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Title

ELECTRONIC EXCHANGE OF SOCIAL SECURITY INFORMATION (EESSI)

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Modified 25/11/2009

References:

- **Recitals :** 3,4,5 IR
- **BR :** Arts. 72,73,78
- **IR : Arts :** 4,88,95 Annex 4;
- **AC Decisions:** Decision N° E1 of 12 June 2009 concerning the practical arrangements for the transitional period for the data exchange via electronic means referred to in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 987/2009

Comments :**Presentation of EESSI**

- One of the main innovations introduced by the new Regulations is the obligation for Member States to exchange social security information only by electronic means (article 4 IR). Although under the Regulations 1408/71 and 574/72 some Member States already put in place some electronic exchanges, these were limited to some sectors and there was no common tool for all sectors and all Member States at the EU level. In order to reach the objective set by the Regulations, an integrated system providing a common secure framework is to be set up. This new system is referred to as the EESSI system (Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information). It is expected to play a major role in facilitating cooperation between institutions and to contribute to a better enforcement of the rights of the citizens e.g., benefits being granted in a speedier way.
- EESSI is primarily a communication (messaging) system that will allow national social security institutions to exchange social security information in a secure manner concerning persons whose situation is not confined to a single Member State (namely where there is a cross-border element). It replaces the current paper E-forms.

The EESSI system consists of:

- a central application (Coordination Node or CN) to be hosted in the Commission's Data Centre and includes the EESSI Directory Services, part of which will be separately replicated as a Public directory in the Data Centre to enable access by citizens (see note on electronic Directory), and
- an application (Reference Implementation, or RI) to be deployed in the national administrations.

The Commission will develop the common EU infrastructure whereas Member States will have to take the necessary steps in order to be connected to the whole system.

- Together these applications should enable Member States' social security administrations to manage the exchange of social security information by electronic means across country boundaries. Currently 31 countries participate in the information exchange (EU27 + Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland).
- The Administrative Commission (see fiche on AC) is the leading entity responsible for setting the rules applicable for the format, the content and the structure of the exchanges, on the advice of the Technical Commission.

Relevant Timelines

- The new Regulations will start to apply on 1 May 2010. This means that the new rules will be applied from this date to individual cases, without prejudice of course to the transitional provisions in Art. 87.BR. However, as regards the exchange of information between institutions, there is a transitional period of 24 months set down in Article 95 IR, within which the Member States may prepare themselves for the electronic exchange of social security information. This will be a challenging task for the Member States and DG EMPL which will be called upon to provide support where needed. This period will begin when the new Regulations enter into force and thus will end on 30 April 2012.
- Under the current Regulations, the information exchange between the national social security institutions takes place with the so-called E-forms. Under the new Regulations the data exchange will take place by means of so-called Structured Electronic Documents ("SEDs"), which are designed to be used in EESSI. These documents exchanged between institutions will not be directly relevant for citizens. In contrast, new portable documents will be available for citizens from May 2010 (for instance : new portable document replacing form E 101) (See note on Portable Documents).
- During the 24 month Transitional Period, several formats of documents will have to be managed by Institutions as they move from the current system to the new system (Paper SEDs, E-forms generated automatically by national databases...). However, the use of these different types of documents should not lead to a loss of rights for the citizens: their rights should continue to be guaranteed thanks to effective cooperation between institutions.

To go further:

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