

It is of course not impossible to move abroad without knowing the language of the country, especially to the countries where English is commonly spoken in addition to the official language, for instance in Belgium or Germany.

Once you are in the host country, there may be several opportunities to improve your language skills. Local municipalities may offer free or cheap courses, there are also opportunities online. Your local employment agency should be also able to provide you with advice in this regard and perhaps even subsidize your language course (especially if you are registered as a job seeker).

- In Belgium, you may have a look at the following websites to see where to learn French and/or Dutch:
 - <https://www.epfc.eu/>
 - <https://www.actiris.brussels/fr/citoyens/brulngua-l-ecole-de-langues-digitale/>
 - <https://www.actiris.brussels/fr/citoyens/apprendre-une-langue/>
 - <https://www.huisnederlandsbrussel.be/en/learn-practise>
- In Bulgaria, you may have a look at the following websites to see where to learn Bulgarian:
 - <https://fabrika-avtonomia.org/free-bulgarian-lessons/>
- In Greece, you may have a look at the following websites to see where to learn Greek:



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- Duolingo: <https://www.duolingo.com/course/el/en/%CE%9C%CE%AC%CE%B8%CE%B5-%CE%95%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B7%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AC>
 - greekpod101: <https://www.greekpod101.com/>
 - Filoglwsia: <http://www.xanthi.ilsp.gr/filog/default.htm>
 - Locten:
<https://www.loecten.com/el/%CE%B5%CE%BA%CE%BC%CE%AC%CE%B8%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%B7-%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B7%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AC>
 - Hellenic American Union: <https://www.hau.gr/?i=learning.el.podcasts>
 - Portal for the Greek language: <https://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/index.html>
 - The Centre for the Greek Language has been operating since 1994. It is a research institute situated in Thessaloniki. The Centre is administered and financed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. More information: <https://greeklanguage.gr/en/?v=f214a7d42e0d> .
- In Italy, you may have a look at the following websites to see where to learn Italian:
 - The Provincial Centers of Adult Education (CPIA) - Centri Provinciali di Istruzione per gli Adulti. They offer free literacy and learning courses of the Italian language, which are part of the Adult Education system and also include elements concerning active citizenship. The list of CPIAs can be consulted at: <https://cercalatuascuola.istruzione.it/cercalatuascuola/>
 - The information about the free courses of Italian language for foreigners can be also found on the websites of single Italian Municipalities.
 - In Spain, you may have a look at the following websites to see where to learn Spanish:
 - <https://eee.cervantes.es/es/index.asp>



RESIDENCE

21. I am moving to another EU Member State for a two-month student exchange programme. Do I need to report my presence to anyone in the host country?

During the first 3 months of your stay, your host country cannot require you to register your residence. However, you can do so if you wish. You will be asked to present the following documents:

- proof of enrolment at an approved educational establishment
- proof of comprehensive health insurance
- declaration that you have sufficient resources to support yourself during your stay abroad

22. I moved to another EU Member State to look for a job 3 months ago. I am still looking but recently a police officer told me to register my residence at the town hall and to prove I have sufficient financial resources. Is it necessary?

As a jobseeker, you don't need to register as a resident for the first 6 months. However, some EU countries may require you to report your presence to the relevant authorities, usually a town hall or a police station, within a reasonable period after arrival. All you need to report your presence as an EU national is your identity card or passport, no other documents should be required.

23. I lost my job in my home country and I would like to try my chances in another EU Member State. I am currently receiving unemployment benefits. Can I continue receiving them once I leave?

Yes, you can continue receiving your unemployment benefit for at least 3 months from the EU Member State where you were last working - and up to a maximum of 6 months, depending on the country paying your benefits. Please remember that you need to be registered as an unemployed jobseeker with the employment services in your home country for at least 4 weeks. Before you leave, remember to request a U2 form from the unemployment services in your country. This document is an authorization to export your unemployment benefits. Upon arrival in your host country, please follow these steps:

- register as a jobseeker with the employment services in your host country within 7 days from the date on which you ceased to be available to the employment services in the country you left
- submit your U2 form when you register

Be aware that employment services in your host country can undertake checks on the progress of your job search as if you were receiving unemployment benefits from them. Remember to inform yourself on your rights and duties as a job seeker in the host country.



24. I am doing a one-year university exchange programme abroad. After 6 months of stay I wanted to register as a resident, but my local town hall requires that I present proof of having 10 000 euro on my bank account. Are they allowed to ask for that?

As a student, you have the right to live in an EU Member State where you are studying for the duration of your studies if you:

- are enrolled in an approved educational establishment
- have sufficient financial resources
- have comprehensive health insurance cover there.

Member States have, however, no right to fix the amount of resources that they consider "sufficient". They should consider your personal situation. However, you satisfy this condition if the resources you possess are higher than the threshold below which the nationals of the host country become eligible for social assistance, or higher than the minimum social security pension paid by that country. For students it is usually enough to make a simple declaration stating that you have sufficient resources not to become a burden on the host social assistance scheme.

25. I moved to another Member State for work. Can my non-EU spouse join me here?

Yes, EU citizens have the right to be accompanied or joined there by their family members, even if they are not EU citizens.

26. We are a same-sex couple who would like to move to another EU Member State. I am an EU citizen, while my spouse comes from a third country. We have recently found out that the country we are moving to does not recognise same-sex marriages. Will my spouse be able to join me anyway?

If you are in a same-sex marriage and you move to another EU Member State, your host country must recognise yours and your non-EU spouse's residence rights. This rule applies even if same-sex marriages are not recognised in the host country.

27. My non-EU spouse would like to live with me in my home country. Can she/he join me following EU rules?

No, if she wants to join you in your country of origin and you haven't lived together in another EU Member State before, only national rules will apply to your situation.

28. My spouse and I are planning to spend our retirement years in another EU Member State. Are there any conditions we need to satisfy in order to register as residents?

Yes, as economically inactive EU citizens, you need to prove that you have comprehensive health insurance cover in your host country, and you possess sufficient resources to live there without needing income support.

29. I have been living in my host country for 5 years. I wanted to apply for permanent residence, but the national authorities requested me to prove that I am employed and have sufficient resources. Can they do that?



No. After 5 years' continuous legal residence, you automatically have the right to permanent residence. Your host country can verify the continuity of your residence, but it should not ask you for a proof of employment or sufficient resources.

30. I have been living in my host country for 5 years. In the second year of my stay, I left for a two-month holiday. Does this break affect my right to permanent residence?

No, the continuity of your residence in your host country is not affected by temporary absences not exceeding a total of 6 months per year. Longer absences of up to one year do not affect the continuity of your residence if they are justified by compulsory military service or for important reasons such as pregnancy and childbirth, serious illness, work, vocational training or a posting to another country.



FAMILY BENEFITS

31. I am working in a host Member State, while my spouse, who does not work, and my kids remained in our home country. Where should I claim child benefits?

If family members do not live in the same Member State, they could be entitled to family benefits from different countries. In principle, the primary country responsible for providing the benefits is the country where your family's right is based on work. As you are the only family member working, it would be therefore your host country to be responsible for the payment of family benefits.

32. I am working in another EU Member State, while my spouse, who is also employed, and my kids remained in our home country. Where should I claim child benefits?

If family members do not live in the same Member State, they could be entitled to family benefits from different countries. In principle, the primary country responsible for providing the benefits is the country where your family's right is based on work. If both parents work, as it is in your case, then the country where your children live is responsible for the payment of the benefits. In your case, it should be therefore your home country to pay. If the benefits in your home country are lower than in your host country, then the difference should be paid by the secondary country (host country in your case) to make sure you receive the maximum amount to which you are entitled.



OLD-AGE PENSIONS

33. I have been living and working in another EU Member State for several years. I am coming back to my home country. Can I somehow recuperate the contributions I paid for my future pension?

You cannot recuperate the contributions paid, but you will not lose them. Once you reach the retirement age, you will get a separate pension from each EU Member State where you have worked or contributed.

34. I have worked in several EU Member States, but I haven't kept all my payslips. Is there an institution which keeps track of my employment records for the purposes of my future pension?

In each Member State there is a social security institution responsible for keeping track of your records and contributions. Once you reach the retirement age, you should make the pension claim in the country of your residence, while the competent institution will liaise with the institutions in the other countries where you worked and establish a portable document 'P1', which will give you an overview of the decisions made by each country on your pension claim.

35. I have recently retired in my home country and would like to spend my retirement years in another EU Member State. Will I continue receiving my pension?

Yes, the pension from your home country will be paid to you regardless of the place of your residence without any reduction, modification or suspension.



CONSUMER RIGHTS

36. I bought a phone online 20 months ago. The phone stopped working, but the seller says that my warranty expired after the first 12 months. Is he right?

No, in the EU, you always have the right to a 2-year guarantee free of charge. The shop or the retailer can offer a longer period of guarantee, but it can never be shorter than 2 years.

37. I bought a PC in an online shop 30 months ago. The computer broke recently. Do I have the right to a guarantee?

Under the EU rules your right to guarantee expired after two years. However, it is always worth contacting the seller or checking the national rules, as some shops and/or countries can offer longer legal guarantees.

38. My phone, which I bought online, broke before the guarantee expired. Under EU rules, can I ask immediately for a refund?

The retailer should give you the choice between having the product repaired or replaced. Only in case both solutions are not feasible (e.g. it would be too costly to repair, the product is not available anymore on the market, etc.), then you can ask to be refunded.

39. I bought a laptop from an online retailer located in another EU Member State. After it arrived, I found out it was broken. I tried to contact the seller, but he doesn't want to take responsibility. What should I do?

You can contact a European Consumer Centre in your country. They will tell you what your consumer rights are and advise you on how to proceed with the problematic seller. The list of the European Consumer Centres is available [here](#).



POLITICAL RIGHTS

40. I would like to vote in the local elections in my host country, but I have no idea of the local political system. Where is it best to look for a reliable information?

It is true that it may be difficult to understand the political structure of your host country, especially if you move from a unitary (centralised) state, such as Poland or Latvia, to a federal state, such as Belgium or Germany.

It is however smart to look for this information, as it also may help you understand the relevance of voting in the local elections. For example, in Belgium, important issues are decided at local level, including maintenance of road infrastructure and social welfare.

- More information on the political system of Belgium:
 - <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/Pages/Belgium-Introduction.aspx>
 - <https://www.flemishparliament.eu/about-the-flemish-parliament/what-are-the-devolved-competences-the-flemish-parliament>
- More information on the political system of Bulgaria:
 - <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=8625&acro=living&lang=bg&parentId=7803&countryId=BG&living=>
 - https://egov.bg/wps/portal/egov/home!/ut/p/z1/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfijo8ziPQItHA39LYy8_c2cnQ0cfX2CzYL9vAwNLEz0wwkpiAJKG-AAjgZA_VFgJXATLAzdDMAmuDoFuxgZuJpBFeAxoyA3wiDTUVERAA8o_6Y!/dz/d5/L2dBISevZ0FBIS9nQSEh/
- More information on the political system of Greece:
 - <https://www.mfa.gr/missionsabroad/en/about-greece/government-and-politics/>
 - <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/To-Politevma/Syntagmatiki-Istoria/>
 - <https://vouliwatch.gr/constitution>
 - <https://www.greeka.com/about-greece/politics/>,
<https://www.mfa.gr/missionsabroad/en/about-greece/government-and-politics/local-government.html>

Results of the elections: <https://ekloges.ypes.gr/>

- Useful information about the parliamentary elections: :
<https://www.ypes.gr/eimai-psifoforos/>
<http://eklogesapps.ypes.gr/eea/eea/eea.htm>
- More information on the political system of Italy:
 - <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/Pages/Italy-Introduction.aspx>
 - <https://www.thelocal.it/20170518/italys-political-system-key-things-to-know>



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- <https://www.tuttitalia.it/>
 - More information on the political system of Spain:
 - https://administracion.gob.es/pag_Home/espanaAdmon/comoSeOrganizaEstado/Sistema_Politico.html#.YBkYhuhKjIU
 - https://administracion.gob.es/pag_Home/espanaAdmon/comoSeOrganizaEstado/EntidadesLocales.html#.YBkYmehKjIU

41. I have been living in another EU Member State. I would like to vote in the EU elections. Do I need to come back to my home country to vote?

No, EU citizens can choose whether to vote in their home or in their host country. If you decide to vote in your host country, you will have to register on the electoral roll. Please check the deadlines for the registration procedures, as they tend to close well in advance of the elections.

42. I would like to vote in the European elections from my host country. Can I choose whether to vote for the candidates from my home or host country?

Yes, you can choose whether to vote for candidates in your host country (by registering on the roll in your host municipality) or home country (in this case you should check if you are still registered to vote in your home country or if you need to re-register). Different EU countries provide different options for their citizens living abroad: postal voting, voting from an embassy or a consulate.

43. Do I have the right to vote in the local elections in my host country?

Yes, any EU citizen who is not a national of the EU Member State in which they live has the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections in that country under the same conditions as the nationals of that country. In order to participate, you will have to apply to be put on the electoral roll, as registration is automatic only in 13 EU countries, e.g. Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary¹.

44. I have just learnt that voting is compulsory in my host country. Will I be obliged to vote if I register on the roll for the local elections or the obligation is valid only for the nationals of that country?

If voting in local elections is compulsory in your host country and, following registration, you were included on the electoral roll of that country, you will have to vote. Voting is compulsory in Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, and Luxembourg.

Please bear in mind: Obligation to vote may discourage many mobile EU citizens from registering for the local elections. However, in some countries, e.g. Belgium, if you are not able to vote, you can designate a proxy, who will vote on your behalf.

¹ https://faireu.ecas.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/FAIREU_Synthesis-Report-1.pdf (access on 17 Dec. 19)



45. I wanted to vote in the local elections in my host country, but I was told by a public official that I need to be a resident of this country for more than five years in order to be eligible. Is he right?

He is right if you are currently living in Luxembourg. Special rules can apply in those EU countries, where non-nationals make up more than 20 % of the total electorate. In such cases, the host country can require an additional period of residence before allowing you to participate in municipal elections. Today the only such country is Luxembourg, which requires mobile EU citizens to be resident for more than 5 years before giving them the right to vote.

46. I would like to know how to register to vote in the local elections in my country. Whom should I contact?

You will receive most up to date information on deadlines if you contact your local municipality. The European Commission has also a dedicated website on voting in local elections, where you can select your country of residence to know more about the procedures. The website is available [here](#).

47. I would like to stand as a candidate in the local elections in my host country. Am I allowed to become a mayor?

Any EU citizen who is not a national of the EU Member State in which they live has the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections in that country under the same conditions as the nationals of that country. However, some Member States allow only their nationals to become mayors. This is the case for Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovenia.

48. I have been living abroad in another EU Member State for several years. My home country is having national elections this year. Am I allowed to vote?

There are no EU rules on your rights to participate in your home country's elections if you live abroad. Each country is free to decide whether and how you can vote from abroad. You should contact your embassy or consulate in your country of residence to get more information on your rights.



WHEN THINGS GO WRONG AND WHERE TO LOOK FOR ADVICE

49. My spouse, who is a non-EU national, would like to join me in my host country, where I have been living for 5 years. Is she/he allowed to join me? Is there any EU service which I could contact to know our rights?

If you have a question regarding your EU rights or the rights of your family members, you can contact Your Europe Advice. It is a free advice service consisting of a team of legal experts who can provide advice in all official EU languages. You can submit your question by clicking on the following [link](#).

50. I have a problem with public authorities in my host country. My non-EU spouse applied for a residence document almost a year ago but hasn't received any answer so far. We were supposed to travel together but she cannot join me without the required documents. Whom should I contact in this case?

If the authorities are failing to comply with their obligations under EU law, SOLVIT might be able to assist. SOLVIT can help if you are facing difficulties with residence rights, getting professional qualifications recognised, obtaining health insurance and so on. You can use SOLVIT for free, and their website can be found [here](#).

51. I am looking for some information on the funding opportunities available for SMEs. The information I found online seems incomplete and I have a few more concrete questions. Is there an EU service I can contact?

You can contact the Europe Direct Contact Centre which answers any question from the public about the European Union, via phone or email, free of charge. You can contact Europe Direct anywhere in the EU, for free at 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 or submit your question [online](#).

52. I believe that my country is breaching EU law. Can I contact the European Commission directly?

You can contact the European Commission about any measure (law, regulation or administrative action) or practice of your country that you believe is against Union law. To submit a complaint, please follow the steps on this [website](#).

53. I believe my complaint to the European Commission hasn't been handled properly. I have also been treated in a very unprofessional way by a civil servant from the European Commission. Is there a specific EU body which could help me?

You can submit a complaint to the European Ombudsman. It is an independent and impartial body that holds the EU's institutions and agencies to account and promotes good administration. To make a complaint, please follow this [link](#).



TRAVELLING IN THE TIMES OF COVID-19

54. Can I move with my family to another EU Member State during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Given the dynamics of the pandemic and the fact that the situation changes on a daily basis, it is difficult to answer this question. Depending on the country you want to move to, there may be certain restrictions, which you should check beforehand.

Non-essential travel is discouraged during the pandemic in the majority of the EU Member States. If you however decide to travel, a negative test prior to the entry or a quarantine (between 7-14 days) upon arrival may be required by the authorities. However, just recently, Belgium has introduced a ban on non-essential travel until 1 March.

Therefore, it is important to check the most recent measures before leaving your country. The European Commission has created a website Re-open EU with an overview of the health situation in European countries, based on data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). It is frequently updated and available in 24 languages: <https://reopen.europa.eu/en/>

More information on the situation and measures in:

- Belgium: <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en>
- Bulgaria: <https://coronavirus.bg>
- Greece: <https://eody.gov.gr/>
<https://covid19.gov.gr/covid19-live-analytics/>
<https://www.moh.gov.gr/>
- Italy: <http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/nuovocoronavirus/homeNuovoCoronavirus.jsp?lingua=english>
- Spain: <https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov/situacionActual.htm>



SERVICES AND OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO MOBILE EU CITIZENS AT LOCAL LEVEL

Belgium, Brussels

- **Project APPROACH** run by Etterbeek municipality aimed at improving social and political inclusion of mobile EU citizens at local level. It provides information on voting system, school enrolment, civic engagement and social life: <https://etterbeek.project-approach.eu/>
- **Centres for adult and continuous learning** offering cheap French and Dutch language courses (other languages are also available):
 - <https://www.gltt.be/en/courses/language-courses>
 - <https://www.cvosemper.be/en/languages/french>
 - <https://www.huisnederlandsbrussel.be/en/learn-practise/praktisch>
 - <https://www.epfc.eu/>
- **Expat Info Dask** offering a personalised administrative assistance service to all those who come to work in Brussels in or around the European and international institutions: <http://www.commissioner.brussels/i-am-an-expat>
- **Europe Direct Brussels** is an information and documentation center on the European Union allowing direct contact between the European Union and the citizens of the Brussels-Capital Region: <https://visit.brussels/fr/sites/europedirect/#>

Bulgaria

- **Europe Direct Bulgaria** is an information and documentation center on the European Union allowing direct contact between the European Union and the citizens of all Bulgarian Regions: https://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/services/contact-points_bg
- **Ministry of Interior** - Migration Directorate in charge of issuing documents: Long-Term and Permanent Residence in Bulgaria for EU Citizens and Their Family Members. Long-Term Residence Permit provide support and information via their INFORMATION CENTRE. INFORMATION ABOUT FOREIGNERS AND EU CITIZENS: <https://www.mvr.bg/migration/Citizens-of-EU>
- **Regional information centres** on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria provide a variety of information, services and support to the citizens of the country as well as to the temporary residents of the respective territory. INFORMATION CENTRE <http://archive.eufunds.bg/bg/page/784>

Italy

- Europe Direct Information Centres (EDICs)
https://ec.europa.eu/italy/services/contact-points_it



- **"MyEU. Portal for young people on the move to promote active citizenship in the European Union"**. The Portal provides information to young people (18-35 years old) who live, study, work abroad or intend to do so:

<https://www.myeuportal.eu/it/sul-progetto-myeu>

- **Italiano.rai.it** - the portal of the Italian language created by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) and Rai Educational to help foreigners learn Italian as a second language (L2), as well as to understand the various aspects of civil life and to get closer to the principles of the Constitution:
<http://www.italiano.rai.it/livello/livello-a1/487/default.aspx>

Greece

- The **Ministry of Citizen protection**: provides information about the residence requirements that apply for the EU mobile citizens and their families. More information can be found on:
<http://www.immigration.gov.gr/web/guest/immigration> .
- **Citizen Service Centres (KEP)**: They are one-stop-shops for several administrative formalities and citizens can be informed about all issues of Public Administration. More information available at Ermis.Gov which has a list of local Citizen Service Centres (KEP):
<http://www.ermis.gov.gr/portal/page/portal/ermis/KepIndex>.
- **Lifelong Learning Centres at Municipalities of the regions of Central Greece and South Aegean**: Lifelong Learning Centres (K.Δ.Β.Μ.) can be established and function at Municipalities of the regions of Central Greece and South Aegean upon request, in which educational programmes of General Adult Education, as well as activities at National and Local Level will be implemented. More information:
<https://www.inedivim.gr/en/programmes-actions/lifelong-learning-centres-municipalities-regions-central-greece-and-south-aegean> .
- **Citizens Helpline**: There is also a Citizens Helpline, which can provide information on all the documents required for the procedures above, as well as information on the municipal parking system, parking permits, local elections and anything related to services provided by the City of Athens. (Tel: 1595 (Monday to Sunday from 07:00-23:00) More details on the Citizens Helpline can be found on the City of Athens website,
<https://www.cityofathens.gr/en/serving-citizens/citizens-helpline>.
The City of Athens regularly runs Greek-language learning programmes for adult migrants, as knowledge of the language is a basic need as evidenced in contacts with migrant community representatives. (<https://www.cityofathens.gr/en/educational-programmes-0>)
- **Gefyres** means Bridges and it is the name of the group of volunteers teaching greek as a foreign language for free to adults, refugees and migrants. Detailed information are available at: <https://www.accmr.gr/en/services/service/1360.html> .Lessons of greek history and culture are also provided.
- **EDIC (Europe Direct Information Centre)**: Europe Direct Information Centres are information and documentation centres on the European Union allowing direct contact



between the European Union and the citizens of Greece. The following EDICs operate in Greece:

1. Europe Direct ELIAMEP (upon appointment)
Address: 49, Vas. Sofias Ave. 10676 Athens Greece, Email: europa.direct@eliamep.gr, Tel: +30 210 7257110, Website: <https://www.europedirectELIAMEP.gr>
2. Europe Direct Lamia (upon appointment)
Address: Fleming & Erithrou Stavrou street 35131 Lamia Greece, Email: ipelamia@otenet.gr, Tel: +30 2231 351500, Website: <http://www.europedirectlamias.eu/>
3. Europe Direct North Aegean (upon appointment)
Address: University hill 81100 Mitilini Greece, Email: europedirect@soc.aegean.gr, Tel: +30 22510 36521-2, Website: <http://www.europedirect-northaegean.gr/>
4. Europe Direct University of Piraeus (upon appointment)
Address: 126 Grigoriou Labraki street 18532 Piraeus Greece, Email: devlabunipi@gmail.com, Tel: +30 210 4142490, Website: <http://europedirect.unipi.gr/>
5. Europe Direct Nafplio (upon appointment)
Address: 34 Vas. Konstantinou Av. 21100 Nafplio Greece, Email: andronikitz@gmail.com, Tel: +30 6977307864, Website: <https://europedirectnafplio.gr/>
6. Europe Direct Western Macedonia (upon appointment)
Address: 7is Noemvriou str, No 9 53100 Florina Greece, Email: info@europedirect-oenef.eu, Tel: +30 23851014 46, Website: <https://www.europedirect-oenef.eu/>
7. Europe Direct Community Enterprise of Thessaloniki Municipality (upon appointment)
Address: 1 Vas Georgiou A av Building E 54640 Thessaloniki Greece, Email: europa-direct@kedith.gr, Tel: +30 2313 317353
8. Europe Direct Central Macedonia (upon appointment)
Address: 54 Marinou Antypa street 57001 Thessaloniki Greece, Email: europedirect@afs.edu.gr, Tel: +30 2310 492853, Website: <https://www.afs.edu.gr/%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%86%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BF-%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%81%CF%89%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%8A%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82-%CF%80%CE%BB%CE%B7%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%86%CF%8C%CF%81%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%B7%CF%82-europe-direct/>
9. Europe Direct Crete (upon appointment)
Address: Region of Crete Eleftherias square 1 71201 Heraklion/Crete Greece, Email: europedirect@crete.gov.gr, Tel: +30 2813 336330, Website: <https://www.europedirect-crete.gr/>
10. Europe Direct Komotini (upon appointment)
Address: 15 N. Tsanakli street 69132 Komotini Greece, Email: info@europedirectkomotini.eu, Tel: + 302531082051-55, Website: <http://europedirectkomotini.eu/>
11. Europe Direct City of Athens (upon appointment)
Address: Serafeio, Peiraos & Petrou Ralli 11854 Athens Greece, Email: europedirect@athens.gr, Tel: +30 210 3450393, Website: <http://europedirect-cityofathens.gr/>
12. Europe Direct Dodecanese (upon appointment)



Address: 72 28th October street 85131 Rhodes Greece, Email: europedirect@ando.gr

Tel: +30 22410 75323, Website: <http://www.ando.gr/europedirect/home>

13. Europe Direct Xanthi (upon appointment)

Address: 12 Vas. Sofias 67100 Xanthi Greece, Email: europedirect@duth.gr, Tel: +30 2541 079115

14. Europe Direct Region of Thessaly (upon appointment)

Address: Papanastasiou & Koumoudourou 41110 Larissa Greece, Email: europedirect@thessaly.gov.gr, Tel: +30 2413 506315

15. Europe Direct Patra (upon appointment)

Address: 32, N.E.O PATRON - ATHINON & Amerikis Street 26441 Patra Greece, Email: info@edic.pde.gov.gr, Tel: +30 2613 613645-646, Website: <http://europedirect.pde.gov.gr/gr/>

16. Europe Direct Xalkidiki

Address: KASSANDRIA-SIVIRIS, 63077, KASSANDRIA, Chalkidiki, Email: eu.direct_halkidiki@business-mentality.com, Tel: +30 2311 221517, Website: <http://www.europedirect-halkidiki.eu/>

17. Europe Direct Nafplio

Address: 20 Siggrou street 21100 Nafplio, Email: europedirect@ptapel.gr, Tel: +30 27523 62141, Website: <http://www.europedirectnafplio.gr>

- Some interesting information are also available under the following hyperlink: <http://livinggreece.gr/2007/05/13/free-greek-language-lessons/> .

Spain

- **Ministry of Interior** – the Ministry of Interior offers information about the conditions for the exercise of the rights of entry and exit, free movement, stay, residence, permanent residence and work in Spain by citizens of other Member States of the European Union: <http://www.interior.gob.es/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/extranjeria/ciudadanos-de-la-union-europea>
- **Ministry of Work, Migration and Social Security** – Through the Foreigners' Portal, the Ministry provides information about the administrative procedures to study, live and work in Spain for European mobile citizens. The Portal also provides application form, information sheets, the location of the Foreigner's Office and other useful information: <http://extranjeros.mitramiss.gob.es/es/informacioninteres/informacionprocedimientos/ciudadanoscomunitarios/index.html>
- **Directorate-General of the Police.** The Police also offers information about administrative procedures and the requirements for short-term and long-term residence in Spain for citizens of the European Union: https://www.policia.es/documentacion/comunitarios/est_resid.html
- **Europe Direct Spain** is an information and documentation center on the European Union allowing direct contact between the European Union and the citizens of Spain, there are several offices throughout the Spanish territory: https://ec.europa.eu/spain/services/contact-points_es



Legal reference

- Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States amending Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 and repealing Directives 64/221/EEC, 68/360/EEC, 72/194/EEC, 73/148/EEC, 75/34/EEC, 75/35/EEC, 90/364/EEC, 90/365/EEC and 93/96/EEC
- Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems
- Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on consumer rights, amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC and Directive 1999/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directive 85/577/EEC and Directive 97/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council
- Council Directive 94/80/EC of 19 December 1994 laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections by citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals
- Council Directive 94/80/EC of 19 December 1994 laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections by citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals
- Council Directive 93/109/EC of 6 December 1993 laying down detailed arrangements for the exercise of the right to vote and stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament for citizens of the Union residing in a Member State of which they are not nationals