



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MEMO

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European Patients' Rights Day: 10 benefits the EU brings to patients

A high level of health protection; the right to benefit from medical treatment; access to healthcare - preventive, diagnostic and curative treatment regardless of financial means, gender or nationality. These principles are enshrined in the European Union's Treaty¹ and its Charter of Fundamental Rights² and the EU institutions are bound to them in their actions. On European Patients' Rights Day, let's take a look at some of the benefits of being a patient in the European Union. As an EU citizen, you can expect:

1) To receive healthcare when visiting another EU country

If you fall ill unexpectedly during a trip to another EU country and need to visit a doctor, there's no need to cut short your visit to return home for treatment. Take your [European Health Insurance Card](#) with you to a local doctor.

2) To be reimbursed for healthcare sought in another EU country

Should you decide to receive [medical treatment in other EU country](#) you can be reimbursed for it at home, under certain circumstances, and normally up to the amount you would be reimbursed in your home country for the same treatment. In some cases, your home country may require you to seek prior authorisation before travelling for treatment.

3) To receive information on safety and quality standards in EU countries

A national contact point in each Member State shall provide information to patients on their rights to healthcare across Europe. Access to information on the quality and safety of care will allow you to make informed decisions.

These contact points can also provide information on the European Reference Networks where you can receive highly specialised healthcare in the case of complex, low prevalence or rare conditions.

¹ The scope for EU action in health policy is set in Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

² Article 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

4) To be treated by qualified healthcare professionals

Patients have the guarantee that whether receiving medical care in their home country or another EU country, they will be treated by healthcare professionals – be they doctors, dentists, nurses, midwives or pharmacists, who have met [EU-wide minimum requirements](#).

Patients will, upon request, receive information from their national contact point about a healthcare provider's right to practice.

5) To get a copy of your medical records

When you are treated, your healthcare provider must make a medical record of the treatment provided. As a patient you have the right to a copy of this medical record in order to secure continuity of care and be treated by a doctor of your choice, also if you continue treatment in another Member State.

6) To have your prescription recognised in all EU Countries

The Commission has set rules on mutual recognition of prescriptions between Member States and on a minimum list of elements to be included in a cross border medical prescription.

As a patient, when travelling to another EU country it is reassuring to know that your prescription can be recognised at your destination. To avoid delays, interruptions in treatment and extra costs, ask your health professional for a [cross border prescription](#) before you leave.

7) To be treated with safe and effective medicines

Medicines must be authorised by the Member States or the European Commission before they can be placed on the EU market. This ensures patients are treated with medicines that are in compliance with strict standards on quality, safety and efficacy.

Once a medicinal product has been authorised in the Union and placed on the market, [its safety is monitored during its entire lifespan](#) to ensure that, in case of adverse reactions, appropriate action is taken swiftly, including additional warnings, restrictions of use or even withdrawal of the product.

8) To be able to report suspected side effects of medicines

As a patient, you have the right to report any adverse reactions to medicines you are taking directly to your national authorities. You can also do so through your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or other healthcare professional.

Medicines for which additional monitoring is considered necessary have a [black inverted triangle](#) in the package leaflet, along with information on how to report suspected adverse events through [the national reporting system](#).

9) To be treated with safe medical devices

EU rules on [medical devices](#), varying from simple bandages to the most sophisticated life-support machines, aim to ensure a high level of patient safety and rapid access to innovative technologies.

10) To benefit from common high standards of quality for blood, organs, tissues and cells

To guarantee quality and patient safety, the EU has developed common rules that apply across the EU to ensure that all donated human material is **safe** and carefully screened to prevent transmission of disease, for example HIV or hepatitis.

In addition, the EU funds [projects](#) and actions that support national authorities in training their inspectors, improving their vigilance systems as well as the organisation of and access to national transfusion and transplantation services.

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_en.htm

Website of Commissioner Borg:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/borg/index_en.htm

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