

First Meeting of the Specialised Committee on Social Security Coordination

Virtual | UK Host | 6 July 2021 | 13:30 to 15:30 BST / 14:30 to 16:30 CEST

Minutes

1. Welcome and opening remarks from the Co-Chairs

The Co-Chairs welcomed each other, and all attendees, to the first Specialised Committee on Social Security Coordination, emphasising the value of the Protocol on Social Security Coordination and the benefits it will bring to citizens moving between the UK and EU.

The Agenda was adopted.

2. Decision 1/2021 (Amendment of the Annexes to the Protocol on Social Security Coordination)

The EU notified the Specialised Committee that the European Commission has adopted a proposal for a Council Decision, allowing the Commission to adopt, on behalf of the EU, Specialised Committee Decision 1/2021. This proposal will be put to the Council for approval. The Specialised Committee agreed that Decision 1/2021 could then be adopted by written procedure.

The Co-Chairs agreed to keep in touch via the Secretariat regarding publishing the updated Annexes and Appendixes once adopted.

3. Notifications in accordance with Article SSC.59

The UK presented its proposal on how to best deal with notifications to the Specialised Committee concerning changes to national legislation covered by the Protocol. In order to avoid the duplication of existing processes and for efficiency, the UK suggested an annual bulk notification of changes to national legislation by the UK and EU should be sufficient.

The EU agreed and welcomed this pragmatic approach.

This will be communicated in writing via the Secretariat for formal agreement.

4. EESSI (Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information), Forms and Documents

The UK communicated its preference to use EESSI for the implementation of the Protocol on Social Security Coordination as it provides more efficient support for citizens moving across borders. The UK expressed, for administrative ease, it would like to see the minimum changes to EESSI, forms and documents necessary to implement the Protocol. The UK suggested guidance could be agreed via the Secretariat to help competent institutions utilise existing internal forms and documents.

However, on customer facing documents such as the PDA1, the UK indicated these would need updating to reflect the new Trade and Cooperation Agreement but committed to being pragmatic and keeping any changes to a minimum.

The EU welcomed the UK's preference to utilise EESSI for the Protocol and agreed that only limited necessary changes should take place. The specific changes and the financial cost model regarding the UK's contribution should be agreed between the UK and EU in a further technical discussion. The EU supported a pragmatic approach and committed to practically looking at any changes e.g. to public forms such as the PDA1 as necessary and will carry out consultations with the Member States on this.

The UK and EU agreed further discussion will be needed on the implications of differentiating or not between the Withdrawal Agreement and Trade and Cooperation Agreement cohort within relevant forms, particularly on the procedures for the reimbursement of sickness benefits.

The Co-Chairs committed to a further technical discussion to progress these issues.

5. Guidance and Information

The UK and EU agreed to be pragmatic and aim to apply the Administrative Commission decisions and recommendations, which are relevant, in the context of the Protocol. The EU explained that they are still consulting, including with Member States, on the most useful areas of new guidance and the form this guidance should take, for example joint guidance.

The Co-Chairs agreed to continue to correspond on this issue via the Secretariat.

6. Implementation and application of the Protocol: Progress Update

The UK and EU shared implementation updates of the Protocol on Social Security Coordination including areas of published guidance and engagement with stakeholders but noted there are no major areas of risk currently identified.

The Co-Chairs agreed to keep in close contact with each other via the Secretariat to ensure any issues that do arise can be dealt with quickly and efficiently in order to limit the effect on citizens.

7. Other Specialised Committee actions

The Co-Chairs agreed to progress other areas delegated to the Specialised Committee but not discussed today via the Secretariat and adopt any necessary decisions through written procedure.

8. Any Other Business

The UK and EU did not have any AOB.

9. Concluding remarks

The UK and EU reiterated the importance of the Specialised Committee and the Protocol on Social Security Coordination for the mutual benefit of citizens.

The Co-Chairs exchanged views on the next meeting of the Specialised Committee and agreed not to hesitate to schedule one as and when necessary, with a preference towards the end of the year or beginning of the next.

Approved by the Joint Secretariat of the Specialised Committee on Social Security Coordination.

Annex 1: Participants of the First Meeting of the Specialised Committee on Social Security Coordination

UK Delegation (18)

- UK Co-chair of the Specialised Committee on Social Security Coordination
- UK Government Officials from DWP, HMRC, DHSC, FCDO & CO
- Scottish Government Officials
- Northern Ireland Executive Officials
- Welsh Government Officials
- UK Mission to the European Union Officials

EU Delegation (39)

- EU Co-chair of the Specialised Committee on Social Security Coordination
- European Commission Officials
- Delegation of the European Union to the UK Officials
- Representatives of EU Member States