



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MEMO

Brussels, 15 May 2013

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 the eve of European Patients' Rights Day, let's take a look at the benefits to patients of being a citizen of the EU. 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

From 25 October 2013, a National Contact Point in each Member State shall provide information to patients on their rights to healthcare across Europe. Patients will have access to information on the quality and safety of the care they will receive in order to make informed decisions.

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

For patients wishing to travel to another country it is reassuring to know that their prescriptions can be recognised in another Member State. To avoid delays, interruptions in treatment and extra costs patients must ask health professionals for a [cross border prescription](#).

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 medical prescription taken by a patient travelling to another EU country.

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.

The Commission has recently adopted a [new symbol](#) in the form of a black inverted triangle to identify medicines for which additional monitoring is considered necessary. As of September 2013, the new symbol will be reflected in the package leaflet of the medicines concerned, along with information on how to report 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 and procedures 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.

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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