



European  
Commission

# Commission actions in the field of EU citizenship 2013-2016

Factsheet January 2017

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Here are examples of measures taken by the EU to help European citizens fully enjoy their EU rights and facilitate their lives.

## *Cutting red tape on citizens' public documents*



In July 2016, the EU adopted legislation that will cut costs and formalities for citizens who need to present a public document in another EU country. Member States have to put in place these measures before December 2018.

Currently, citizens moving to or living in another EU country often have to obtain a stamp to prove that their public documents (such as a birth, marriage or death certificate) are authentic. Under the new regulation, this stamp and the bureaucratic procedures linked to it will no longer be required when presenting public documents issued in one EU country to the authorities of another EU country.

For more information, [see factsheet](#).

## **Facilitating free movement**

### *Simplifying cross-border inheritance*

450 000 cross-border successions take place in the EU every year. These successions represent a considerable value, estimated at more than EUR 120 billion. Cross-border successions are complex, as succession law varies considerably from one EU country to another.

New European Union rules will make it easier for citizens to handle the legal side of an international succession. These rules are applicable as of 17 August 2015. Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom do not participate in the Regulation.

For more information, [see here](#).



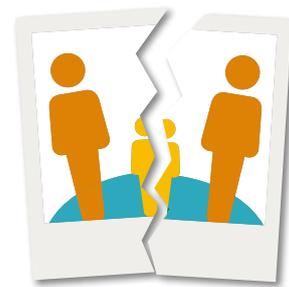
### Child protection in cross-border family proceedings

Cross-border disputes on family matters have increased in the EU in line with the rising number of international families (16 million). The number of international divorces now reaches some 140,000 per year in the EU.

Since March 2005, the [Brussels IIa Regulation](#) facilitates EU judicial cooperation in matrimonial matters and matters of parental responsibility, including custody, access rights and child abduction. It serves to settle conflicts of jurisdiction between Member States and facilitates the free circulation of judgments in the EU by laying down provisions on their recognition and enforcement in another Member State.

In June 2016, the European Commission proposed revised rules to speed up the legal and administrative proceedings and ensure that the child's best interest is always taken into account.

For more information, see [press release](#).



### Right to protection by diplomatic and consular authorities



When living or travelling outside the EU, you might sometimes need help from your embassy or consulate, e.g. in case you have lost all your belongings or have been victim of a crime.

But what happens if your country has no diplomatic or consular representation in the country where you are?

Under EU law, as an “unrepresented EU citizen”, you're entitled to help from any other EU Member State's embassy or consulate - under the same conditions as this EU country helps its own nationals.

Find [out here](#), which embassy or consulate can help you when travelling abroad.

### Simplifying job search for citizens in another EU country

EU social security coordination rules protect citizens' social security rights when they move to another Member State. The Commission proposed on 13 December 2016 a revision of the social security coordination regulations to ensure that these rules continue being fit-for-purpose, clear and fair and contribute to create a deeper, better functioning and fairer European labour market.

To support young EU citizens entering the labour market, the Commission launched the 'Your first EURES job' website to help people aged 18–35 from the European Economic Area in their search for a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in another country. It also helps employers find candidates in another EU country to fill their vacancies.

Find a job or candidate [here](#).



## Facilitating the settling of disputes for purchases made in another EU country

Bought a new flat screen and never got it? Or did you pay your supplier abroad and he delivered a faulty product? Don't worry, there is a cheap way to claim your money back. As of July 2017, consumers and small businesses will benefit from an inexpensive and easy solution to settle cross-border payment claims of up to €5,000 through the revised European Small Claims procedure.



## Consumer rights

### Reinforcing consumers rights online

Since 2015, the new EU Consumer Rights Directive will give people stronger rights when they shop online.

Here are some of the improvements brought by the new rules:

- Elimination of hidden charges and costs on the Internet, outlawing fraudsters tricking people into paying for 'free' services;
- Ban of pre-ticked boxes on websites, avoiding consumers to be tricked into buying unwanted travel insurance or car rental;
- 14 days to return goods bought at a distance, whether by internet, post or phone (extended from 7 days previously)
- Elimination of surcharges for the use of credit cards and hotlines



For more information, [see here](#).



## Fundamental rights

### Reinforcing procedural rights

Across the EU every year, 9 million people face criminal proceedings. EU rules set common rights and minimum standards for all criminal proceedings, whether you are accused or suspected in your home country or elsewhere in the EU.

New rules provide for essential rights such as the right to interpretation and translation, the right to information and the right of access to a lawyer. They also ensure the principle of presumption of innocence and the right to be present at one's trial and, most recently, procedural safeguards for children involved in criminal proceedings.

See [citizens' guide](#) on rights in criminal justice proceedings

## Combating discrimination

### LGBTI equality

2015 Eurobarometer on discrimination shows that almost 60 % of EU citizens see discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity as widespread. At the same time, 71 % of respondents support equal rights for LGBT people.

The European Commission presented in December 2015 a list of actions to advance LGBTI equality for 2016 - 2019. Major actions have been taken in 2016 to advance LGBTI equality, including EU-wide campaigns aimed at promoting social acceptance of LGBTI people, funding of projects against hate crime and hate speech, and co-operation with companies to promote LGBTI inclusion in the workplace. Further initiatives will be taken in 2017 and beyond.

For more information, [see list of actions](#).



## *Roma integration*

Roma are still discriminated across Europe.

In 2013, Member States committed themselves through a [Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures](#), to develop National Roma Integration strategies to promote access of Roma to education, employment, healthcare and housing.

The European Commission assesses every year the progress and published in 2016 an [overview](#) of the Roma integration measures in place.



## **Link:**

Find your rights website.

[http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/index_en.htm)