

WHO WE ARE

Shaping a social Europe together

The voice of Germany's social insurers

We

Since 1993, we have represented the interests of the umbrella associations of the German social insurance system in dealings with the European institutions. We monitor and analyse trends and developments in European health policy and social policy, as well as commercial law, competition law and international trade law. We unite the interests of the umbrella associations of Germany's statutory health, long-term care, pension and accident insurance providers and actively participate in shaping European health and social policy. We want all EU citizens to benefit from health and social systems that are strong, efficient and future-proof. Our office is here in Brussels and we can be contacted at any time.



Creating a social Europe with free movement

In addition to the ongoing economic and social inequality in the EU Member States, a reorientation of the social dimension in the EU is essential due to changes in working and living conditions and demographic developments. The "European Pillar of Social Rights" is a valuable instrument for improving social equality. This is why it will be brought to life through several projects in the coming years. Such initiatives at EU level must take into account the diversity of social security systems and the different economic circumstances in the Member States. The EU's role in coordinating social security systems has proven its worth. It should continue to promote cooperation between Member States where there is clear added value.



Making the most of digitalisation

The digitalisation of social security services and the way they communicate with insured persons and employers should not be an end in itself. The full potential of digitalisation will only manifest itself when the administrative burden on insured persons and employers is significantly reduced. This can be helped by sharing electronic records as much as possible (following the "once-only principle"), while also safeguarding data protection. The recently created European Single Digital Gateway is a useful means of making it easier for citizens to communicate with authorities, including across borders, and should be systematically expanded. In addition to digital services, other communication channels should also be maintained so as not to exclude anyone.

International cooperation to ensure payment of social security contributions

The globalisation of economic and labour relations is leading to an increase in cross-border services and exchanges. A prominent example is brokering or organising work via electronic platforms. In this situation, at least three parties interact—client, contractor, platform—and each can be active in different countries. As a result, ensuring that all workers have social security protection and that the contributions due are actually paid is a complex task. Platform work is a phenomenon both in Europe and internationally. It is therefore important to also find solutions at both these levels. In the coming years, Europe must increasingly address the issue of social protection. Discussions that consolidate interests and promote cooperation between participating authorities and social security institutions also need to be initiated.

Challenges of an ageing society

In the European social model, statutory pension systems play a central role in ensuring an adequate income in old age. Depending on the Member States' preferences, they are supplemented by occupational and private pension schemes. In view of demographic change and economic conditions, all systems face the challenge of ensuring the sustainable financing of adequate benefits. It is particularly important to find solutions by creating better and more inclusive working arrangements in order to enable insured persons to acquire sufficient rights and to make retirement flexible. Good examples of this are initiatives within the framework of the European Pillar of Social Rights to reduce the “gender pay gap” and to integrate older people into the labour market. A well-organised exchange of experience at European level can also provide valuable momentum here.

Potential opportunities in the health sector

Citizens should also continue to benefit from European unity in the future. Be it directly through a well-functioning health system when staying in another EU country or indirectly through close cooperation between Member States, for example when authorising medicines. In order to make the health systems fit for the future, we must jointly harness their potential. Examples include the assessment of medicinal products and medical devices to ensure the best possible care of patients, making use of digitalisation and artificial intelligence, and joint research efforts. The European Union's goal of jointly taking on Europe-wide challenges and pooling efforts at European level through research in health systems and healthcare must be at the heart of this.

“Vision Zero” through a culture of prevention

A person's health is a valuable resource that must have top priority at work and be maintained by all suitable means. The ultimate goal is “Vision Zero”—the vision of a world without work-related accidents and illnesses. The highest priority is to avoid fatal and serious accidents at work and occupational diseases. Digitalisation and demographic change are changing the way work is organised and, as a result of longer working lives, to new challenges in terms of prevention and maintaining employability. To achieve a long and healthy working life—even in the changing world of work—joint efforts are needed. These should include a comprehensive culture of prevention covering all areas of life. Policies and strategies for rehabilitation and reintegration should strengthen or restore the employability of older people and people who have been injured or suffered an illness. We welcome the European Parliament's initiative to increase the prominence of this issue.

Contact:

We'd love to hear from you!

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