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Towards a better coordination of social security systems in the EU

MEPs adopted a report on a regulation which aims at improving the coordination of national social security systems when citizens work or travel cross-border. The text adopted by 645 votes in favour, 13 against and 18 abstentions defines for all the parties involved (insured persons and members of their family, employers, social security institutions and the competent authorities of the Member States) the procedures for implementing the rules set out in the basic regulation in practice.

"The regulation will ensure that social security functions effectively when EU citizens move freely within Europe for professional reasons, studies or leisure", says the rapporteur Jean Lambert (Greens/EFA, UK).

During the first reading, the Council adopted a majority of Parliament's amendments concerning the principles underlying the cooperation for implementation and the strengthening of data protection when data are exchanged through electronic means.

At second reading, Parliament tabled amendments aiming at clarifying the rights for citizens to information. The second-reading agreement between Parliament and Council emphasises that the persons covered by the regulation receive from the competent institution a timely answer to their requests and the necessary information to assert their rights.

Members States' particularities

MEPs also adopted a report by Jan Cremers (PES, NL) on the content of the annexes to the basic regulation by 633 votes in favour, 13 against and 18 abstentions. The annexes refer to national particularities that need to be taken into account.

For the Parliament, the problematic issue was Annex III, since it contains a list of Member States which apply "restriction of rights to benefits in kind for members of the family of a frontier worker" and initial EP position was to repeal the annex.

The compromise agreed with Council, aims at ensuring that the list of Member States in Annex III is reviewed 5 years from the date of entry into force of the regulation. Then, a report from the Administrative Commission on social security will assess the significance, frequency, scale and costs of the application of Annex III. The Annex should be repealed unless, in its report, the Administrative Commission provides compelling reasons not to do so.

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