



European
Commission

A colorful illustration depicting various aspects of life and work. It includes a man on a ladder, a woman holding a sign with a red 'X' over a yellow and red circle, a police officer's hat, a woman on a bicycle, a man with a backpack, a woman sitting on a bench, a man with a camera, a woman with a speech bubble, and various symbols like stars and a heart. The illustration is rendered in a sketchy, hand-drawn style with a color palette of blues, yellows, and greys.

Did you know? 10 EU rights at a glance

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Did you know? 10 EU rights at a glance

Being a European citizen means you benefit from all the big things: a continent at peace, the world's biggest economy, the freedom to move – things we often take for granted. But it also means all the small, everyday things that make a real and daily difference. Like being able to send back a faulty good you ordered online, low roaming costs or compensation for cancelled flights – all of that is Europe working for you. And we'll keep on working for you.

*Viviane Reding,
European Commission,
Vice-President responsible for Justice,
Fundamental Rights and Citizenship*

Did you know? 10 EU rights at a glance

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1. European and local elections

As an EU citizen you have the right to:

- **vote and be a candidate in European Parliament elections** in the EU country where you reside, under the same conditions as the nationals of that country;
- **vote and be a candidate in local elections** in the EU country where you reside, under the same conditions as nationals of that country.

Did you know?

To make European Parliament elections even more democratic, the European Commission recommended that European parties name their preferred candidate as President of the European Commission.

The Members of the European Parliament represent the EU's 507 million citizens and make decisions in practically all policy areas, including mobile phone charges, regulation of banks and protection of personal data.

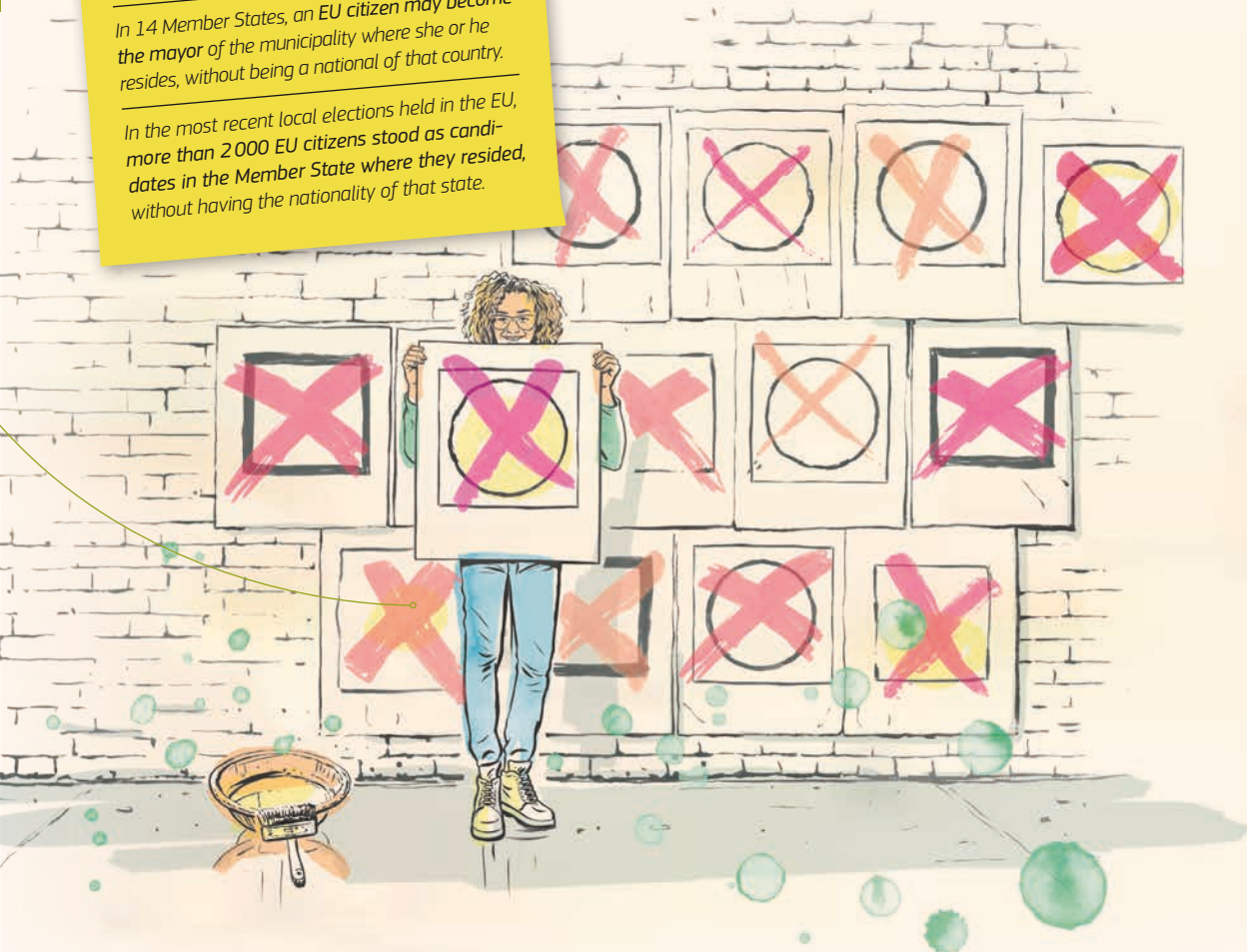
DAVID IS RUNNING IN THE ELECTIONS

David has lived in the Portuguese town of Vila for quite a few years now. He gets on well with the people and knows what's going on. The municipal elections come around and one of the parties wants to field him as a candidate. David would like to be on the local council – he sees it as a way of serving a community that made him feel welcome. His only concern is that he isn't a Portuguese national. Like a number of people in Vila, David is British. But as an EU citizen resident in Vila, he has the right to stand in municipal elections there.

Did you know?

In 14 Member States, an EU citizen may become the mayor of the municipality where she or he resides, without being a national of that country.

In the most recent local elections held in the EU, more than 2 000 EU citizens stood as candidates in the Member State where they resided, without having the nationality of that state.



2. Making your voice heard

As an EU citizen you have the right to:

- have your say on plans for new EU laws;
- launch or support a European citizens' initiative to invite the European Commission to propose legislation on a specific issue on which it has competence, such as the environment, agriculture, transport or public health;
- petition the European Parliament or the European Ombudsman if you have a complaint relating to EU issues.

Did you know?

In 2013, some 141 online EU consultations were open to citizens on topics and possible EU actions ranging from transport to consumer affairs and from public health to taxation.

The European Commission has held more than 50 citizens' dialogues in all 28 Member States. They enable citizens to debate directly with EU Commissioners, Members of the European Parliament, and national, regional and local politicians.

SARAH'S VOICE

Sarah is a British citizen. She moved to France but still kept closely in touch with developments in the United Kingdom (UK) and continued to vote in the national elections. However, after having resided in France for 15 years, she was no longer entitled to vote in the UK's national elections. Sarah did not understand this rule. Why should she lose her right to vote in the UK because she has exercised her right to free movement in the EU? She petitioned the European Parliament and wrote to the Commission. The Commission heard her voice (and the voice of many other citizens of Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland, Malta and the UK in a similar situation) and issued guidance proposing practical solutions for EU citizens to retain their right to vote in national elections.



Did you know?

To organise a *European citizens' initiative*, citizens must form a committee of at least seven EU citizens resident in at least seven different Member States. When these organisers have collected one million signatures, the Commission carefully examines their initiative and meets them. They also have the opportunity to present their initiative at a public hearing in the European Parliament. The Commission then gives a formal response spelling out what action it will propose and the reasons for doing so, or explaining why it cannot take action.

How to make your voice heard at EU level: http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/index_en.htm

Check out the ongoing citizens' initiatives: <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative>

Check out the citizens' dialogues: http://ec.europa.eu/debate-future-europe/citizens-dialogues/index_en.htm

3. Free movement

As an EU citizen you have the right to:

- **train and study anywhere in the EU** under the same conditions as nationals;
- **work anywhere in the EU** and benefit from the opportunities offered by an **EU-wide labour market**.

Did you know?

With over 14 million EU citizens resident in another Member State, free movement – or the ability to live, work and study anywhere in the Union – is the EU right most cherished by Europeans.

Erasmus+, will enable over four million European students, trainees, teachers and trainers in the years 2014-20 to have an education or training experience abroad.

The EU is also promoting student mobility by making it easier to have academic qualifications recognised.

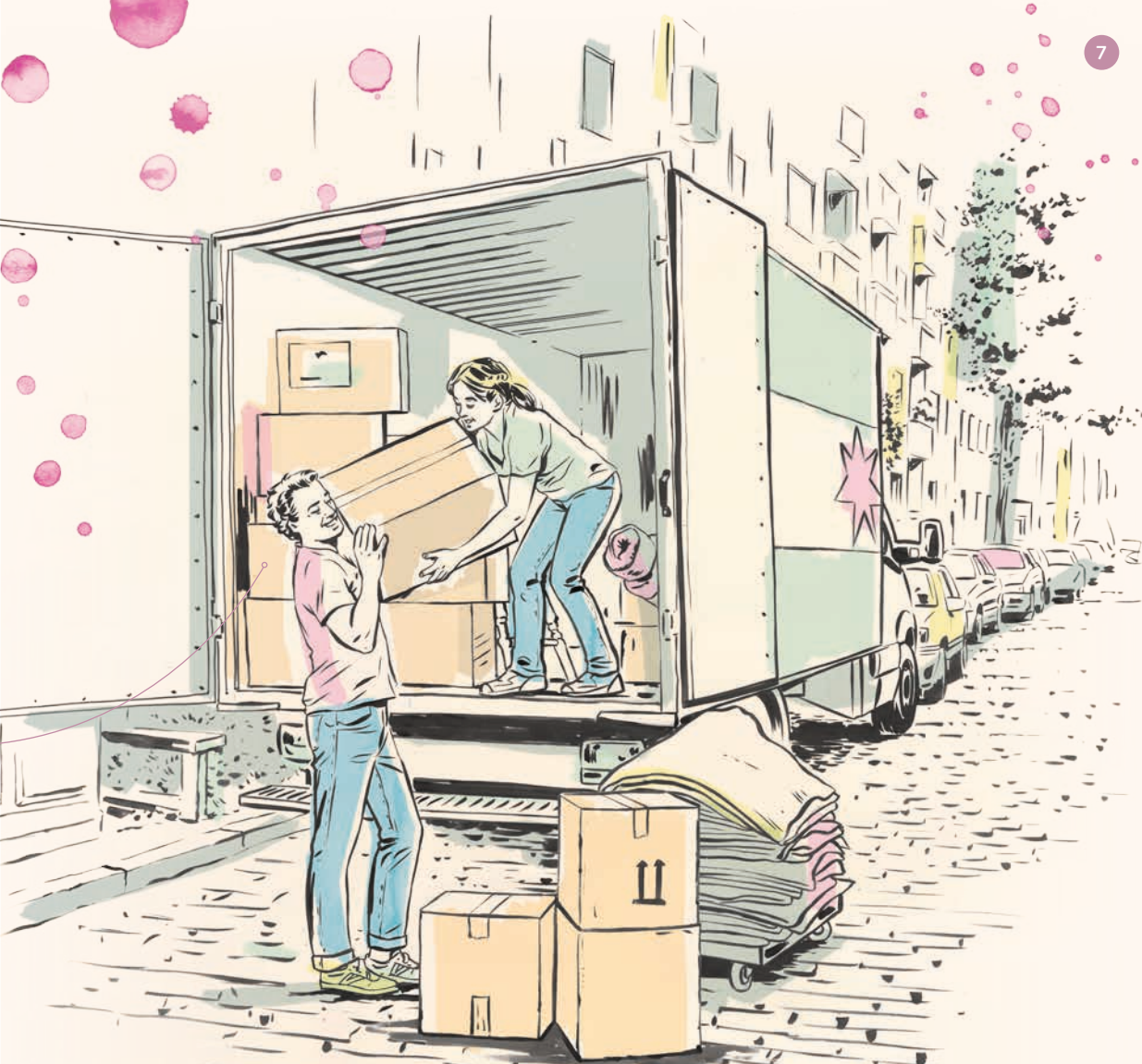
Did you know?

In 2012, some 6.6 million EU citizens worked in an EU country other than their own. EURES is the European network of employment services which helps you to find a job in another EU country.

The EU is working on the recognition of professional qualifications to make it easier for citizens to work elsewhere in the EU.

ANDREW'S MOVE

Andrew decided to leave his job as an architect in the Czech Republic and join his wife in Italy, where she went to study. Thanks to EURES, he was able to find out what job opportunities are available to him in Italy. His Czech professional qualification as an architect is directly recognised in Italy, and he is allowed to apply for jobs on the same terms as Italians. He has also received information about opportunities to learn Italian.



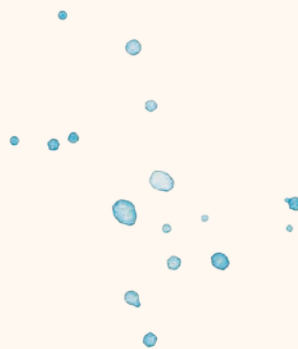
4. Health

As an EU citizen you have the right to:

- **receive necessary healthcare in any EU country**, if you unexpectedly fall ill or have an accident during a visit to another EU country. You will receive public healthcare under the same conditions as people insured in the host country. You can claim reimbursement either in the country that you are visiting while you are still there or when you go back to the country where you are insured. Ask your insurer for your European health insurance card before you go abroad;
- **choose to get planned healthcare in another EU country** and be reimbursed for it at home, fully or partially depending on the circumstances. In some cases you might need to seek prior authorisation from your insurer;
- **benefit from some of the highest food safety standards in the world.** Compulsory checks take place throughout the agri-food chain to ensure that plants and animals are healthy and that food and animal feed is safe, of high quality, appropriately labelled and meets strict EU standards.

SABINE'S ANKLE

Sabine from Germany breaks her ankle while visiting Lithuania. Not a pleasant thing to happen anywhere, and even less so when you're far from home. But at least she needn't worry about seeking treatment. Just by showing her European health insurance card and her identity card, she gets all the care she needs. The European health insurance card entitles her to reimbursement from her German health insurer, in accordance with Lithuanian tariffs.





Did you know?

In every EU country, a free European health insurance card is available from your statutory health insurer. If you show it, you will receive medically necessary public healthcare under the same conditions as locals. Even if you don't have your card with you, you are entitled to healthcare – and once back home, you can ask your health insurance institution for reimbursement.

Prior authorisation for planned medical treatment cannot be refused by your insurer if you have to wait too long for the treatment at home. Each EU country has a national contact point which can provide you with detailed information on your rights.

The EU is promoting an eHealth network among European countries. eHealth uses information technologies to facilitate access to life-saving clinical data available in emergencies, to improve the quality of healthcare and access to medical expertise and to promote patients' empowerment. In certain circumstances patients can receive treatment remotely, including monitoring of chronic patients from a distance, checking vital statistics such as blood pressure, body temperature and sleep rhythms.

5. Consumer rights

As an EU citizen you have the right to:

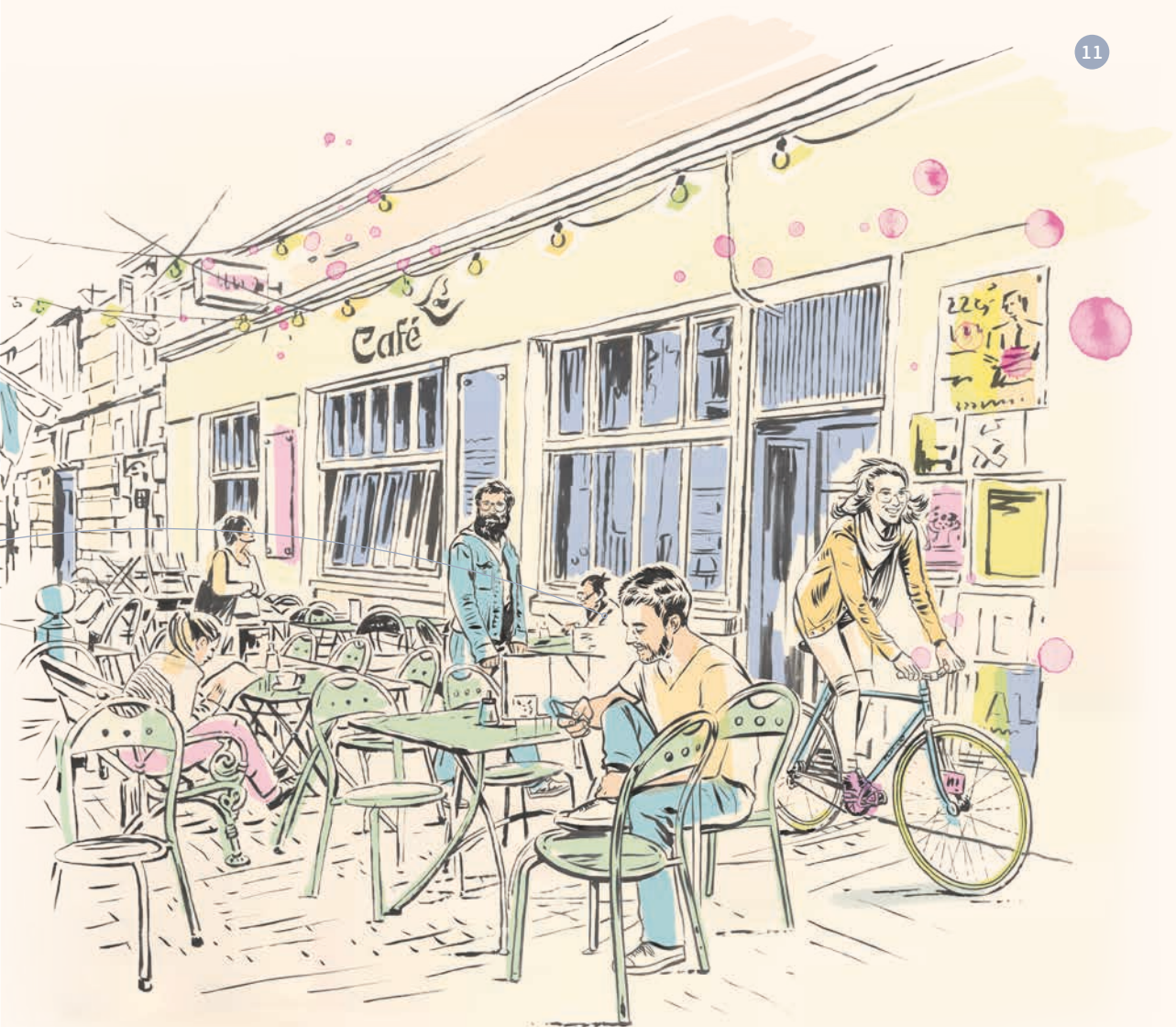
- **rely on fair treatment:** consumers are protected from unfair terms in contracts that would create excessively heavy obligations for them vis-à-vis the trader;
- **receive full information before you buy:** misleading and aggressive marketing practices by traders are not allowed. Sufficient information must be given to allow informed choices;
- **profit from strong protection when shopping online:** for instance consumers get 14 days to send back products which do not meet their expectations;
- **get a solution if something goes wrong:** if goods are faulty, consumers can ask for repair, replacement or, if this is not possible, a price reduction or refund;
- **benefit from greatly improved product safety:** thanks to the EU's rapid alert system for products other than food which allows unsafe goods to be identified and removed from the market quickly to protect consumers.

Did you know?

You can use a quick and easy procedure for small claims to get your money back. Judgements delivered under this procedure are recognised and enforceable in other EU Member States without the need to physically go to court. The procedure currently applies for purchases of up to € 2000 and the Commission recently proposed to raise this threshold to € 10000. It can be used in all EU Member States except Denmark. Soon you will be able to complete and submit the claim online.

KAMIL'S COURT CASE

Kamil often buys goods online. But after a long time without any problems, he finds himself in a dispute with a trader in another EU country and contemplates legal action. The trader refers him to a standard contract term requiring that, in case of disputes, the consumer can only bring an action against the trader in courts in the trader's country of establishment. Kamil has the right to refuse to respect this clause: terms which restrict consumers' legal rights, including their right to take legal action against the trader in their own country, are unfair and banned throughout the EU.



6. Travel

As an EU citizen you have the right to:

- rely on being protected by a full set of **passenger rights** whether you travel by air, rail, ship, bus or coach. Passengers enjoy the right to information, assistance and, in certain circumstances, compensation in case of cancellation or long delay;
- enjoy extra protection if you buy **package holidays**. Your rights include information in brochures, rights to cancel without penalty, liability for the seller for services (for example if you end up in a substandard hotel) and protection if a tour operator or airline goes bankrupt;
- **go to any other EU Member State's consulate or embassy to ask for help**, when you travel to a country outside the EU and your home country is not represented there (for instance if you lose important documents, have a serious accident or are arrested). EU Member States must help citizens of other Member States to leave a country in crisis situations;
- **travel without discrimination if you have a disability or reduced mobility**. EU rules make sure you have the right to assistance when you travel by air, train, ship and bus or coach. It is always better to inform your carrier of your needs before you travel. If you are entitled to use disabled parking facilities in your home country, the EU standard model for disability parking cards will give you the same access to parking facilities in other EU countries. The conditions of the country of destination always apply.

PAUL'S TRAIN

Paul's international train is now running two and a half hours late. But he travels within the EU, so he receives compensation. As the delay is over one hour, he could opt to cancel his journey and get his fare refunded immediately. Instead, he decides to sit it out. As a result, he is entitled to meals and refreshments proportionate to his waiting time. In any case, he knows that if he is completely stranded later on, he has the right to an overnight hotel stay at no cost to himself. In the end, the train finally turns up and Paul travels on to his destination. But as the delay was more than two hours, he claims back 50% of his fare.



Did you know?

You can check your EU passenger rights anytime, anywhere. Download the passenger rights smartphone app:



<http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights/en/mobile.html>

7. Telecoms

As an EU citizen you have the right to:

- benefit from a guaranteed reasonable **quality of fixed telecoms service at affordable prices**, regardless of where you live in the EU;
- **shop around and easily compare prices**. Operators have to provide transparent, up-to-date information on prices and tariffs of telecoms services;
- receive a **written contract** from your phone company with clear information about the services you have signed up for, with specific details, in particular on tariffs and costs, and the option of ending the contract if the supplier changes the terms;
- **change your telecoms operator without changing your phone number**, within one day;
- use your phone anywhere in the EU knowing you will pay **fair roaming** prices.

Did you know?

You can dial 112, the EU-wide emergency number, free from any mobile or fixed phone, everywhere in the EU. Available 24/7, this number works in all EU Member States. Operators speaking a range of languages will put you through to the right emergency service. The use of 112 as a unique or parallel emergency number has been spreading. It is now available in about 80 countries.

There is now a hotline number (116 000) for missing children. Parents, children, or those with information about a missing child can dial the same number. It will connect you to an experienced organisation able to provide support and practical assistance.

GUISEPPE'S ROAMING BILL

Guisepppe spends a few days in London. He uses his smartphone and tablet computer a lot: checking an online map each day, surfing on the Internet every evening, posting holiday snaps to his blog and sending work-related e-mails. But thanks to the EU's current roaming rules, this will cost Guisepppe no more than € 20, almost € 500 less than he would have paid five years ago.



More details on rights for telecom users: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/users-rights>
and EU roaming rules: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/roaming>

8. Cross-border divorces and separations

As an EU citizen you have the right to:

- rely on legal certainty, predictability and flexibility when your family situation involves more than one EU country. EU rules applicable in most EU countries help you determine:
 - **which country's courts are competent** to decide your divorce or legal separation, determine the custody and visiting rights over your children;
 - **which country's law** the courts will apply to your **divorce or legal separation**. This will help to avoid a rush to court by a spouse keen to apply the national law that best serves his or her own interests. This happens only if the spouses, in a divorce case with an international dimension, do not reach their own agreement on which law to use;
 - **which country's law** the courts will apply to fix **maintenance for your children**;
- have your judgment on divorce or legal separation, custody and visiting rights over your children and maintenance for your children given in one EU country more easily recognised and enforced in another EU country.

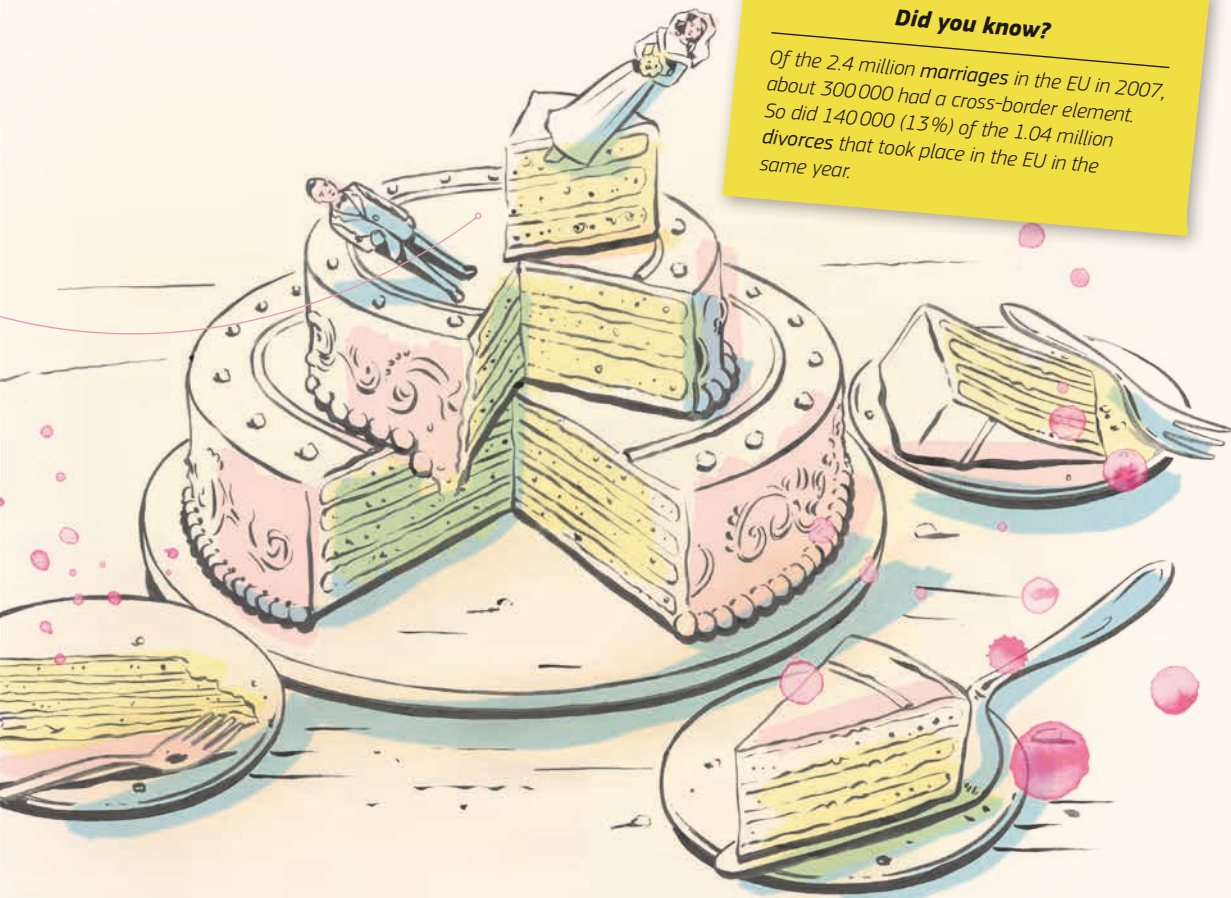
EVA AND ROLF'S FAMILY

Eva from Hungary and Rolf from Germany live in Italy. They have one daughter, Anna. After some years, Eva wanted to divorce. Thanks to EU rules, Eva was able to file for divorce in Italy. As Eva and Rolf are on good terms, they signed an agreement choosing German law for their divorce, which the Italian court applied. Since Eva and Rolf's daughter, Anna, also lives in Italy, the Italian court could also decide on Anna's custody and her parents' visiting rights. On Eva's request, the Italian court determined the maintenance for Anna.



Did you know?

Of the 2.4 million marriages in the EU in 2007, about 300 000 had a cross-border element. So did 140 000 (13%) of the 1.04 million divorces that took place in the EU in the same year.



EU divorce and separation rules explained:

http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/family/couple/divorce-separation/index_en.htm

http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/family/children/parental-responsibility/index_en.htm

http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/family/couple/maintenance/index_en.htm

9. Crime victims' rights and a fair trial

As an EU citizen you have the right to:

- rely on **specific safeguards** if you are a victim of a crime anywhere in the EU;

- rely on getting a **fair trial anywhere in the EU**, if you are suspected or accused of having committed a crime. This includes the right to interpretation and translation, information on procedural rights and on the accusation against you, the right to a lawyer and the right to communicate, on arrest, with your family and consulate.

Did you know?

From January 2015, victims of violence will be protected EU-wide. The European protection order will enable a protection measure issued against a perpetrator in one EU country to be recognised and enforced in another EU country.

From November 2015, victims will:

- **get information about their rights straight away;**
- **have access to victim support services** according to their individual needs;
- **have guaranteed procedural rights** such as the right to interpretation and translation, the right to legal aid, the right to review a decision not to prosecute and the right to be heard;
- **be protected against secondary and repeat victimisation** according to their individual needs (for instance by limiting the number of interviews and medical examinations, by arranging interviews by a specially trained person or by ensuring special measures to avoid visual contact with an offender during court proceedings).

JUSTICE FOR VALÉRIE

While holidaying in another Member State, Valérie is violently attacked and robbed. At the police station, she receives information on her rights in her language and an interpreter is called so that she can make her statement in her mother tongue. She receives a translated, written acknowledgment of her complaint and is informed about the next steps. She is also referred to a specialised victim support organisation. Once back in her country, the authorities in the Member State where she was assaulted keep her informed about all the stages of the criminal proceedings. She testifies and eventually the offender is convicted. As of the end of 2015, these safeguards will apply throughout the EU.



Did you know?

Around 9 million people face criminal justice proceedings every year in the EU. This includes more than 1 million children who are brought into formal contact with the police, prosecuted, in pre-trial detention or brought before criminal courts.

In November 2013, the Commission proposed that:

- children should have special safeguards when facing criminal proceedings: mandatory access to a lawyer at all stages, enhanced information, assistance by parents and special protection in case of deprivation of liberty;
- suspects or accused persons who are deprived of liberty should have access to provisional legal aid in the early stages of the proceedings;
- the right to be present at trial and important aspects of the presumption of innocence should be reinforced.

EU rights for crime victims: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/victims/index_en.htm

EU rights for suspects and the accused: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/criminal-rights/index_en.htm

10. Information and guidance

As an EU citizen you have the right to:

- **contact the EU in your own language and get information and assistance on your EU rights.**

Did you know?

You can contact the Europe Direct Contact Centre, which answers all sorts of questions on EU-related matters by phone (00800 6 78 9 10 11), e-mail and web chat or visit the Europe Direct Information Centre in the region or town where you live.

You can visit the website [Your Europe](#) for practical information in your language on your rights when moving, living, studying, training, working, shopping or simply travelling abroad.

Representation offices of the European Commission are also at your service in your country.

SOME QUESTIONS EUROPE DIRECT ANSWERED FOR CITIZENS IN 2013

'I read that in 2014 we will vote for the European Parliament but I don't really know when. Moreover, given that I'm from Italy but live in Spain, do I have the right to vote in my current place of residence?'

'I am Czech and live with my family in the Czech Republic. However, I work in Slovakia and commute to work every day. In which country are my family and I covered by my medical insurance?'

'I am an Italian citizen who has been offered a permanent job in Germany. Is my American husband entitled to live and work in Germany?'

'I am a university graduate from France. I found a fixed-term job contract in London from the end of June. Do I need a residence permit? Who do I contact for this?'

'I bought a computer online from a German website but it does not work properly. What should I do? Are there general rules for returning goods purchased online?'

'I was supposed to fly from Paris to Sofia, but on my arrival at the airport I was informed that my flight was delayed by 3 ½ hours due to technical failure. Is there any EU legislation that would protect my rights?'



A one-stop shop webpage sets out your EU rights and how to make sure they are respected:
http://ec.europa.eu/your-rights/info/individuals/index_en.htm

Your EU contact points

Europe Direct

Find your nearest regional EU information centre at
<http://europedirect.europa.eu>



European Commission Representations

European Commission Representation in Ireland

European Union House
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Petitions Committee of the European Parliament

European Parliament

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FRANCE
Tel. +33 388172313
Website: <http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>

The European Union



Member States of the European Union (2014)

Candidate countries and potential candidates

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