

CROSS BORDER ACTIVITIES IN BULGARIA

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The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU

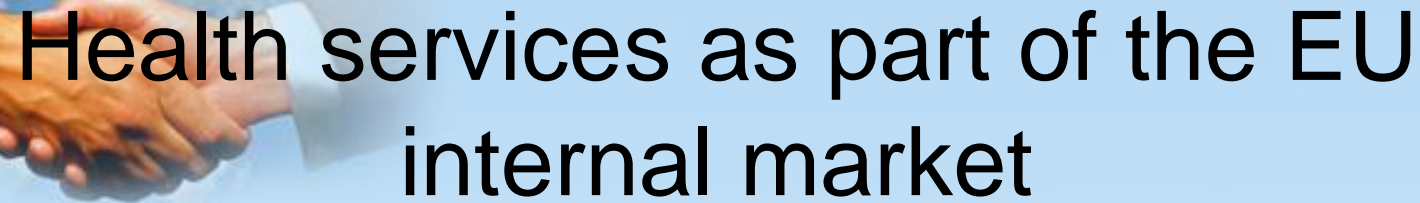
The right to health and medical care for each EU citizen is stated in Articles 34 and 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and includes:

- the right to social security benefits;
- the entitlement to social services providing protection in cases such as maternity, illness, industrial accidents, dependency or old age, and in the case of loss of employment;
- the right of access to preventive health care;
- the right to benefit from medical treatment under the conditions established by national laws and practices.



Common values and principles

In 2006 at the “Health” Council the Ministers of Health adopted a “Statement of common values and principles in EU health systems” which called for action: “ensuring clarity for European citizens about their rights and entitlements when they move from one EU Member State to another and enshrining these values and principles in a legal framework in order to ensure legal clarity”.

The image shows two hands shaking in a firm grip, symbolizing agreement or partnership. The hands are positioned over a faint world map background. The person on the left is wearing a grey suit jacket and a white shirt cuff. The person on the right is wearing a white shirt cuff. The background is a light blue gradient.

Health services as part of the EU internal market

- The European Court of Justice has made clear that Treaty provisions on free movement apply to health services, regardless on how they are organized, or financed at national level.
- Still there is no clear directive on services in the internal market in applying free movement principles and practices to cross-border health services.



The need for normative and financial regulation

The European Court of Justice rulings have developed the following principles for cross-border medical care:

- ***Any non-hospital care*** to which a person is entitled in their own Member State they may also seek in any other Member State without prior authorization and be reimbursed up to the level of reimbursement provided by their own system.
- ***Any hospital care*** to which they are entitled in their own Member state they may also seek in any other Member State provided they first have the authorization of their own system. This authorization must be given if their system can not provide them care within a medically acceptable time limit considering their condition. They will be reimbursed up to at least the level of reimbursement provided by their own system.



It is necessary to ensure effective application of the EU freedoms to receive and provide cross-border health services and to address this process from organizational, normative, financial and research point of view.

This could be one of the priority areas of cooperation between the Balkan countries

Questions waiting for answers:

- **how to regulate flexibly cross-border health care without creating barriers to free movement of patients and services?**
- **how to ensure proper financial compensation for the receiving health institutions?**
- **what information should be available for patients to facilitate the selection between the healthcare providers in other countries?**
- **what practical barriers exist for citizens seeking health care abroad?**



Types of cross-border health care

- ***Cross-border provision of services*** - (free movement of services from the territory of one member state to another) such as telemedicine, remote diagnosis etc.
- ***Use of services abroad*** - (i.e. a patient is seeking consultation or treatment from a health care provider in another member state – considered as patient mobility).
- ***Permanent presence of a service provider*** – (i.e. establishment of a health care provider in another member state, such as local clinics, hospitals etc. as branches of foreign health institutions).
- ***Temporary presence of persons*** – (mobility of health professionals providing services abroad)



Necessary interventions

- **Working out of a normative regulatory framework.**
- **Provision of information for the quantity, quality, accessibility and the impact of the cross-border medical services**
- **Identifying the competent authorities and their responsibilities**
- **Defining the responsibility and assessing the level of harm caused by possible medical errors**
- **Clarifying the ethical framework for some cross-border implemented medical interventions**
- **Supporting the practical cooperation and the partnership relations between the national health administrations, insurance funds, health establishments and citizen.**



Support to national health administrations

- The free movement of patients and health specialists is a topic of interest to the national health administrations, the EU Commission and to other stakeholders. These topics are already in the agenda of the “High Level Group on health services and medical care.”
- Both Seventh and Eighth Community Framework Programmes for Research support financially such initiatives for the development of cross-border health care.

A photograph showing two hands shaking in a firm grip, symbolizing cooperation or agreement. The hands are positioned over a faint world map background. The person on the left is wearing a grey suit jacket and a white shirt. The person on the right is wearing a white shirt. The background is a light blue gradient.

Bulgarian participation in EU cross border projects

- **Policy priorities of the Ministry of Health in the field of cross border cooperation: development of cross border health services and environmental health hazards.**
- **Cross border projects with the participation of Faculty of Public Health**
 - **Health care reforms in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe – challenges, expectations, results**
 - **Health management training for health executives from border regions of Balkan countries**

A photograph showing two hands shaking in a firm grip, symbolizing agreement or partnership. The hands are positioned over a faint world map background. The person on the left is wearing a dark suit jacket and a white shirt cuff. The person on the right is wearing a light-colored suit jacket and a white shirt cuff.

Bulgarian participation in EU cross border projects

- Assessment of women’s health in the border regions**
- Establishment of Public Health Centers in border regions of Greece and Bulgaria**
- Prevention, monitoring and control of endemic diseases in the border regions of the Balkan countries**
- Training in epidemiology, prevention and cross-border control of infectious and parasitic diseases. (In cooperation with MH and the local public health authorities)**



Possible areas for collaborative activities

Collaborative activities could be focused on implementation, coordination and research in the following and some other areas of priority interest:

- Creation of European network of specialized “Centers of reference”.
- Improvement of the international coordination mechanisms of the health policy process for elaboration of successful models for cross-border public health and health care interventions.
- Health impact assessment of cross-border health activities as well as assessment of the financial needs.

A photograph showing two hands shaking in a firm grip, symbolizing collaboration. The hands are positioned over a world map, which is partially visible in the background. The background of the entire slide is a light blue gradient.

Possible areas for collaborative activities

- **Assessment of the health knowledge and culture (health literacy) and their impact on healthy behavior**
- **Assessment of health inequalities in border regions in relation to health determinants**
- **Cross border mapping of health facilities and human resources**
- **Development and provision of cross border health services in the Balkan countries**
- **Health impact assessment of cross border projects**