

Single Market Scoreboard

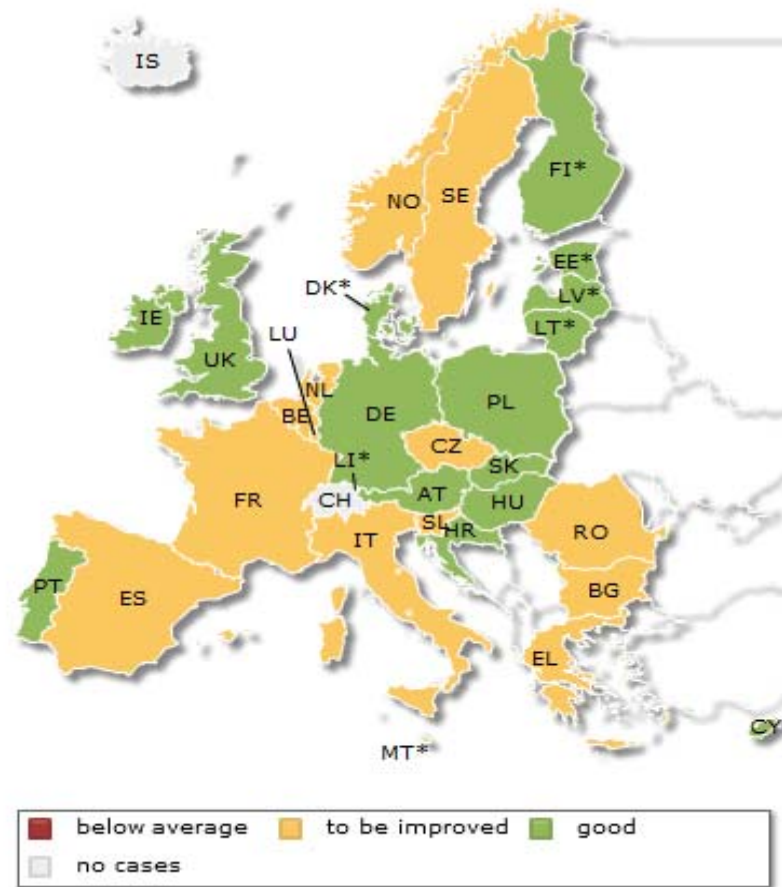
Performance per governance tool

SOLVIT

(Reporting period: 01/2014 – 12/2014)



2. overall (all 3 indicators combined)



A country's **overall performance** is calculated by assigning the following values to each of its 4 indicators:

RED = -1, YELLOW = 0 and GREEN = +1.

Final colours are assigned based on the **sum of these scores**:

2 higher	or	-1, 0 or 1	or	-2 or lower	or	
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* *countries with less than 10 cases*

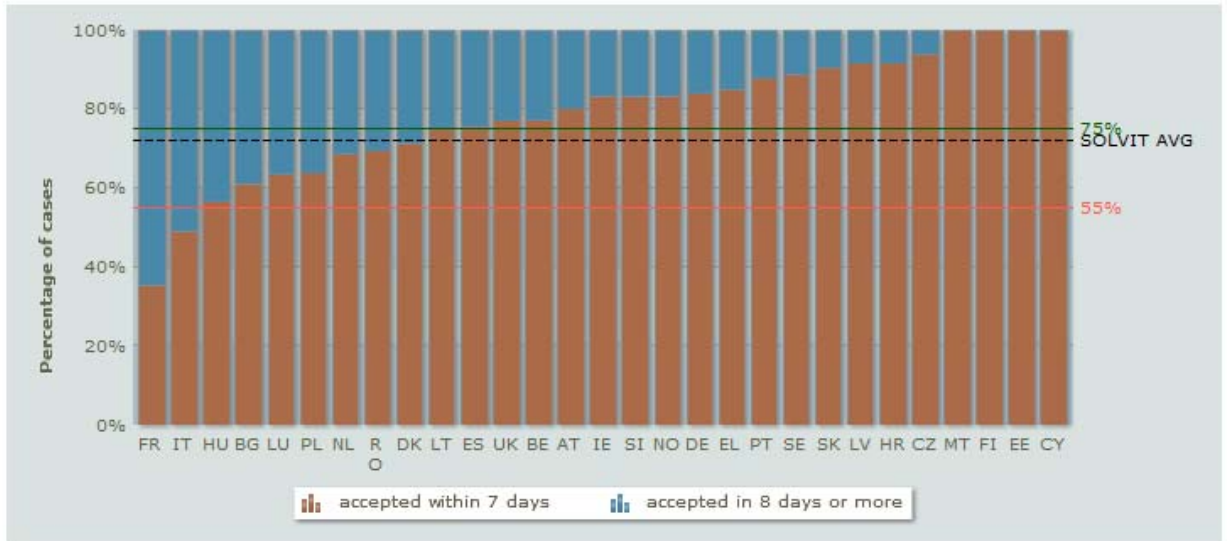
No assessment has been made for Iceland as it had no cases; Estonia and Liechtenstein were assessed on just 2 indicators which, coupled with the low number of cases, lends less weight to the overall assessment.

How does SOLVIT work?

People who encounter a problem exercising their rights apply to their **Home centre** (usually in their Home country).

The home centre prepares the case and sends it to the SOLVIT centre in the country where the problem occurred (**Lead centre**), which deals with the authority in question.

Indicator [1]: Home centre – first response time

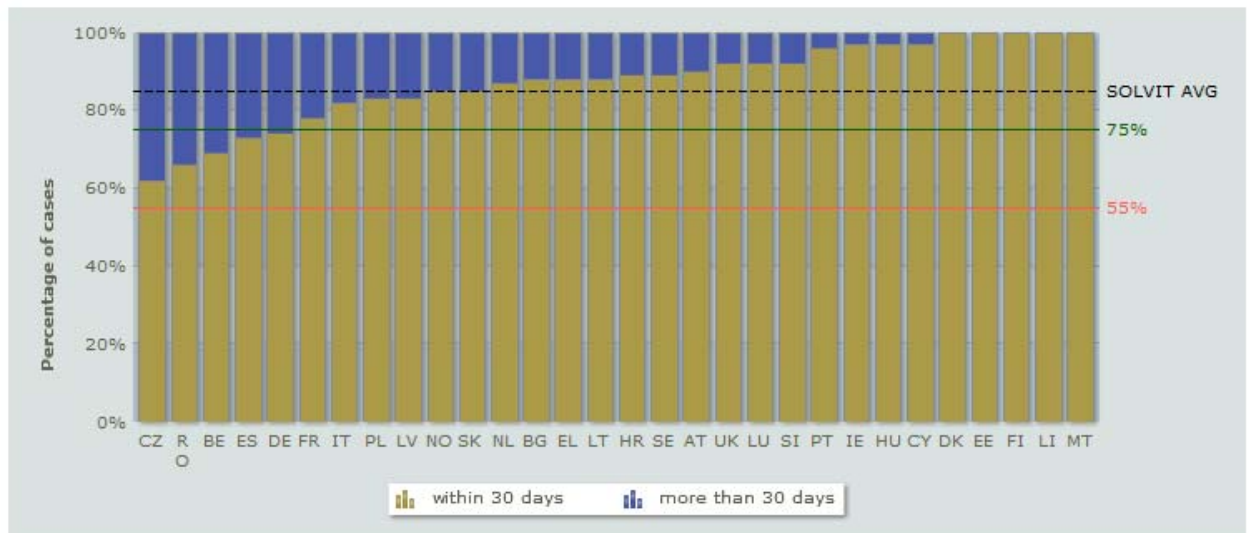


The indicator measures the time taken to **establish initial contact** with the applicant. The target deadline is **7 days** maximum.

Comments

To explain SOLVIT's role to, and verify possible issues with the applicants, it is important to establish an **initial contact** with them **promptly**. Overall there has been an improvement in this area in recent years. However, further efforts are still required from France, Luxembourg, Italy, Norway and Bulgaria in particular.

Indicator [2]: Home centre – preparation time

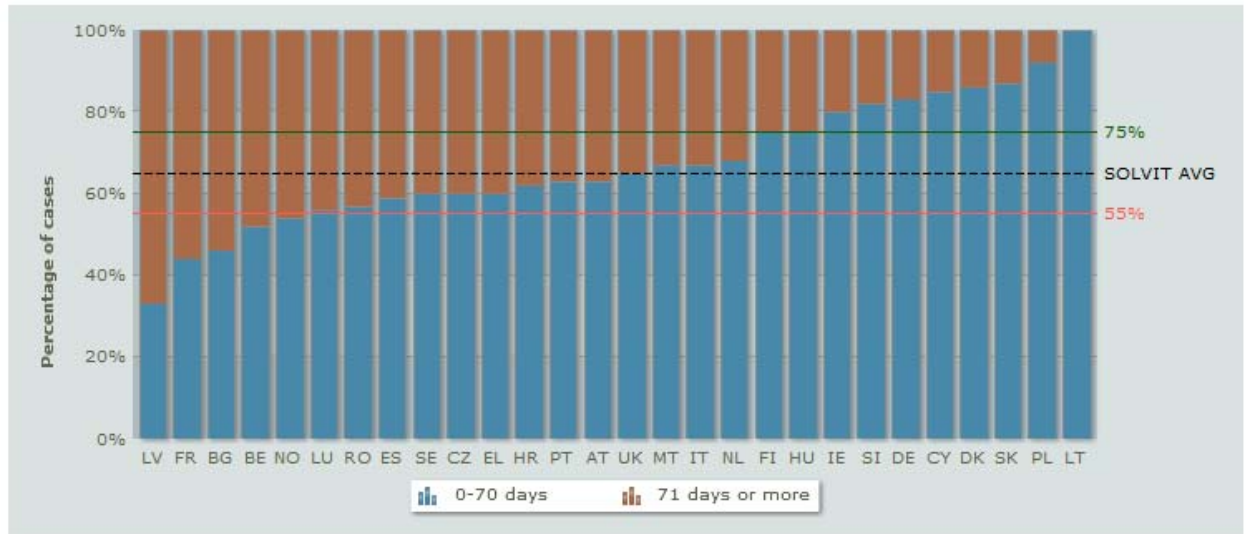


The indicator measures the time taken to prepare cases for transfer to the lead centre. The target deadline is **30 days** maximum.

Comments

Preparation time in most countries is satisfactory.

Indicator [3]: Lead centre - resolution time



The indicator measures the time taken by the lead centre to handle a case. The target deadline is **10 weeks** maximum.

Comments

Average number of days taken: 70 (72 previously). Several centres, in particular Latvia, France, Bulgaria, Belgium and Norway, need to make greater efforts to deal more quickly with cases.

Over 10 weeks: 34% of cases (38% previously).

Over 20 weeks (*twice the target time!*): 12% of cases (14% previously).

*Although 76% of the cases which took longer than 20 weeks were ultimately solved, this is not acceptable - SOLVIT's key aims include providing help **promptly**.*

Factors affecting resolution speed:

- how cooperative national administrations are
- caseload
- staff numbers (many centres are understaffed or have other tasks in addition to the SOLVIT).

Indicator [4]: Resolution rate by country



The indicator measures the percentage of cases solved. The aim is to solve them all.

Comments:

In 2014, the **resolution rate** dropped from **92% to 85%**. This was due to the **recurrent problem** in **Greece** with the administrative treatment of pensions of EU citizens having worked in Greece (resolution rate for Greece was 31%). However if these pension cases are discounted, the overall resolution rate is **actually 92%** (and 93% for Greece).

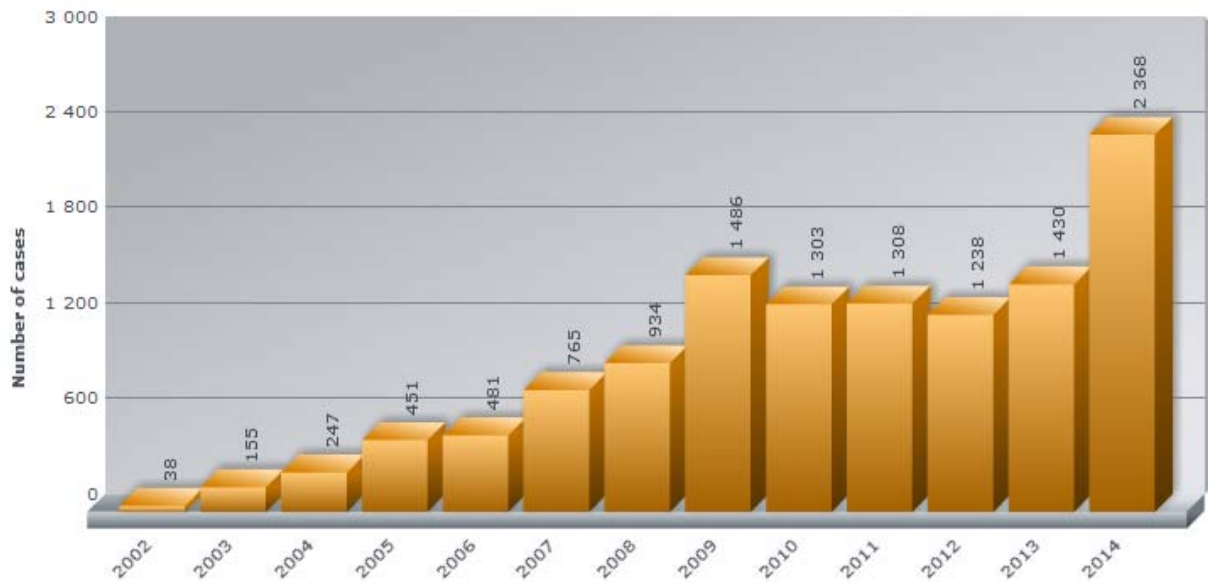
Other countries below 70%: Slovenia, Norway, Sweden and Malta. In Sweden the mandatory personal identification numbers accounted for most of the unresolved SOLVIT cases; this represents a structural problem that could not be solved informally.

Achievements

- In 2014, SOLVIT helped **more than 4 000 people** by solving the problem, clarifying the issue(s) or signposting them to another service.
- **Better coordination between SOLVIT and the EC complaint handling mechanism** has been achieved by establishing a technical link for transferring cases from the Commission to SOLVIT.
- An **improved common online complaint form** was implemented, guiding citizens and businesses to the right service.
- **Cooperation with Your Europe Advice (YEA) has been further strengthened** by enabling SOLVIT to directly transfer questions to YEA (YEA to SOLVIT transfers have been possible since 2013).
- A **modernised website** went live.

Facts and figures

Overall caseload

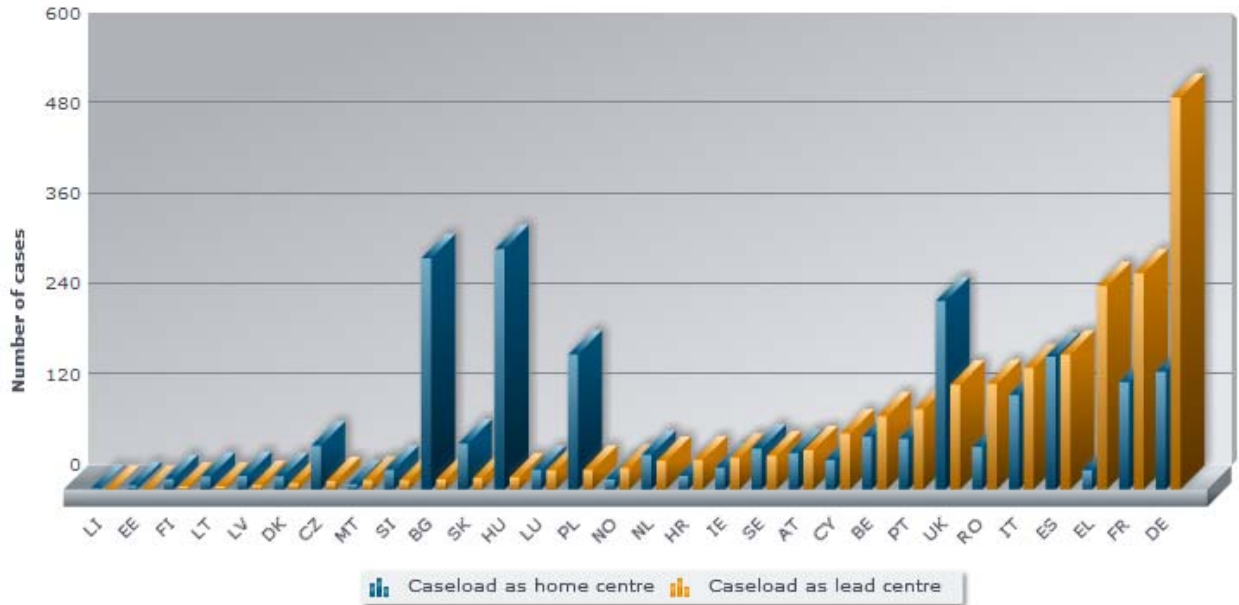


Change since 2013 – up by **66%** (1 427 to 2 368 cases).

- The increase stems mainly from cases in the area of social security.
- Almost 800 cases concerned **two specific recurrent issues** (in **Germany** and **Greece**). Discounting these, the increase in the caseload would have been **18%**.
- 51% of cases were submitted **online**, 12% were **transferred by YEA** (3% in 2013) and the rest by other means (e-mail, phone, post, in person).

In 2014 SOLVIT also received a further **2 400 complaints** (1 700 in 2013) that were **not within its remit**. It responds to all such complaints, by trying to help complainants find other means of redress.

Distribution of cases: Home centres and Lead centres

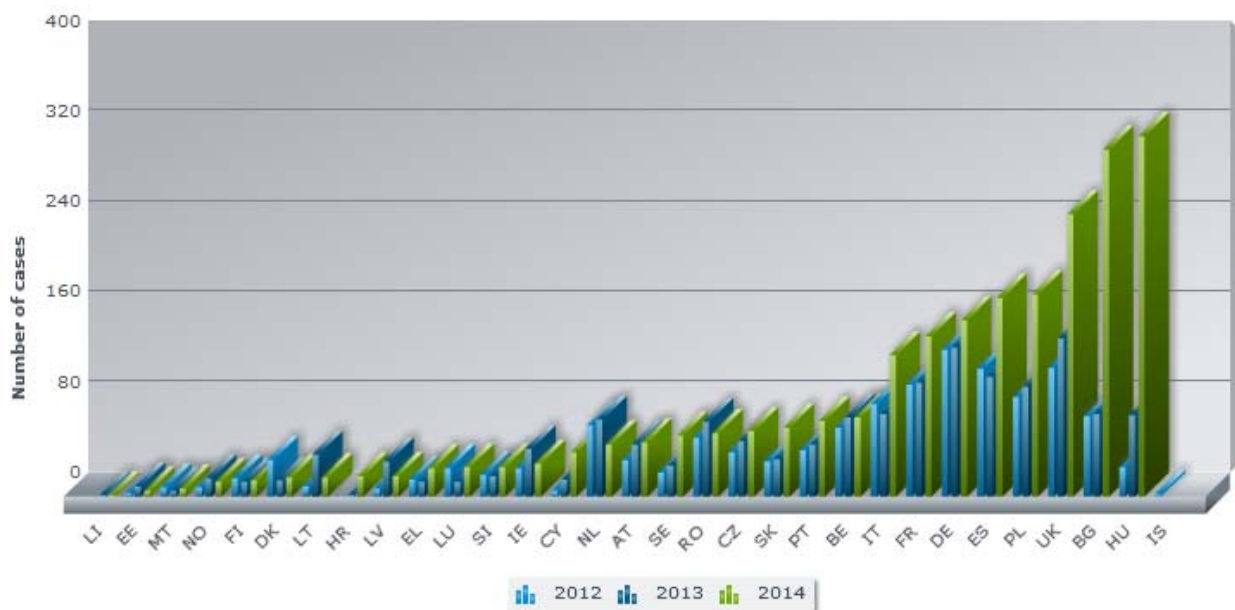


Net recipients of cases: Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Norway, Portugal and Romania

Net submitters of cases: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and the UK

Equally distributed: Austria, Luxembourg, Sweden and Spain

Cases submitted by country over the last 3 years

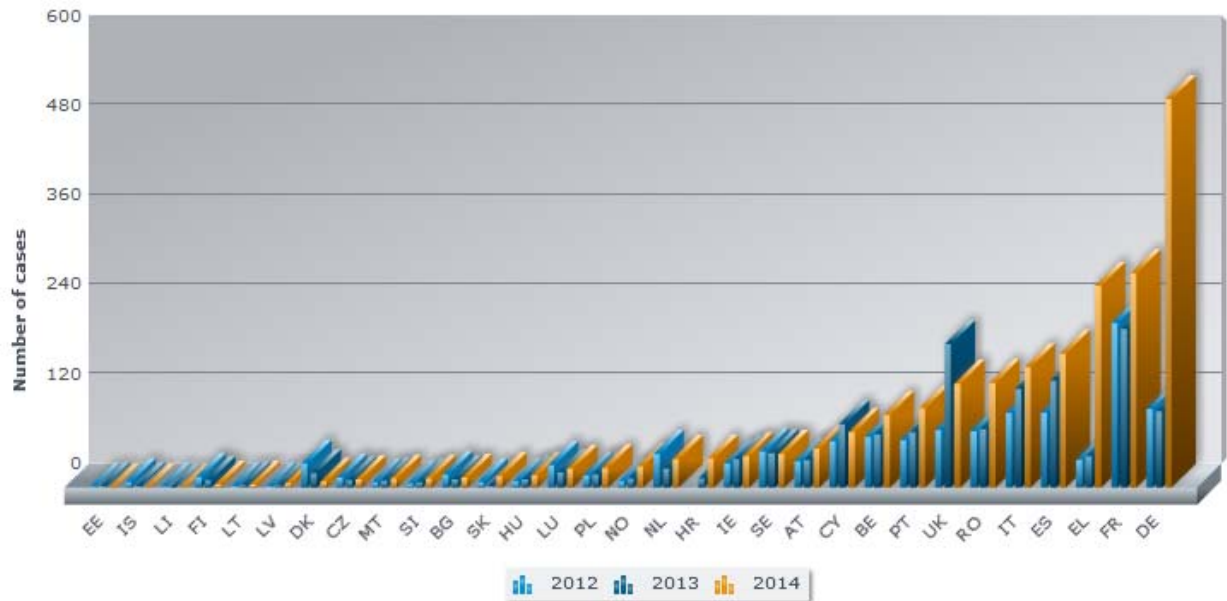


Biggest submitters: Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain and the UK.

Comments

The huge increase in cases submitted by Hungary and Bulgaria is due to the recurrent issues in Germany and Greece respectively.

Cases received by country over the last 3 years

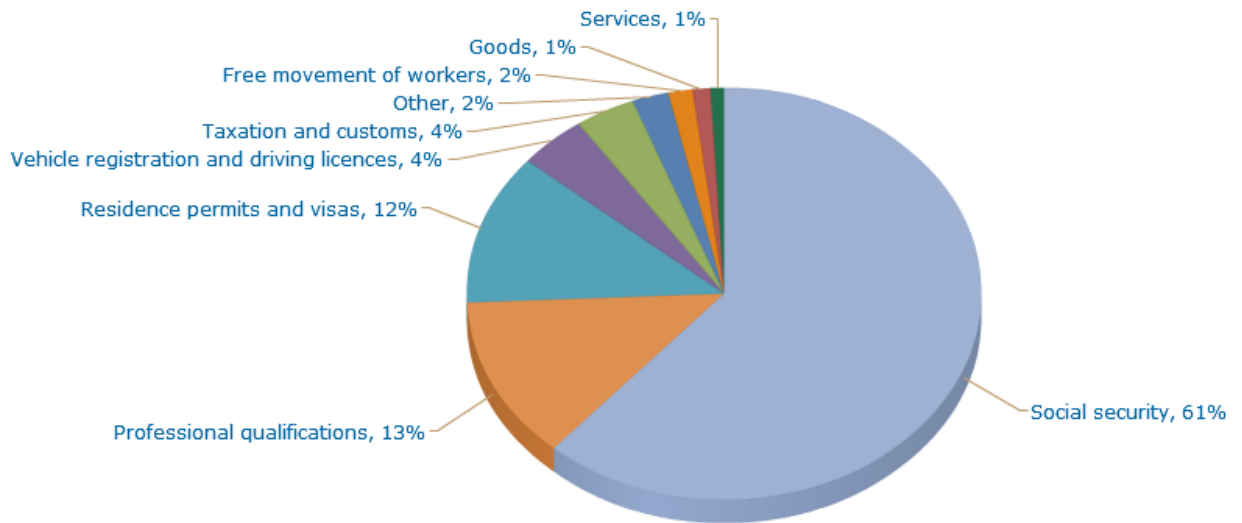


Biggest receivers : France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the UK

Comments

The sharp increase in cases received by Germany and Greece is due to two recurrent issues (family benefits - mostly child benefits - in Germany and pensions in Greece).

Problem areas

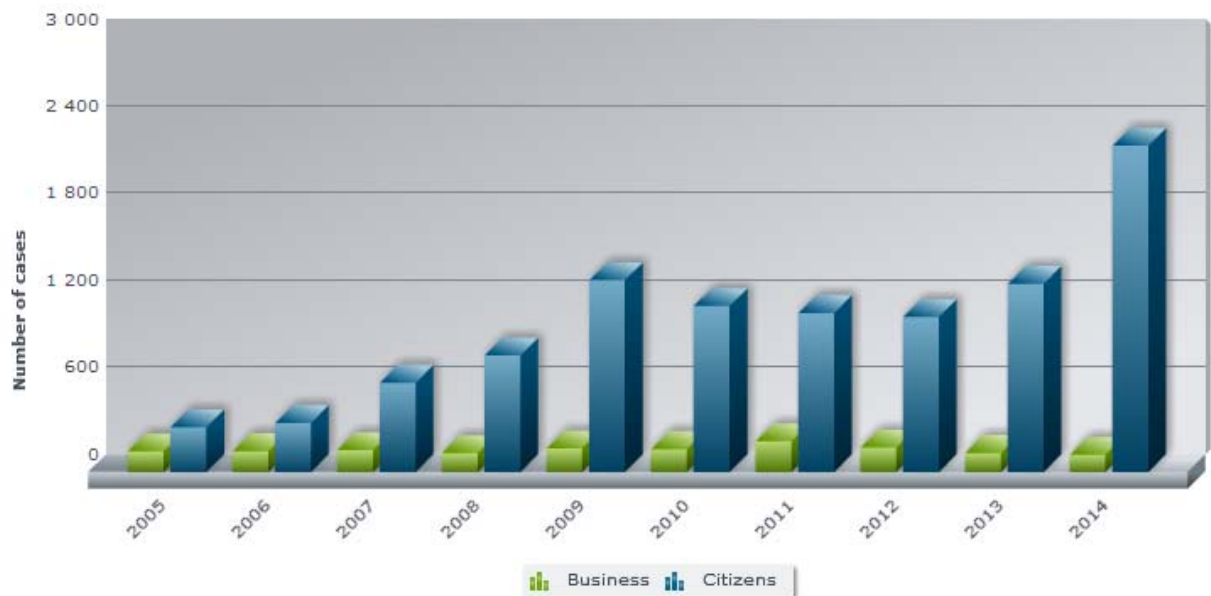


The percentage of cases relating to the **social security area rose sharply** from **40%** to **62%**.

Comments

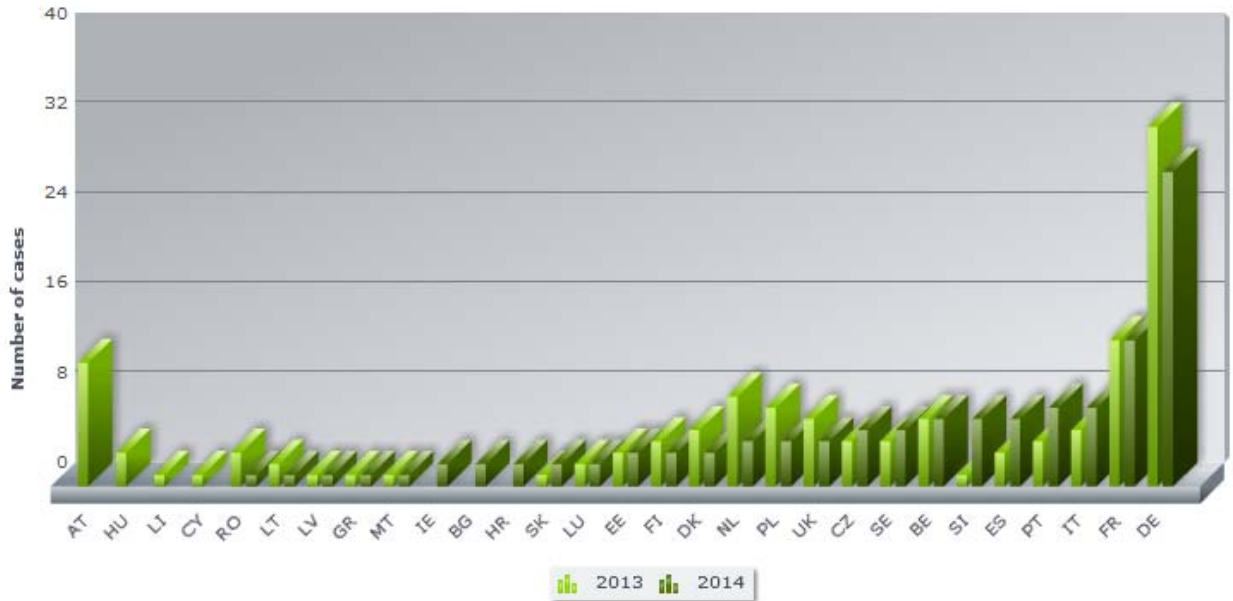
Even discounting the German family benefits cases and the Greek pension cases, those relating to the social security area increased from 40% to 48%. **Professional qualifications** cases **increased** by 73% to 303 cases. **Residence rights** cases **dropped** by 20% to 281 cases.

Business cases v. citizens cases



Over the years, **businesses have submitted only a fraction** of the cases compared with those of private individuals. 2014 saw an all-time low, with only 119 closed cases (132 in 2013). This drop, combined with the increase of citizens' cases means that business cases represent an even smaller proportion of the total – 5% (9% in 2013).

Business cases - by country



Biggest contributors of business cases: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain

Comments:

Inflow of business cases fluctuates widely between the participating countries and even between those which actively promote SOLVIT to businesses (such as Austria and the Netherlands).

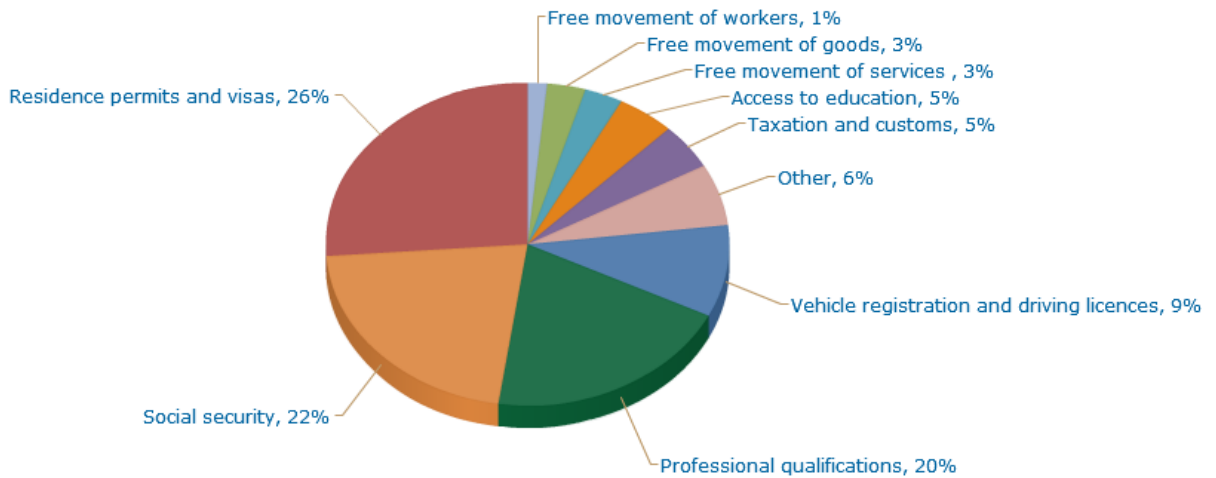
The network will continue its efforts to attract business cases, including:

- Strengthening cooperation with **national business organisations & networks** (such as Enterprise Europe Network (**EEN**) and **contact points** established under different directives (especially points of single contact and product contact points).
- Enhancing presence and findability on the web, in particular through Your Europe.
- Improving centres' access to **expertise** on business issues.

Resolution rates business cases: 89%

The three main problem areas are **taxation** (40 cases), free movement of **goods** (23 cases) and free movement of **services** (14 cases).

Structural cases - by area of legislation



- **Cases handled:** 70 cases (47 in 2013)
- **Cases resolved:** 33 (19 in 2013)*
- **Main areas:** free movement of persons and residence rights (17), recognition of professional qualifications (17) and social security (14)

Handling times:

Cases closed within 10 weeks: 49%

- **Longest handling time:** 624 days
- **Most cases (lead centre):** United Kingdom (15), Croatia (14) and Sweden (12)

* *Structural cases are usually highly complex (and often entail amendments to national laws), so resolving them usually takes longer than SOLVIT's standard 10-week target.*

Given these issues, the lead SOLVIT centre has 2 options:

- *keep the case open – until the necessary changes have gone through, definitively ending the problem.*
- *close the case – but classify it as 'unresolved', since (a) it will take too long or (b) the lead centre cannot persuade its national authorities that the law needs to be amended.*

Staffing level in SOLVIT centres

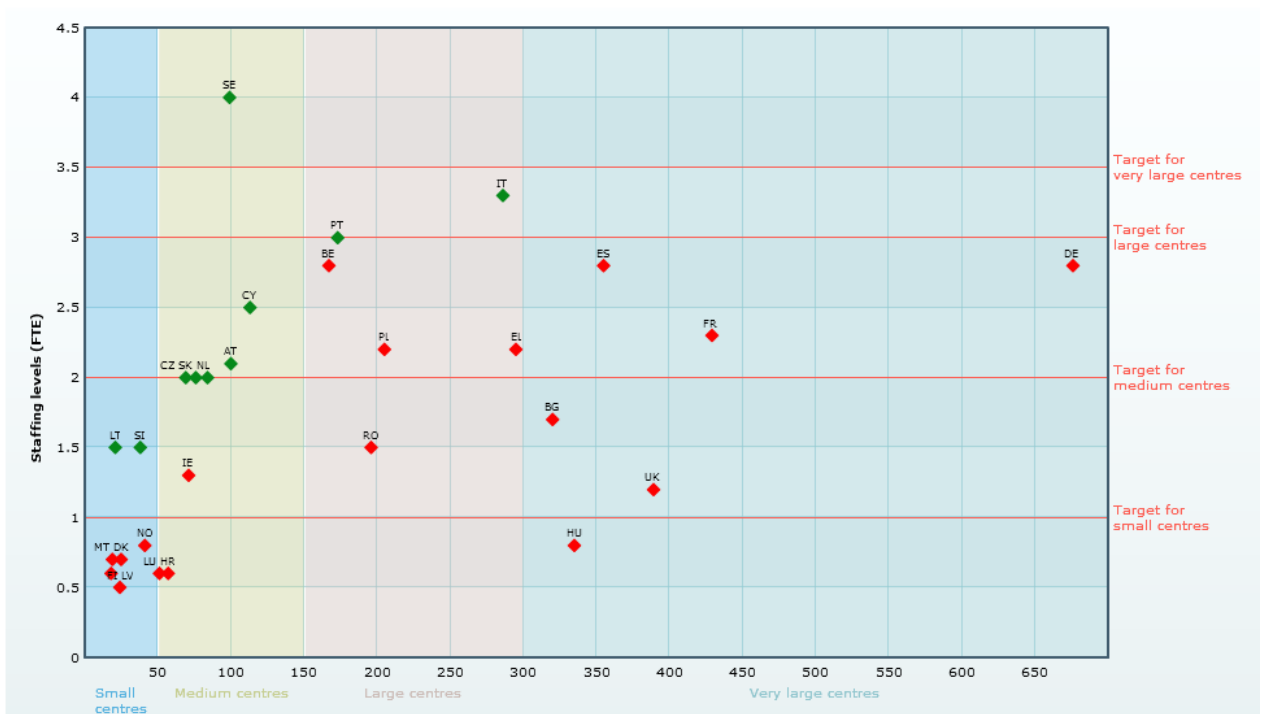
The chart below shows current staffing levels (time to be spent on SOLVIT work) in relation to caseload.

The number of staff (FTEs or full-time equivalents) should be determined by the caseload of the SOLVIT centres:

- small SOLVIT centres (16-50 cases) => 1 FTE
- medium SOLVIT centres (51-150 cases) => 2 FTEs
- large SOLVIT centres (151-300 cases) => 3 FTEs
- very large SOLVIT centres (over 300 cases) => 3.5 FTEs

Red symbol: low staff numbers

Green symbol: minimum staff numbers/time spent on SOLVIT



Issues

1. **Caseloads are rising – but staff numbers are static or even falling.** In many cases, staff may be unable to cope with any further caseload increases. Many centres also seem to experience difficulties with communicating promptly (replying to e-mails, telephone calls etc.).
2. **High turnover** in some centres makes business continuity and efficient case handling more difficult.
3. Many SOLVIT centres often have to **give priority to other tasks** for their national administration, leaving insufficient time for SOLVIT duties.

Limited resources may also account for the many cases not handled within the 10-week deadline.

Priorities

Governments:

- Make sure SOLVIT centres are **adequately staffed**
- Enable them to **prioritise SOLVIT work**
- Ensure a degree of **staffing continuity**
- Ensure a cooperative spirit towards SOLVIT in **national administration**

SOLVIT centres:

- Follow case-handling **rules** and maintain **communication**.
- Meet the recommended **target times** (drastic improvement by **lead centres** needed in many countries).
- Continue national **promotion** efforts by beefing up cooperation with national authorities (including embassies and consulates) and intermediary organisations.
- Ensure they have (access to) expertise on issues of interest to **business**.

Commission:

- Continue work with other **Commission-led networks & assistance services**, so more eligible cases are submitted or transferred to SOLVIT.
- Coordination between departments to ensure that people are directed to the appropriate service.
- Work more closely with national and EU-level **business organisations, networks** like EEN, the Europe Direct Network and **goods/services contact points**.
- Continue efforts **inside the Commission** to increase **awareness** and use of SOLVIT.