

Annex 5: Description of the action:

Cross-border mobility is of particular importance in the border regions, as it is part of the every-day life of citizens to cross the border, either to get to their work places or for leisure purposes. It can be said that border regions are engines and also laboratories of cross-border cooperation. No other continent than Europe has such a dense net of national borders. At these interfaces, different cultural and linguistic and, above all, also legal and administrative systems clash. Social security is a remarkable example for the complexity of the barriers, which can be found at the internal and external borders of the European Union.

Twenty years of internal market have let to progress but, according to a survey of the SOLVIT network¹, social security problems caused by the implementation of EU directives still remain at the top of the barriers, and this with 34 %. A complete harmonisation of legislation is impossible in the foreseeable future, as this is not desired by the Member States. Therefore, it has to be expected that due to the dynamic development of national border systems, new situations will arise that could cause difficulties for mobile workers, if they are not informed both timely and comprehensively.

The present project specifically focuses on barriers concerning social security in border regions. Due to their peripheral location and the clashing of different social security systems, legislation, languages and cultures, they have to face particular challenges when providing information to border commuters.

Due to lacking reliable data, it is difficult to say how many employees cross a European border several times per week in order to get from their homes to their workplaces, but it can be estimated that there are between 400.000 and 850.000 cross-border commuters. This number could be much higher, if potential cross-border could receive better information about possible risks and particularities, about their rights and obligations with regard to social security claims. Although information on standard situations can be obtained relatively easy via brochures and web portals, the situation could quickly become extremely complicated if the situation of a worker somehow differs from the standard situations: "The devil is in the details".

¹ This network was founded in the year 2002 by the European Commission and the Member States in order do develop pragmatic solutions for problems arising due to wrong application of EU rules.