



# Patients' rights have no borders

Seeking healthcare in another EU Country



This guide, promoted by Active Citizenship Network (ACN) in the framework of the EU Communication campaign "Patients' rights have no borders", wants to contribute to the appropriate implementation of the Directive 2011/24/EU on cross-border healthcare in each EU Member State. This booklet integrates informative materials already produced by the European Commission with more useful details, such as contacts of the National Contact Point and of civic and patients organisations available in the country, information for people affected by rare diseases, etc.

The campaign involves partner organisations of ACN from 14 EU countries:

- Austria:** Lower Austrian Patient and Nursing Advocacy / NÖ Patienten- und Pflegenwaltschaft
- Bulgaria:** Patients' Organisation „With You“ / Пациентски организации „Заедно с теб“
- Cyprus:** Cyprus Alliance for Rare Disorders / Παγκύπρια Συμμαχία Σπάνιων Παθήσεων
- France:** Inter-association on Health / Collectif Interassociatif Sur la Santé
- Germany:** Civic Initiative on Health / Bürger Initiative Gesundheit e.V.
- Hungary:** Hungarian Federation of People with Rare and Congenital Diseases / Ritka és Veszélyes Rendellenességgel élők Országos Szövetsége
- Ireland:** Irish Patients' Association
- Italy:** Active Citizenship Network / Cittadinanzattiva Onlus-Tribunale per i Diritti del Malato
- Lithuania:** Council Of Representatives Of Patients' Organizations Of Lithuania / Lietuvos Pacientų Organizacijų Atstovų Taryba
- Malta:** Malta Health Network
- Poland:** Institute for Patients' Rights & Health Education / Instytut Praw Pacjenta i Edukacji Zdrowotnej
- Slovakia:** Society of Consumer Protection / Spoločnosť Ochrany Spotrebiteľov
- Spain:** Platform of Patient Organisations / Plataforma de Organizaciones de Pacientes
- The Netherlands:** EPECS-European Patients Empowerment for Customised Solutions

Texts by Active Citizenship Network (Mariano Votta & Sonia Belfiore)  
Designed by: Lorenzo Blasina  
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## Foreword

In 2002, Active Citizenship Network together with a group of European partner organisations established a European Charter of Patients' Rights, which includes the following 14 rights: the right to preventive measures; access care; information; consent; free choice; privacy and confidentiality; respect of patients' time; observance of quality standards; safety; innovation; avoidance of unnecessary suffering and pain; personalized treatment; to complain; to receive compensation.

The EU Directive 2011/24/EU on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare has officially recognised the "right to free choice" and the "right to information" included in the European Charter of Patients' Rights.

## What about you?

This guide will help you to learn more about your cross-border healthcare rights, providing the contact details of the National Contact Points and a patient association available for assistance in your country.

In EU, only 17% of people are aware about their rights when going abroad for care, in Ireland only 35%.

In EU, only 10% of citizens know about the existence of National Contact Points, in Ireland only 11%.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>"EU Commission report on the operation of Directive 2011/24/EU on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (4th September 2015)";

## Did you know? <sup>2</sup>

You have the right to receive medical treatment in another EU Member State and the right to have your home country cover some or all of the costs.

You have the right to be informed about the treatment options open to you, how other EU countries ensure quality and safety in healthcare, and whether a particular provider of your choice is legally entitled to offer services.

### Your right to have the costs of treatment covered

- If you are entitled to a particular treatment in your home country, then you have a right to be reimbursed when you receive it in another country.
- Your level of reimbursement will be up to the costs of that treatment in your home country.
- You may choose whichever healthcare provider you wish, whether public or private.
- For some treatments (certain in-patient or highly specialised services) you may be required to get authorisation from your own health system before receiving the treatment abroad.
- If you are facing a medically unjustifiable waiting time for treatment at home then authorisation must be granted. In this case, you may even be entitled to a higher level of coverage for your healthcare costs.



2. The source of the text with the green background is: "Seeking healthcare in another EU Member State: your rights", published by the European Commission

## Interested?

EU law requires health insurers, health authorities and healthcare providers to help you make use of these rights in practice. Here's how:

### In your home country

*Your home country is responsible for the financial aspects of your cross-border healthcare (where you have a right to have your costs covered). It must also provide appropriate medical support before and after you go.*

Your country will have set up one or more contact points where you can receive more details on your rights, including which healthcare services you are entitled to. These contact points can also tell you if you need to apply for authorisation before receiving treatment, and how to appeal if you think your rights have not been respected.

Your home health system must provide you with a copy of your medical records to take abroad with you. Once you have received your treatment, it must provide the same follow-up care it would have provided if you had been treated at home.

### In the country where you are seeking treatment

*If you are to receive medical treatment in another EU country, you have the same rights as a citizen of that country, and your treatment will be subject to the same rules and standards.*

The country where you are to receive treatment will also have set up one or more **contact points** to provide information on the quality and safety systems of that country, and on how healthcare providers are supervised and regulated. These **contact points** can confirm that the healthcare provider you have chosen has a right to provide that particular service. They can also explain the rights of patients in the country of treatment.

**!** To know more about the patients' rights in the country where you seek care, you can also contact a national patient organisation involved in this EU campaign which will provide information and assistance: <http://bit.ly/1NJfnZT>

The healthcare provider you have chosen must tell you about the different treatment options available to you. They must tell you about the quality and safety of the healthcare they provide (including their authorization or registration status, and liability insurance arrangements). They must provide you with clear information on prices, so you know in advance what your costs will be. Finally, they will provide you with a copy of your treatment record to take back to your home system.

## Know before you go

### Check your treatment plans with your health professional:

- It is highly recommended that you discuss your planned treatment with your doctor before committing to anything.

### Plan your trip thoroughly:

- Research your treatment options.
- Make sure you have a copy of your medical records, information on any medicines you are taking, and any relevant test results.
- Check whether you will need a referral from a general practitioner to access (or be reimbursed for) specialist care.
- Check the details of your healthcare provider.

### Check the financial implications with your National Contact Point or insurer:

- Make sure you know how much your treatment will cost and whether your authorities will pay the costs directly, or will reimburse you some or all of the costs.
- Check any requirements for pre-treatment authorisation.
- Remember that some costs (travel, accommodation, repatriation, etc.) may not be covered.

### Make sure you get the medical followup you need:

- Verify you have a discharge plan.
- Arrange to get a copy of your record from your healthcare provider.
- If you get a prescription make sure it is suitable for cross-border use (EU law prescribes certain minimum content to make sure that prescriptions can be recognised in every country).
- Arrange appropriate medical followup with your home system (in advance if necessary).

You can find more information on this subject and also on emergency or unplanned healthcare at [www.europa.eu/youreurope](http://www.europa.eu/youreurope)



## Struggling with a rare disease?

The EU Directive of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare requires also the development and establishment of European Reference Networks of highly specialised healthcare providers and centres of expertise, in particular in the area of rare diseases, to share knowledge and identify where patients should go when expertise is unavailable in their home country.

Besides, the European Reference Networks will help to provide affordable, high-quality and cost-effective healthcare to those patients requiring specific resources of expertise and to improve these patients' access to the best possible care available in the EU for their condition.

For further information, visit:

<http://bit.ly/1sySi21>

<http://bit.ly/1ITQdFd>



## Need Help?

### Find your National Contact Point

If needed, don't hesitate to contact your contact point!

**Name:** Cross-Border Healthcare Directive Department

**Website:** <http://hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/schemes/cbd/CBD.html>

**Email:** [Crossborderdirective@hse.ie](mailto:Crossborderdirective@hse.ie)

**HSE info line:** 1850 24 1850 (Monday to Saturday, 8am to 8pm)

### Find your National Association

Contact [Irish Patients' Association](#),  
official national partner of Active Citizenship Network.



[Irish Patients' Association](#)

**Address:** TheClinic.IE, Glenageary Shopping Centre,  
Glenageary, Co. Dublin, A96 VY20

**Mail:** [info@irishpatients.ie](mailto:info@irishpatients.ie)

**Website:** [www.irishpatients.ie](http://www.irishpatients.ie)

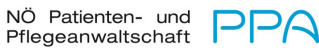
For information about National Contact Points and patient organisations in other EU countries, check [www.activecitizenship.net](http://www.activecitizenship.net)



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## Partners



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REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE TO THE EU  
Rue Philippe Le Bon, 46 - 1000 Brussels - Belgium  
Mob. +39 3408465097  
brussels@activecitizenship.net  
www.activecitizenship.net

HEADQUARTERS  
Via Cereate, 6 - 00183 Rome - Italy  
Tel. +39 (0)6 367181 Fax +39 (0)6 36718333  
mail@activecitizenship.net  
www.cittadinanzattiva.it