

PRACTICAL GUIDE

EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD (EHIC)

INSTITUTO DA SEGURANÇA SOCIAL, I.P



SEGURANÇA SOCIAL



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The information in this practical guide does not waive the consultation of the law.

A — European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) - What is it?

This card allows any national resident in Portugal to receive medical care during his/her temporary stay in one of the 27 Member States of the European Union, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland or Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) grants its holder the access to necessary healthcare during a temporary stay in another Member State.

It is a single-format card, common throughout the European Union, the European Economic Area and Switzerland, and it is aimed to simplify the identification of its holder and of the institution responsible for the payment of healthcare costs.

Important note: The European Health Insurance Card does not cover situations where the person travels to another country for the specific purpose of receiving medical treatment.

Please note: Considering that the European Union and the United Kingdom have reached an agreement – the **Trade and Cooperation Agreement** (EU-UK Agreement), covering matters of **coordination of social security systems, including healthcare** – the healthcare scheme previously in force continues to be applied in these countries. Therefore, during a temporary stay in the United Kingdom, **the EU beneficiaries will continue to benefit from healthcare**, if necessary, **using the European Health Insurance Card**.

B1 — What is the Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC)?

In case the responsible service is unable to issue the EHIC in time, when the beneficiary has to travel abroad and needs the card or if he/she has lost or forgotten it, the institution covering the beneficiary may send a Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC) directly to the healthcare provider of the foreign country or to the beneficiary (by fax or email). This certificate covers the same benefits as the EHIC.

B2 — Who may apply for the EHIC? What are the applying conditions?

Who may apply for the EHIC?

- Beneficiaries from the Social Security system (active workers, pensioners or family members).
- Beneficiaries of the Voluntary Social Insurance Scheme.

In the case of research fellows, the EHIC/PRC is issued stating the respective Social Security Identification Number (NISS). If they do not have a NISS yet, the EHIC is issued stating their National Health Service User Number.

- Beneficiaries of public health subsystems:

- Directorate-General for Social Protection of Civil Servants and Agents (ADSE);
- Social Action Institute of the Armed Forces (IASFA/ADM);
- Sickness insurance of the National Republican Guard (SAD-GNR);
- Sickness insurance of the Public Security Police (SAD-PSP).

In order to apply for the EHIC or the Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC), the beneficiaries of these subsystems must provide their National Health Service User Number or Social Security Identification Number (NISS).

- Users of the National Health Service (if they are not covered by any health system or subsystem). In this case, the EHIC is issued stating the National Health Service User Number.
- People who have worked abroad and returned to Portugal after becoming pensioners:
 - If you are a beneficiary of the Portuguese Social Security system or public sector scheme, or receive a pension from Portugal, you are entitled to sickness insurance in Portugal. In this case, the EHIC is issued by the Portuguese Social Security Services.
 - If you are not a beneficiary of the Portuguese Social Security system or public sector scheme, nor receive a pension from Portugal, you must make your registration at the Social Security District Centre of your residence area, submitting form E-121/Portable Document S1 issued by the competent institution of the Member State that pays your pension, being that institution competent for issuing the EHIC. The same applies to the family members who are not covered by the Portuguese Social Security system or public sector scheme.
- Pensioners from a foreign mandatory social protection system:
 - If you are a pensioner from only one of the Member States of the European Union or European Economic Area, the EHIC is issued by the institution of the Member State that pays your pension.
 - If you are a pensioner only from Switzerland, the EHIC is issued by the competent Social Security Service of your residence area, only in the case you are exempt from the Swiss health insurance because you have exercised your right of option for the Portuguese National Health Service.
- Posted workers:

If a worker is going to carry out an activity abroad, in addition to the EHIC, the employer must request the issuing of Form E-101/Portable Document A1, indicating the number of months of activity to be carried out by the worker abroad, which cannot exceed 24 months. If the posting period exceeds 24 months, the worker is, in principle, subject to the legislation of the Member State where he/she is working and the employer must provide for the worker's registration in the social security system of that Member State.

- Households:

If, in a household with two adults (a couple), only one of them is covered by a social protection system or subsystem, the respective spouse (husband or wife) is entitled to the EHIC/PRC, as well as their children, if any, whether they are entitled or not to the family benefit.

Please note: If the spouse of a worker covered by the legislation of another Member State is not carrying out a professional activity in Portugal, he/she must register himself/herself and the respective children at the competent Social Security District Centre of their residence area, submitting Form E109/Portable Document S1, which must be issued by the competent Social Security institution covering the migrant worker. Exceptionally, this situation does not apply to family members of migrant workers in Switzerland.

Please note: For military personnel on an official mission — in the war between Ukraine and Russia -, the form Mod. GIT 53 — DGSS may be completed and signed on behalf of the person concerned, stating his/her Portuguese Social Security Identification Number (NISS) and the National Health Service User Card Number, in case he/she does not pay Social Security contributions. This form may be sent to the International Coordination Unit (UCI – *Unidade de Coordenação Internacional*) by email (ISS-iinternacionais@seg-social.pt) or to the Social Security District services of the residence area, whose contact details are available at <https://www.seg-social.pt/contactos4>.

C1 — How to apply for the EHIC

Necessary Documents

Form

Where to apply for the EHIC

Necessary Documents

The beneficiary's:

- Social Security Identification Card; or
- Public or Private Subsystem Card; or
- National Health Service User Card.

Form

Mod. GIT 53 — DGSS, available at the Social Security Customer Information Services and for printing on the Internet, at www.seg-social.pt

In the **Acessos Rápidos** (Quick Access) menu, click on **Formulários** (Forms) and in the field **Pesquisar por palavra-chave** (keyword search) insert the form/model number or name.

Where to apply for the EHIC

1. On the Internet



Social Security beneficiaries with a Portuguese Social Security Identification Number (NISS) may apply for the EHIC through the Social Security online service (*Segurança Social Direta*) – if they are not already registered on this service, they must do so and wait for the access password to be sent by email or SMS. The Social Security APP “*Segurança Social + próxima*” is also available for “Card Consultation”, “Card Issuing” and “Card Renewal” from a mobile phone (Smartphone).

Important note: The EHIC is free of charge for its holders; therefore, do not apply for the EHIC on unknown websites that ask you for money.

2. In person

In mainland Portugal

At the Social Security services of the residence area of the beneficiaries registered in the Social Security system, by completing form Mod. GIT 53 — DGSS, available at the Social Security customer Information Services or for printing on the Internet, at www.seg-social.pt, and attaching a copy of one of the following documents:

- the beneficiary’s Social Security Identification Card or Document stating the NISS;
 - the Public or Private Subsystem Card;
 - the National Health Service User Card.
- ◆ In Citizen Spaces (*Espaços Cidadão*) – digitally assisted services for access to the Social Security Online service (*Segurança Social Direta*).

In the Azores

- At the Institute for Social Development of the Azores (*Instituto para o Desenvolvimento Social dos Açores, IPRA*).

In Madeira

- At the Social Security Centre services.

If you have changed your address and did not communicate this to the Social Security Services, you must do it before applying for the EHIC, submitting form Mod. MG2 – DGSS – Requerimento de alteração de Dados – beneficiário ativo/pensionista (Request for change of personal details – active beneficiary/pensioner), which is available at the Social Security customer information services and for printing on the Internet, at www.seg-social.pt

In the **Acessos Rápidos** (Quick Access) menu, click on **Formulários** (Forms) and in the field **Pesquisar por palavra-chave** (keyword search) insert the form/model number or name.

If, when applying for the EHIC, you do not indicate any address (Portuguese or foreign), due to security reasons, the EHIC is sent to the address registered in the Social Security Information System (SISS). Therefore, you should make sure that your address is updated in the system.

If you are a pensioner of a foreign mandatory social protection system, you must request the EHIC to the institution that pays your pension.

C2 — When is the EHIC issued?

Delivery time: five to seven business days.

If you do not provide a different address (Portuguese or foreign), the card is sent by post to the address registered in the Social Security Information System (SISS).

Since the EHIC is an individual card, each family member of the insured person must have his/her own card.

Important note: If there is a delay in the delivery of the EHIC or the Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC), the supporting document of the EHIC request does not replace the submission of the EHIC and, therefore, it is not accepted by the healthcare providers abroad.

D1 — What is the EHIC validity period? How to request for the EHIC renewal?

Validity

The EHIC validity period is 3 years.

EHIC Renewal

If you are a Social Security beneficiary, you may request the EHIC renewal through the Social Security Online Service (*Segurança Social Direta*) – to do so, you must be previously registered on this service.

To request the EHIC renewal, you must state your:

- Full name;
- Birth date;
- Social Security Identification Number (NISS);
- Card number (EHIC), whose validity is about to expire.

If you are requesting the EHIC renewal for more than one household member, the operation must be repeated per each member.

Please note: If, in the meantime, you have changed your residence, you must communicate this to the Social Security Services (as indicated in paragraph C1) before submitting the EHIC renewal request. Otherwise, the new card will be sent to your former address.

You may also request the EHIC renewal in person as indicated in paragraph C1.

D2 — What are the EHIC holder's duties?

If you become ill when you are temporarily staying in another Member State, you may go to the public health services to receive the necessary treatment and you will only have to pay the fees and/or healthcare costs that the nationals of that Member State pay to receive such treatment.

If the EHIC has been lost or stolen, you must communicate this fact to the Social Security or health subsystem services that issued it. If you are travelling, you may ask for a Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC) to be sent to your e-mail; this may be especially useful if you need to be hospitalised.

Please note: In Spain, as of 1 September 2012, medicines are no longer free for Spanish pensioners.

As from that date, the price to be paid by pensioners is 10% of the medicine value.

Pensioners holding the European Health Insurance Card who, during a stay in Spain, need healthcare and to buy medicines, must make a sworn statement on their pensioner status in order to benefit from the same percentage of the medicine price applied to Spanish pensioners.

If that sworn statement is not made, the amount to be paid corresponds to a percentage of the medicine price, calculated according to the pensioner's annual income, as follows:

Annual income (EUR)	Percentage of the value of the medicine
Equal to or lower than 100,000	50 %
Higher than 100,000	60 %

E1 — Applicable Legislation

Decree-Law No 26/2012 of 6 February

Establishes the extinction of the following insurance schemes: *Caixa de Previdência e Abono de Família dos Jornalistas* (Journalists' Insurance and Family Benefit Scheme); *Caixa de Previdência do Pessoal da Empresa Portuguesa das Águas Livres, S. A.* (Insurance Scheme for Personnel of the Portuguese Company *Águas Livres, S.A.*); *Caixa de Previdência do Pessoal das Companhias Reunidas Gás e Eletricidade* (Insurance Scheme for Personnel of the Joined Gas and Electricity Companies); *Caixa de Previdência do Pessoal dos Telefones de Lisboa e Porto* (Insurance Scheme for Personnel of the Lisbon and Porto Telephone Company); «*Cimentos*» - *Federação de Caixas de Previdência* (Cement company – Insurance Schemes Federation); *Caixa de Previdência do Pessoal da Companhia de Cimento Tejo* (Insurance Scheme for Personnel of Tejo Cement Company); *Caixa de Previdência da Secil - Companhia Geral de Cal e Cimento* (Secil Insurance Scheme – General Company of Lime and Cement); and *Caixa de Previdência da Empresa de Cimentos de Leiria* (Insurance Scheme of Leiria Cement Company).

Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April on the coordination of social security systems, as amended by Regulation (EC) No 988/2009. This Regulation entered into force on 1 May 2010 and, initially, it was only applicable in the EU Member States. Together with Regulation (EC) No 987/2009, the legislative package was renamed “modernised coordination of social security systems”. A consolidated version of these Regulations has been published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Ministerial Order No 1359/2009, Official Journal No 208 of 27 October

Approves the European Health Insurance Card template - Ministry of Finance and Public Administration, Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and Ministry of Health.

Regulation (EC) No 631/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, to self-employed persons and to members of their families moving within the Community, and Council Regulation (EEC) No 574/72 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71, in respect of the alignment of rights and the simplification of procedures.

Decision of the Administrative Commission on social security for migrant workers No 189 of 18 June 2003

Aimed at introducing a European health insurance card to replace the forms necessary for the application of Council Regulations (EEC) No 1408/71 and (EEC) No 574/72 as regards access to health care during a temporary stay in a Member State other than the competent State or the State of residence.

Regulation (EEC) No 574/72 of 27 March laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, to self-employed persons and to their families moving within the Community

E2 — Glossary

EHIC

European Health Insurance Card

PRC

Provisional Replacement Certificate

Posted worker

A "posted worker" is an employee who is sent by his employer/company to carry out an activity abroad on a temporary basis, being authorized to pay his/her contributions to the Portuguese Social Security.

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if I need healthcare outside Portugal and do not have the EHIC/PRC?

If you need healthcare in a country of the European Union, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland or the United Kingdom and you do not have the EHIC or PRC with you, you must pay the healthcare costs and submit the invoices to the Health Centre or Health subsystem from which you are a beneficiary.

The Ministry of Health or the Health subsystem will then decide if you are entitled or not to the healthcare costs reimbursement and, if yes, when the payment will be made.

It is therefore advisable to apply for the EHIC before travelling or, if it is not issued on time, request the Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC).

Can the EHIC be used worldwide?

No, the card is only valid in the EU Member States, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

If you are going to travel to a country other than those mentioned above and that country has an agreement with Portugal, you must go to the Social Security services of your residence area and request the appropriate form for that country.

Can I use the EHIC in the UK?

Yes. Portuguese beneficiaries who need healthcare during a temporary stay in the UK continue to be entitled to use the European Health Insurance Card.

I am going to travel abroad. How can I identify the public health services of a Member State?

You should seek information about the public health services of the Member State concerned and where they are located before travelling to that country or when you arrive there.

For further information, please consult the following website:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_security_schemes/healthcare/index_en.htm

Can I use the European Health Insurance Card to go to another country in order to receive medical treatment?

No. The EHIC does not cover situations in which the insured person travels to another State for the specific purpose of receiving medical treatment.

What to do if my European Health Insurance Card has been lost or stolen?

You must immediately communicate this fact to the entity that issued the card and follow the instructions given to you by the respective services. This communication is mandatory. It may be done via the Social Security Line: + 351 210 545 400 or + 351 300 502 502 (business days from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and via email, by completing the contact form available on the Social Security Online Service (*Segurança Social Direta*); in the **Perfil** (Profile) menu, click on **contactos com a Segurança Social** (contacts with Social Security).

How to apply for the EHIC/PRC if you are a pensioner of a foreign mandatory social protection system?

You must make your registration at the Social Security District Centre of your residence area, using Form E-121/Portable Document S1, which must be issued by the competent institution of the Member State that pays your pension.

What are the procedures in relation to posted workers?

If the beneficiary is going to carry out an activity abroad, in addition to the EHIC, the employer must request the issuing of Form E-101/Portable Document A1, indicating the number of months of activity to be carried out by the worker abroad, provided that it does not exceed 24 months in relation to the 27 Member States and 12 months in relation to Switzerland and the European Economic Area (EEA) countries.

If the posting period exceeds 24 months, the worker is, in principle, subject to the legislation of the Member State where he/she is carrying out the activity and the employer must provide for the worker's registration in the social security system of that Member State.

Which Insurance Schemes have stopped issuing the EHIC and when did the EHIC started to be issued by the General Social Security System?

The following insurance schemes were extinguished and integrated into the Social Security Institute (*ISS, I.P. - Instituto da Segurança Social, I.P.*): *Caixa de Previdência e Abono de Família dos Jornalistas* (Journalists' Insurance and Family Benefit Scheme); *Caixa de Previdência do Pessoal da Empresa Portuguesa das Águas Livres, S. A.* (Insurance Scheme for Personnel of the Portuguese Company *Águas Livres, S.A.*); *Caixa de Previdência do Pessoal das Companhias Reunidas Gás e Eletricidade* (Insurance Scheme for Personnel of the Joined Gas and Electricity Companies); *Caixa de Previdência do Pessoal dos Telefones de Lisboa e Porto* (Insurance Scheme for Personnel of the Lisbon and Porto Telephone Company); «*Cimentos*» - *Federação de Caixas de Previdência* (Cement company – Insurance Schemes Federation); *Caixa de Previdência do Pessoal da Companhia de Cimento Tejo* (Insurance Scheme for Personnel of Tejo Cement Company); *Caixa de Previdência da Secil - Companhia Geral de Cal e Cimento* (Secil Insurance Scheme – General Company of Lime and Cement);

and *Caixa de Previdência da Empresa de Cimentos de Leiria* (Insurance Scheme of Leiria Cement Company).

Considering that the beneficiaries of the Medical and Social Assistance Services of the Southern Mainland Portugal and Islands Bank Workers' Union (*SAMS – Serviços de Assistência Médico-Social do Sindicato dos Bancários do Sul e Ilhas*) can no longer apply for the EHIC in these services, in which services can they now apply for the EHIC?

The Social Security Institute is now the competent service to receive and process the EHIC applications submitted by this subsystem's beneficiaries, but only if they apply as users of the National Health Service and submit the respective National Health Service User Card or Citizen Card.

Considering that the beneficiaries of the public health subsystems (*SAD-GNR, SAD-PSP, IASFA/ADM*) can no longer apply for the EHIC in the respective services, in which services can they now apply for the EHIC?

The Social Security Institute is now the competent service to receive and process the EHIC applications submitted by these subsystems' beneficiaries. For Social Security beneficiaries, the EHIC must be issued stating the respective Social Security Identification Number (NISS) and, for the other beneficiaries, the EHIC is issued stating the National Health Service User number and upon submission of the National Health Service User Card or Citizen Card.