

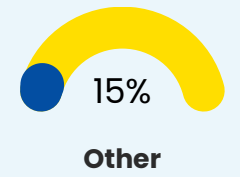
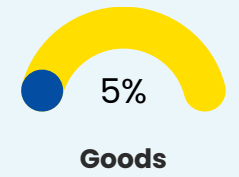
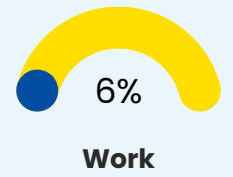
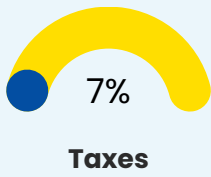
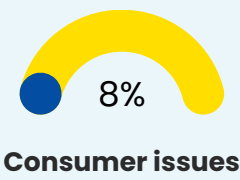
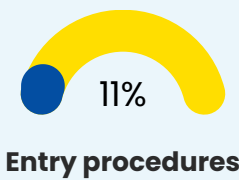
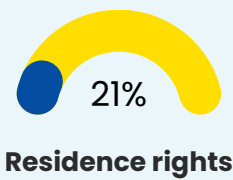
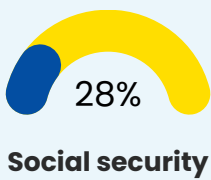
19,255 enquiries

These enquiries provide an insight into the problems experienced by EU citizens and businesses regarding their EU rights, including freedom of movement.

INSIGHTS OF THE YEA INQUIRES

In 2024, YEA received a 3% increase in requests compared to the previous year. Additionally, YEA handled 164 legal advice requests from 23 SOLVIT centres, marking a 49% rise compared to 2023 and the highest number ever recorded. These enquiries offer valuable insights into the challenges EU citizens and businesses experience in exercising their rights, particularly freedom of movement.

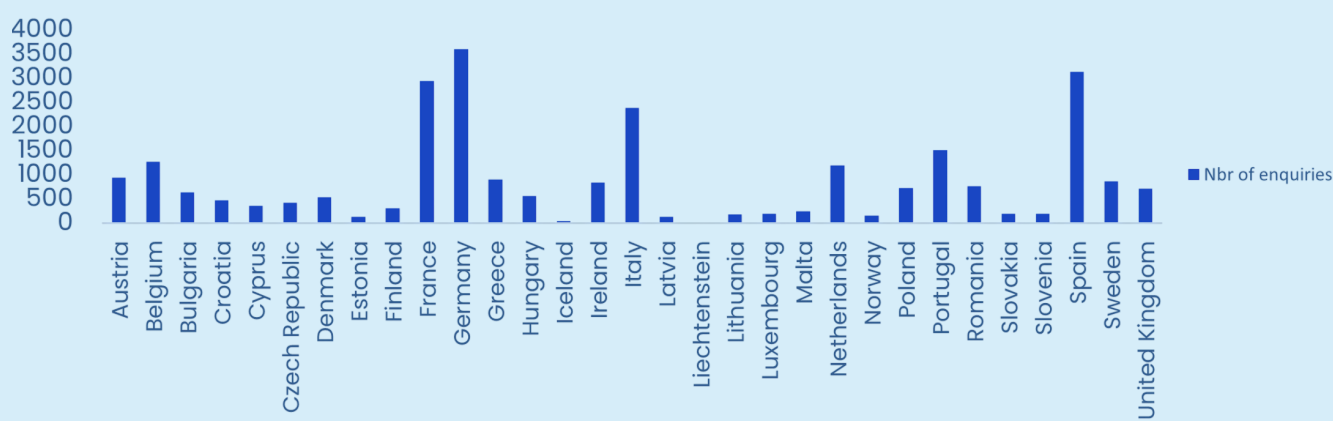
Social security enquiries (28%) were a significant proportion of those received. These were followed by residence rights (21%) and entry procedures (11%). This hierarchy remains unchanged from 2023.



Compared to previous years, issues related to residence and social security enquiries have increased, while entry procedure enquiries have declined.

COUNTRIES CONCERNED IN 2024

YEA enquiries concerned all 27 Member States, as well as Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein. YEA received more questions about Germany, Spain, France, Italy, and Portugal.



THE FIVE MAIN ISSUES IN 2024

SOCIAL SECURITY:
Country of Insurance



Our recommendation

A Danish citizen who previously worked in Germany and now resides in Denmark was unable to determine which social security system he belonged to. While working in Germany, he developed cancer and was subsequently dismissed by his employer. He received no financial support during his illness, as neither the Danish, nor German social security authorities were willing to take responsibility.

The Irish wife of a Polish national gave birth in Poland. The father was employed in Ireland and wanted to take paternity leave and claim paternity pay. However, he was unable to do so because Ireland refused to issue a social security number for the baby, as the child was not yet a resident. Despite both parents having Irish social security numbers, this prevented the father from claiming paternity benefits.

Despite the establishment of the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI), administrative cooperation between national authorities requires further enhancement. National authorities must receive comprehensive training on the applicable social security rules governing the movement of citizens within the EU.

Requests for information should be processed promptly and, in any case, within three months. In exceptional circumstances, where meeting this deadline is not feasible, the competent authority should communicate the reasons for the delay, provide a revised timeline and offer regular updates.

SOCIAL SECURITY:
Health Care, Sickness
or Maternity



Our recommendation

A Greek citizen experienced severe knee pain while on holiday in France and urgently needed to see an orthopedist at a public hospital. Despite presenting his EHIC, the hospital refused to accept it and charged him the full cost of the consultation and medical exam, disregarding the urgency of his condition.

A Swedish citizen moving to Austria requested a Form S1 from Sweden. However, the Swedish Försäkringskassan (National Agency for Social Insurance) informed her that it could take up to 18 months to issue the form, despite the requirement that it should be provided immediately.

Raise awareness among citizens and national authorities about using an EHIC to obtain healthcare coverage.

Raise awareness of patients’ rights to reimbursement (independently of possession of an EHIC) for cross-border healthcare to ensure that everyone who needs care knows their rights and can make informed choices.

SOCIAL SECURITY:
Old age Benefits



Our recommendation

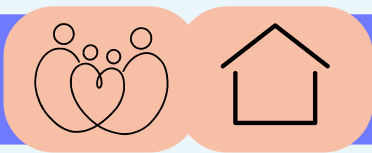
A retired Romanian citizen living in France had been receiving a pension from Romania. The Romanian authorities changed their procedure, requiring proof that he was still eligible for the pension. He submitted the documents but never received a response. His pension payments ceased.

A German citizen living in Germany was entitled to a basic pension from Romania. The social security authority in Romania refused to pay the pension into a German bank account, insisting that the pensioner should have a bank account in Romania to receive the pension.

Pensioners require clear and reliable information since the rules differ from country to country. Information should be provided both from the country sending before departure and the receiving country upon and after arrival.

The European Institutions should reinforce the obligation of communication and cooperation between Member States, as stated in Article 76 of Regulation (EC) No. 883/2004.

RESIDENCE:
Family Rights



RESIDENCE:
Permanent Residence

A US national married to an Italian citizen in Ireland applied for a residence card there. After two months without acknowledgement, she was concerned about her right to remain as her leave was expiring. She also struggled to find work without proof of her right to employment.

The Maltese authorities refused to facilitate residence for the unmarried partner of an Irish citizen, citing insufficient proof of a durable relationship. Despite submitting extensive evidence, including witness statements and photographs, the authorities dismissed the application, stating that “the department does not accept long-distance relationships.”

A Finnish citizen who had lived in Poland for 20 years with her Polish family was suddenly asked to restart the residence procedure. The authorities demanded proof that her mother had renounced her Polish citizenship in 1974 – documents that had already been authenticated by a Polish embassy years ago.

A Czech citizen who had lived in Italy for ten years – first as a student, then as the wife of an Italian citizen – applied for permanent residence. The municipality wrongly required her to prove that she had been married or employed for at least five years, disregarding her entire period of residence.

Our recommendation

Member States should ensure that national legislation is clear and sufficiently detailed to guarantee attainment of the objectives of Directive 2004/38/EC. The new Guidance on the right to free movement, published by the European Commission on December 6, 2023, aims to assist Member State authorities and national courts to correctly apply EU free movement rules regarding the existence of a duly attested de facto durable relationship. It clarifies that “where the entry visa expires while waiting for the issuance of the residence card, non-EU family members do not have to return to their country of origin and obtain a new entry visa”.

Member States’ authorities and national administrations should be informed and trained to apply the rules appropriately.