



# Recovery procedures

Statistical data applicable to reference year 2021

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## Glossary

**Basic Regulation:** Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the coordination of social security systems.

**Implementing Regulation:** Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems.

**Competent Member State:** The Member State in which the institution with which the person concerned is insured or from which the person is entitled to benefits is situated.

**EU-27:** Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Croatia (HR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), and Sweden (SE).

**EU-14:** Belgium (BE), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Italy (IT), Luxembourg (LU), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Portugal (PT), Finland (FI), and Sweden (SE).

**EU-13:** Bulgaria (BG), the Czech Republic (CZ), Estonia (EE), Croatia (HR), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), Poland (PL), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), and Slovakia (SK).

**EFTA countries:** Iceland (IS), Liechtenstein (LI), Norway (NO), and Switzerland (CH).



## 1. Introduction

At least two Member States are involved in a cross-border situation. In such situations, the risk exists that social security contributions are not paid for/by mobile persons to the public authority in the competent Member State. Furthermore, there is a risk that benefits are unduly paid to mobile persons due to fraud or error. Chapter III of Title IV of the Implementing Regulation defines the procedures and rules on mutual assistance for the recovery of such claims. These provisions are very important, because an effective recovery considerably helps to tackle the risk of fraud and error.

The Basic Regulation provides that, in accordance with the principle of good administration, the institutions of the Member States have a duty of *mutual information and cooperation* to ensure the correct implementation of this Regulation.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Implementing Regulation, a Member State (*the applicant party*) may request another Member State (*the requested party*) to provide any information which would be useful in the recovery of its claims relating to contributions or to benefits paid or provided unduly.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, a request by the *applicant party* for the collection of contributions and the recovery of unduly paid benefits can be submitted to the *requested party*.<sup>3</sup>

Statistical data on the recovery procedures offer a valuable insight into the practical functioning of the social security coordination in the EU/EFTA and into the mutual administrative cooperation between the Member States. The statistical data in this report provide more information on the number of requests for information and recovery of outstanding contributions and unduly paid benefits for the reference year 2021. The outcome of these requests (being refused, successful, unsuccessful, or still pending) is described as well. A distinction in reporting has been made between the number of requests for information submitted/received (*section 1.1*), the number of requests for recovery of outstanding contributions submitted/received (*section 1.2*), and the number of requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits submitted/received (*section 1.3*).

In total, 28 Member States<sup>4</sup> provided statistical information for reference year 2021. However, the response rate strongly differs across the questions. Moreover, the response rate of the competent public authorities in the Member State concerned sometimes varies over the years. Consequently, the figures reported by Member States may show strong fluctuations. This is the main reason why figures on the evolution of requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits are not included in the report.

As of 1 February 2020, the United Kingdom is no longer part of the European Union. This has a significant impact on the dissemination of statistics. In all thematic reports for reference year 2021, the EU-27 aggregate (excluding the UK) is produced. Accordingly, the text of the report describing the quantitative findings focusses on this EU-27 aggregate.

There are two Agreements now governing the relations between the EU and UK in terms of social security coordination. First, the **Withdrawal Agreement**<sup>5</sup> entered into force on 1 February 2020 with a transitional period until 31 December 2020. It provides for *full coordination* to all those persons (including their family members/survivors) who have

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<sup>1</sup> Article 76 (4) of the Basic Regulation.

<sup>2</sup> Article 76 of the Implementing Regulation.

<sup>3</sup> Article 84 of the Basic Regulation and Articles 78 to 85 of the Implementing Regulation.

<sup>4</sup> No response was received from CY, IS, and UK. EL reported that statistical data are not available.

<sup>5</sup> Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community 2019/C 384 I/01. See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1580206007232&uri=CELEX%3A12019W/TXT%2802%29>

continuously been in a cross-border situation involving the EU and the UK since before the end of the transition period. This means that the complete social security coordination acquis<sup>6</sup> applies to these persons. Furthermore, *partial coordination* applies to persons who are not covered by art. 30 (full coordination) but have been subject to both UK/EU social security legislation before the end of the transition period.

The **Trade and Cooperation Agreement**<sup>7</sup> was signed on 30 December 2020, was applied provisionally as of 1 January 2021, and entered into force on 1 May 2021. In this Agreement there is a **Protocol on Social Security Coordination** which covers all persons who 1) are or have been covered by the social security legislation of an EU Member State or of the UK; 2) are residing in an EU Member State or the UK; 3) are or have been in a cross-border situation between an EU Member State and the UK as from 1 January 2021. This Protocol fully coordinates all branches of social security coordination that are currently coordinated under the Basic Regulation except for family benefits, long-term care, special non-contributory cash benefits, and assisted reproduction services. Additionally, there is a partial coordination for invalidity benefits and unemployment benefits. However, this Protocol does not apply to situations involving a UK national moving between two or more Member States, without a cross-border element with the UK as such. Furthermore, it does not apply to the EFTA Member States.

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<sup>6</sup> Basic Regulation and Implementing Regulation

<sup>7</sup> Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part. See [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L\\_.2021.149.01.0010.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A2021%3A149%3ATOC](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2021.149.01.0010.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A2021%3A149%3ATOC)

## 1.1. Requests for information

*Table 1* shows the number of requests for information submitted and received, as well as the percentage of these requests that were refused in 2021. A high number of requests for information were **submitted** by Germany, Austria, Poland, and Slovakia, and to a lesser extent by the Netherlands and Lithuania. The other reporting Member States submitted (almost) no requests. For almost all reporting Member States, all requests for information were accepted. The only exception is Bulgaria where all requests were refused, but it concerns less than five requests in total.

The right-hand side of *Table 1* shows the number of requests for information from the perspective of the **receiving** Member State. Germany, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia each received more than 1 000 requests for information in 2021. Additionally, Hungary (473), Austria (907), and Switzerland (375) received a high number of requests for information. Most Member States accepted the majority of requests for information. Only Ireland (45 %), Spain (63 %), and Italy (70 %) rejected a substantial percentage of incoming requests for information in 2021. Member States were also asked to specify the main reason for which information was requested, both when requests are submitted and received. Almost all Member States mentioned a request for an address as main reason. Requests for information about the income, the assets for recovery, and the identity of a person were other often-mentioned reasons.

**Table 1 - Number of requests for information *submitted* and *received*, 2021**

	Requests for information <i>submitted</i>		Requests for information <i>received</i>	
	Number	% refused	Number	% refused
BE	89	6 %	80	1 %
BG	<5	100 %	89	0 %
CZ	<5	0 %	138	18 %
DK			46	
DE	2 884	0 %	1 160	0 %
EE	<5		<5	
IE			98	45 %
EL				
ES	0		32	63 %
FR	<5		44	
HR				
IT			10	70 %
CY				
LV	<5	0 %	60	0 %
LT	588	6 %	10	20 %
LU	<5	0 %	26	0 %
HU	0		473	2 %
MT				
NL	749	0 %	204	0 %
AT	2 183	0 %	907	4 %
PL	1 272	1 %	1 017	13 %
PT			288	0 %
RO	156	0 %	1 985	0 %
SI				
SK	9 086	1 %	1 955	2 %
FI	65		49	0 %
SE	<5	0 %	94	0 %
IS				
LI			<5	0 %
NO	8		78	
CH			375	0 %
UK				

Source: Questionnaire on recovery procedures 2022

## 1.2. Recovery of outstanding contributions

### 1.2.1. Number of requests for recovery of outstanding contributions

An overview of the number of requests for recovery of outstanding contributions submitted and received in 2021 is presented in *Table 2*. The number of requests for recovery depends on several factors such as the extent of cross-border mobility as well as the national procedures of Member States.

Most of the requests for recovery were submitted by Austria (3 801 requests) and Germany (1 168 requests). Most of the other reporting Member States submitted only a very limited number of requests, namely less than 170 requests. Spain and Portugal did not even submit a single request for the recovery of outstanding contributions. The evolution from 2020 to 2021 is particularly remarkable in Germany, as it increased from 338 to 1 168 or a 246% increase.

Member States which received the highest number of requests for recover of outstanding contributions are Germany (1 964) and Romania (779). Furthermore, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, and Switzerland each received more than 190 requests. On the contrary, Estonia (7), Ireland (<5), Italy (9), Finland (6) and Liechtenstein (7) received a low number of requests for recovery of outstanding contributions. From the receiving perspective, the evolution in Romania stands out, as it received 570 more requests in 2021 than in 2020, or an increase of 273 %.

Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Spain, France, Latvia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Norway, and Switzerland received more questions for recovery of outstanding contributions than they sent to other Member States. This is in contrast to Lithuania, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland, and Liechtenstein which have sent more requests in net terms.

**Table 2 - Number of requests for recovery of outstanding contributions *submitted* and *received*, 2021 and 2020**

	Requests for recovery of outstanding contributions <i>submitted</i>				Requests for recovery of outstanding contributions <i>received</i>				Net 2021 ( <i>submitted</i> – <i>received</i> )
	2021	2020	Change Number	%	2021	2020	Change Number	%	
BE	32				55				-23
BG									
CZ	15	35	-20	-57 %	98	63	35	56 %	-83
DK					10	9	1	11 %	
DE	1 168	338	830	246 %	1 964	1 815	149	8 %	-796
EE	6	<5	2	50 %	7	<5	3	75 %	-1
IE					<5				
EL									
ES	0	0			26	19	7	37 %	-26
FR	26				70				-44
HR									
IT					9				
CY									
LV	<5				23				-22
LT	119				23				96
LU	46				11				35
HU	6	11	-5	-45 %	553	395	158	40 %	-547
MT		0							
NL	<5	49	-47	-96 %	81	119	-38	-32 %	-79
AT	3 801	2 323	1 478	64 %	358	663	-305	-46 %	3 443
PL	166	174	-8	-5 %	398	348	50	14 %	-232
PT	0	0			17	31	-14	-45 %	-17
RO	66	96	-30	-31 %	779	209	570	273 %	-713
SI		1 167				23			
SK	39	61	-22	-36 %	282	159	123	77 %	-243
FI	9	6	3	50 %	6	9	-3	-33 %	3
SE	8	11	-3	-27 %	26	29	-3	-10 %	-18
IS									
LI	9	7	2	29 %	7	<5	4	133 %	2
NO					39				-39
CH					191	135	56	41 %	-191
UK						237			

Source: Questionnaire on recovery procedures 2022

### 1.2.2. Outcome of the requests for recovery of outstanding contributions

Member States were asked to indicate the outcome of the requests for recovery of outstanding contributions submitted or received in 2021. On average, most of the requests submitted/received in 2021 are still pending. This does not come as a surprise as processing these requests is a time-consuming exercise. Below figures also indicate that a substantial number of requests for recovery are refused by the receiving Member States. For instance, most of the requests received by Estonia (71 %), Spain (92 %), and Italy (67 %) are refused. Furthermore, more than one in five requests received by Belgium, Austria, Poland, and Slovakia are refused.

Finally, in several Member States, the number of unsuccessfully closed claims exceeds the number of successfully (i.e., the claim was not recovered in full or partially) closed claims. This is the case from a sending perspective in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Hungary, Romania, Finland, and Liechtenstein. From a receiving perspective the share of unsuccessful closed claims surpasses the number of successful closed claims in Ireland, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, and Finland. This reflects how challenging it is for competent authorities to recover outstanding contributions.

**Table 3 - The outcome today of the requests for recovery of outstanding contributions, 2021**

	Number of outstanding contribution cases submitted					Number of outstanding contribution cases received				
	Total*	Refused	Successful**	Unsuccessful	Still pending	Total*	Refused	Successful**	Unsuccessful	Still pending
BE	32	43.8 %	0.0 %	18.8 %	37.5 %	52	30.8 %	38.5 %	0.0 %	30.8 %
BG										
CZ	15	0.0 %	13.3 %	40.0 %	46.7 %	98	14.3 %	30.6 %	8.2 %	46.9 %
DK						10	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
DE	120	13.3 %	14.2 %	14.2 %	58.3 %	63	11.1 %	7.9 %	7.9 %	73.0 %
EE	6	33.3 %	16.7 %	16.7 %	33.3 %	7	71.4 %	14.3 %	0.0 %	14.3 %
IE						<5	0.0 %	0.0 %	33.3 %	66.7 %
EL										
ES	0					26	92.3 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	7.7 %
FR	26	7.7 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	92.3 %	70	0.0 %	0.0 %	7.1 %	92.9 %
HR										
IT						9	66.7 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	33.3 %
CY										
LV	<5	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	100.0 %	23	0.0 %	56.5 %	0.0 %	43.5 %
LT	119	1.7 %	6.7 %	0.0 %	91.6 %	23	17.4 %	47.8 %	0.0 %	34.8 %
LU	46	0.0 %	15.2 %	41.3 %	43.5 %	11	0.0 %	9.1 %	18.2 %	72.7 %
HU	10	10.0 %	10.0 %	40.0 %	40.0 %	580	6.0 %	18.4 %	7.1 %	68.4 %
MT	0					0				
NL	<5	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	100.0 %	81	6.2 %	0.0 %	7.4 %	86.4 %
AT	3801	6.5 %	29.4 %	15.5 %	48.6 %	358	29.6 %	22.6 %	10.6 %	37.2 %
PL	166	21.1 %	10.8 %	8.4 %	59.6 %	398	33.4 %	8.3 %	15.1 %	43.2 %
PT	0					17	0.0 %	5.9 %	41.2 %	52.9 %
RO	66	0.0 %	3.0 %	6.1 %	90.9 %	779	1.7 %	22.6 %	0.8 %	75.0 %
SI	0					0				
SK	82	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	100.0 %	238	20.6 %	4.6 %	8.4 %	66.4 %
FI	9	0.0 %	22.2 %	33.3 %	44.4 %	6	0.0 %	33.3 %	50.0 %	16.7 %
SE	8	25.0 %	12.5 %	0.0 %	62.5 %	26	0.0 %	11.5 %	11.5 %	76.9 %
UK										
IS	22	0.0 %	9.1 %	40.9 %	50.0 %	8	0.0 %	62.5 %	25.0 %	12.5 %
LI						39	0.0 %	100.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %
NO						140	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
CH										
Weighted average	4 531	7.1 %	26.0 %	14.9 %	52.1 %	3 042	13.7 %	17.7 %	6.8 %	62.5 %
Unweighted average		9.6 %	9.6 %	16.2 %	64.7 %		16.7 %	20.6 %	10.5 %	52.2 %

\* The total in *Table 3* might differ from the total reported in *Table 2*. The total in *Table 3* concerns the sum of the breakdown by outcome of the cases, whereas the total in *Table 2* represented the total reported by the Member States.

\*\* The requests for recovery can be regarded as 'successful' when the claim was recovered in full or partially.

Source: Questionnaire on recovery procedures 2022

### 1.3. Recovery of unduly paid benefits

In this section, figures on the number of requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits and the outcome of these requests are reported. In addition, a more detailed analysis by branch of social security is made and the share of requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits in the total number of paid benefits (i.e., persons entitled) is calculated for the export of family benefits.

#### 1.3.1. Number of requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits

As already mentioned in the introduction, it is important to keep in mind that the data provided by the reporting Member States are sometimes incomplete given that the competent institutions were unable to provide data for all branches of social security. This might result in a very fragmented picture for some reporting Member States.

*Table 4* shows the total number of requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits, both as a submitting and receiving Member State. Especially Luxembourg (4 143 requests), Slovenia (1 484), Romania (1 392), and Belgium (1 080) **submitted** a high number of requests. All their requests for recovery concern unduly paid family benefits, as can be seen in *Figure 1*.

Most requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits were **received** by Belgium (2 086 requests). On the contrary, Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, and Croatia received ten requests or less for the recovery of unduly paid benefits.

Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Spain, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, and Sweden received more questions for recovery of unduly paid benefits than they sent to other Member States. This is in contrast to Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, and Norway which have sent more requests in net terms in 2021.

**Table 4 - Number of requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits *submitted* and *received*, 2021**

	Requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits <i>submitted</i>	Requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits <i>received</i>	Net (submitted – received)
BE	1 080	2 086	-1 006
BG		43	
CZ	11	54	-43
DK		21	
DE	426	85	341
EE	14	57	-43
IE	33	175	-142
EL			
ES	0	10	-10
FR			
HR	0	0	
IT		31	
CY			
LV	<5	35	-33
LT		24	
LU	4 143	23	4 120
HU	6	149	-143
MT	0	13	-13
NL	208	6	202
AT	93	9	84
PL	180	725	-545
PT	60	324	-264
RO	1 392	185	1 207
SI	1 484		
SK	895	106	789
FI	216	101	115
SE	<5	177	-176
IS			
LI			
NO	286	17	269
CH		64	
UK			

Source: Questionnaire on recovery procedures 2022

Member States were asked to provide a breakdown of the requests for unduly paid benefits by type of benefit. *Figure 1* shows this breakdown from the point of view of the **submitting** Member State, whereas *Figure 2* does the same from the point of view of the **receiving** Member State. Certain Member States were unable to provide data on all branches of social security. For instance, several Member States only provided information on the number of requests for recovery of unduly paid family benefits, causing the figures below to show 100%-columns. This might give a skewed image of the true breakdown by branch of social security. Nevertheless, certain Member States did provide information concerning the different branches of social security, which gives us an initial idea about the 'real' breakdown.

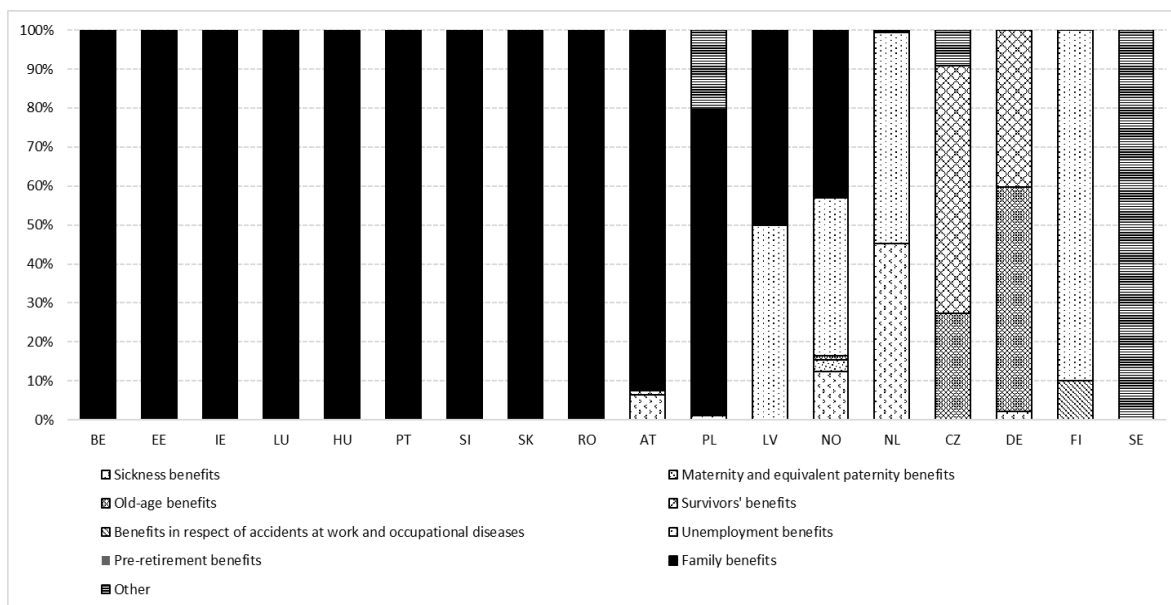
Both figures show that in general, the majority of the requests for recovery concern unduly paid family benefits. For instance, all or most of the requests for recovery submitted by Belgium, Estonia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania, Austria, Poland, and Norway concern unduly paid family benefits (*Figure 1*). The same holds true for all or most of the requests for recovery received by Bulgaria, Belgium, Slovakia, Ireland, Estonia, Romania, the Czech Republic, Norway, Switzerland, Poland, Latvia, Hungary, Portugal, and Sweden (*Figure 2*).



The requests submitted by Latvia are equally divided between unemployment benefits and family benefits (*Figure 1*). Both in the Netherlands and Finland the requests submitted mainly concern unemployment benefits, while in Germany it concerns requests for the recovery of old-age and survivors' benefits. Finally, the Czech Republic primarily submitted requests for the recovery of unduly paid old-age benefits, while in Sweden it concerned other benefits.

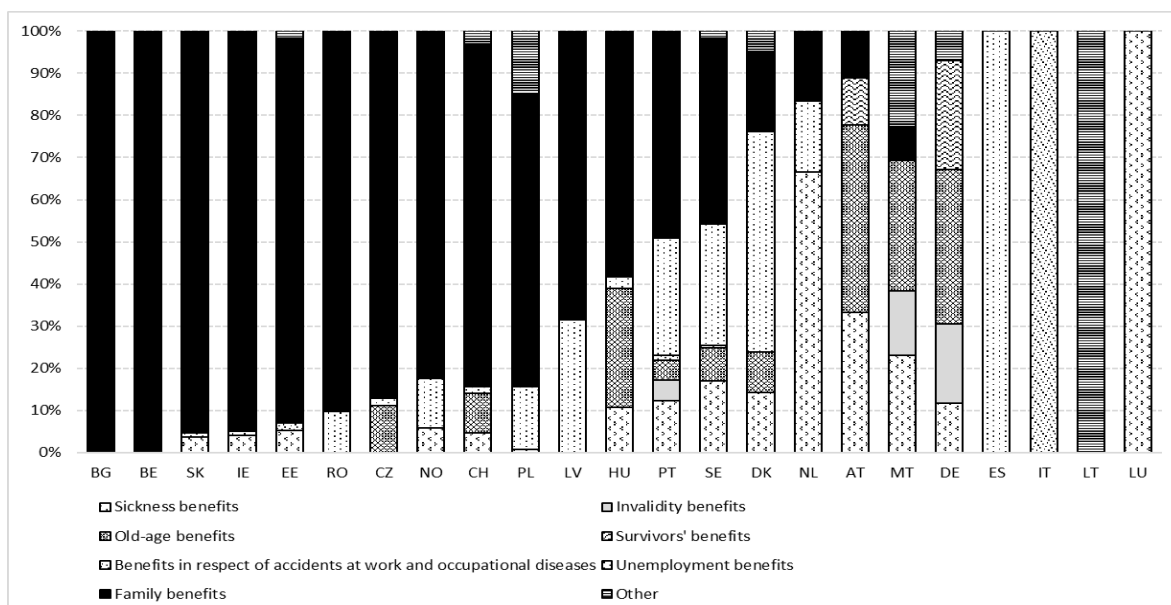
To sum up, more than eight in ten requests submitted or received by the reporting Member States apply to the recovery of unduly paid family benefits. In addition, a relatively high number of requests to recover unduly paid unemployment benefits, old-age benefits, and sickness benefits are received/submitted.

**Figure 1 - Requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits submitted, breakdown by branch of social security, 2021**



Source: Questionnaire on recovery procedures 2022

**Figure 2 - Requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits received, breakdown by branch of social security, 2021**



Source: Questionnaire on recovery procedures 2022



### 1.3.2. Outcome of the requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits

In most of the cases, requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits submitted/received in 2021 have already been settled successfully or are still pending. For 13 out of 17 reporting 'submitting' Member States and for 12 out of 23 reporting 'recipient' Member States, the majority of the requests for recovery are still pending. Nonetheless, in general, a lower percentage of pending claims of unduly paid benefits can be observed compared to the claims of outstanding contributions (*Tables 5 versus Table 3*). The figures reported in *Tables 3 and 5* also seem to indicate that the likelihood of a successful recovery of unduly paid benefits is higher than that of a successful recovery of outstanding contributions. The outcome of the request might also differ depending on the type of benefit.

**Table 5 - The outcome today of the requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits, 2021**

	Number of requests for recovery <i>submitted</i>					Number of requests for recovery <i>received</i>				
	Total*	Refused	Successful**	Unsuccessful	Still pending	Total*	Refused	Successful**	Unsuccessful	Still pending
BE	1 080	0 %	81 %	3 %	16 %	2 086	0 %	95 %	1 %	4 %
BG						43	0 %	0 %	21 %	79 %
CZ	11	0 %	9 %	18 %	73 %	54	2 %	19 %	35 %	44 %
DK						21	0 %	0 %	0 %	100 %
DE	418	0 %	22 %	14 %	64 %	75	0 %	8 %	0 %	92 %
EE	14	14 %	0 %	0 %	86 %	57	9 %	14 %	0 %	77 %
IE	33	0 %	0 %	33 %	67 %	175	1 %	62 %	23 %	13 %
EL										
ES	0					10	40 %	0 %	30 %	30 %
FR						0				
HR	0					0				
IT						31	87 %	3 %	0 %	10 %
CY										
LV	<5	0 %	0 %	0 %	100 %	35	40 %	6 %	0 %	54 %
LT						24	83 %	0 %	0 %	17 %
LU	4143	0 %	65 %	0 %	35 %	23	100 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
HU	10	10 %	10 %	40 %	40 %	149	21 %	23 %	9 %	47 %
MT	0					13	0 %	0 %	0 %	100 %
NL	<5	0 %	0 %	0 %	100 %	6	17 %	33 %	33 %	17 %
AT	93	0 %	5 %	24 %	71 %	9	0 %	11 %	11 %	78 %
PL	180	7 %	16 %	31 %	47 %	725	18 %	27 %	12 %	43 %
PT	60	2 %	15 %	0 %	83 %	324	31 %	8 %	33 %	28 %
RO	1392	11 %	44 %	45 %	0 %	185	31 %	23 %	28 %	18 %
SI						0				
SK	744	3 %	17 %	0 %	81 %	121	19 %	57 %	0 %	24 %
FI	10	10 %	20 %	0 %	70 %	0				
SE	<5	0 %	0 %	0 %	100 %	177	1 %	24 %	10 %	66 %
IS										
LI						0				
NO	286	16 %	78 %	0 %	6 %	17	0 %	100 %	0 %	0 %
CH						39	0 %	0 %	0 %	100 %
UK										
Weighted average	8 479	3 %	55 %	10 %	33 %	4 399	10 %	58 %	9 %	24 %
Unweighted average		4 %	22 %	12 %	61 %		22 %	22 %	11 %	45 %

\* The total in *Table 5* might differ from the total reported in *Table 4*. The total in *Table 5* concerns the sum of the breakdown by outcome of the cases, whereas the total in *Table 4* represents the total reported by the Member States.

\*\* The requests for recovery can be regarded as 'successful' when the claim was recovered in full or partially.  
Source: Questionnaire on recovery procedures 2022

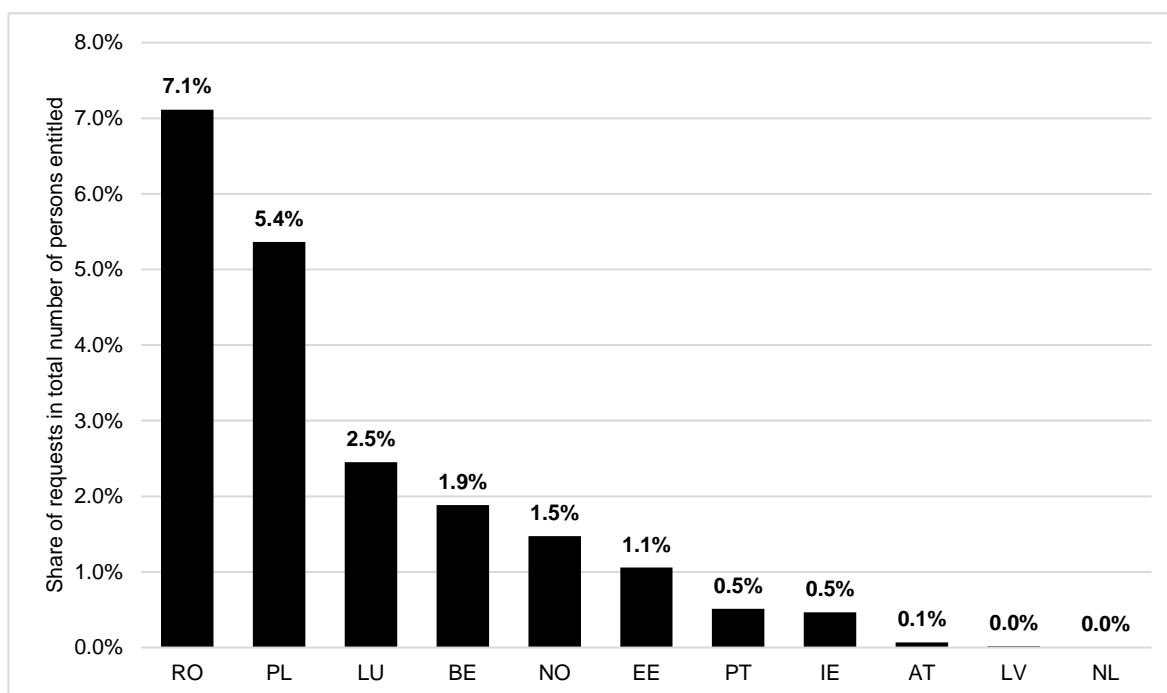
Since it became obvious from *Figure 1* and *Figure 2* that family benefits are an important branch of social security regarding the requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits, they are looked at in more detail below. The number of requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits can be compared to the total number of benefits paid within the context of the application of the EU rules on social security coordination. The latter number can be found in the thematic questionnaire on the export of family benefits.

In *Figure 3*, data collected by the questionnaire on recovery are compared to data collected by the questionnaire on the export of family benefits. More specifically, the number of requests of recovery submitted in 2021 are divided by the total number of entitled persons for the export of family benefits. However, this indicator is calculated only for a limited number of Member States, for which data were available.

In relative terms (as a percentage of the total number of persons entitled to a family benefit), Romania, Poland, Luxembourg, Belgium, Norway, and Estonia asked to recover a relatively high percentage of exported family benefits, namely over 1 % of benefits. This appears to be less the case for the Portugal, Ireland, Austria, Latvia, and the Netherlands.

However, the reported figures should be considered as an overestimation as typically an eligible person is entitled to more than one family benefit per year (probably 12 if the family benefit is paid on a monthly basis). On the other hand, the request for recovery may also relate to several months. Some caution is therefore required when drawing conclusions. Nonetheless, these figures, together with the observation that most of the requests for recovery of unduly paid benefits concern this branch of social security, show that the EU provisions on the coordination of family benefits might be the most sensitive to fraud and error.

**Figure 3 - Requests for recovery of unduly paid family benefits submitted compared to the total number of family benefits exported abroad, 2021**



Source: Questionnaire on recovery procedures and Questionnaire on the export of family benefits 2022

## Annex I Questionnaire

Requests for information								
	Requests for information <i>submitted in reference year</i>			Requests for information <i>received in reference year</i>				
	Number of requests for information submitted	Main areas for which information is requested*	Number refused	Number of requests for information received	Main areas for which information is requested*	Number refused		
Total								
Requests for recovery of <i>outstanding contributions</i>								
	Requests for recovery <i>submitted in reference year</i>				Requests for recovery <i>received in reference year</i>			
	Number of outstanding contribution cases submitted	Outcome of requests as of today			Number of outstanding contribution cases received	Outcome of requests as of today		
		Refused	Successful**	Still pending		Refused	Successful**	Still pending
Total								
Requests for recovery of <i>unduly paid benefits</i>								
By branches of social security and/or total	Requests for recovery <i>submitted in reference year</i>				Requests for recovery <i>received in reference year</i>			
	Number of unduly paid benefit cases submitted	Outcome of requests as of today			Number of unduly paid benefit cases received	Outcome of requests as of today		
		Refused	Successful**	Still pending		Refused	Successful**	Still pending
Sickness benefits								
Maternity and equivalent paternity benefits								
Invalidity benefits								
Old-age benefits								
Survivors' benefits								
Benefits in respect of accidents at work and occupational diseases								
Death grants								
Unemployment benefits								
Pre-retirement benefits								
Family benefits								
Other								
Total								

\* E.g. identity of the person concerned, address, income, benefits received, assets for recovery, ... If main areas could be qualified please add additional rows by area  
 \*\* Request for recovery can be regarded as 'successful' when claim was recovered in full or partially

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