



Title

PORTABLE DOCUMENTS

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References:

- **Recitals** : -
- **BR** : -
- **IR**: several articles call for p. documents
- **AC Decision** : xxx/xx
- **ECJ CASE Law**:

Comments:

What is a Portable Document?

- This is a document that a social security office issues to a citizen. The following features characterise them more precisely. Each document is about an individual person (possibly including family members) and contains their names and other identifiers. The social security office that issues the document also duly signs and stamps it. Some types of document inform the holder, others grant them rights, others again allow them to start necessary procedures. The document may be for the eyes of the holder only or may need to be shown or handed to an official (in a different Member State than the one where it was issued).

How can one recognise a portable document?

- A portable document for the coordination of social security bears an EU flag on the top-left corner, a reference to the social security coordination on the top right corner, and the indication of the issuing institution at the bottom. The exception is the EHIC, illustrated at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559&langId=en>

What is the purpose of a portable document?

- EU social security coordination is by and large carried out through contacts between national social security offices. However, in some cases citizens are involved in the exchange of information as well. This is done via portable documents.

Can the document serve as an ID?

- No. Social security documents do not certify the holder's identity. Portable documents are to be shown together with proper ID documents.

Are portable documents public?

- No, they are strictly private. They contain private information about social security rights and the holders are only to show them to social security officers. The exception is the EHIC, the European Health Insurance Card, which is to be shown to medical personnel abroad as proof that the holder has medical insurance.

Are these physical documents, i.e. duly filled, signed and stamped sheets?

- For the time being, yes. Almost all documents are A4 sheets containing information on the holder's social security rights and obligations, plus instructions on their use. The sole exception is the EHIC, the European Health Insurance Card, which is a pocket-size plastic card and bears no instructions. In the future, some documents may be issued electronically.

Are portable documents a new feature of the modernised coordination, from 2010?

- No, similar documents were in use from the 1960s and were called E-forms. The E101 is an example of an E-form. "Portable Documents" is in effect a new name for documents to be used by citizens that replace certain old E-forms.

How many types of portable documents are there?

- From 2010, the range of portable documents has been reduced to 10 types. In addition, social security offices may occasionally provide citizens with transcripts of their service communication; this is very rarely required.

Do all E-forms from the pre-2010 era lose validity from June 2010?

- Not quite. No new E-forms should be issued from May 2010, although some offices may continue to do so exceptionally for practical reasons until April 2012 at the latest. In addition, the EHIC, the European Health Insurance Card, will continue to be issued in the pre-2010 format even after 2012. Also, some E-forms issued before or shortly after May 2010 may continue to be valid until they expire or are replaced; their validity may go well beyond 2012.

What if a citizen loses his portable document?

- In this case, they should inform immediately the social security office that issued it and follow their instructions. These can vary by country and type of document. As a general rule, the citizen does not lose the rights certified in the lost document.

To go further:

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