

## Resource 1.14

### Q & A Card

### Teacher Facts



**Question:**

I plan to take a gap year when I finish school. Can I travel around other countries in the EU without any restrictions?

**Answer:**

For stays of less than three months, the only requirement on Union citizens is that they possess a valid identity document or passport. The host member state may require the persons concerned to register their presence in the country within a reasonable and non-discriminatory period of time.

The right of residence for more than six months remains subject to certain conditions. Applicants must:

- either be engaged in economic activity (on an employed or self-employed basis);
- have sufficient resources and sickness insurance to ensure that they do not become a burden on the social services of the host member state during their stay. The Member States may not specify a minimum amount which they deem sufficient; instead they must take account of personal circumstances;
- be following vocational training as a student and have sufficient resources and sickness insurance to ensure that they do not become a burden on the social services of the host member state during their stay; or
- be a family member of a Union citizen who falls into one of the above categories.

For more information visit:

[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/justice\\_freedom\\_security/free\\_movement\\_of\\_persons\\_asylum\\_immigration/l33152\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/l33152_en.htm)

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#### Question:

My family plans to move to another EU country. I am interested in democracy and politics and am, therefore, concerned that when I reach the voting age in that country, I won't be able to vote. What are my rights?

#### Answer:

The Treaty on European Union (also known as the Maastricht Treaty) gives every Union citizen the right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal and European elections in the country where he or she lives. They are held to the same conditions as nationals of that country.

#### Municipal Elections

When you live in another member state, you are directly affected by that local authority's decisions – whether about road plans or development of new schools. So it's right that you should be able to express your opinion on local issues. You can do this by voting or by standing as a candidate in local elections.

Some EU countries permit voting only at your principal or usual place of residence. However, in countries that also allow voting at your secondary place of residence, they must treat you the same as a national of their country. You do not automatically lose the right to vote in your country of origin if you vote in municipal elections in your country of residence.

As a general rule, EU countries cannot require you to have lived there for a certain amount of time before allowing you to vote unless their own nationals are subject to this same rule. However, one country, Luxembourg, may impose a minimum residency requirement, within certain limits.

#### European Elections

During European Parliament elections, you can either vote in your EU country of origin or in the EU country where you live, but not both. This is because if you were allowed to vote in both countries, you would have two votes. This would be unfair.

#### Formalities

To vote in the European Parliament elections, all EU countries require you to register on the electoral roll. Once registered, you will remain registered under the same conditions as the nationals of that country.

For municipal elections, EU countries that do not have compulsory voting can automatically register EU nationals on their electoral roll. In the others, you have to apply to register, just like in a European Parliament election. This, in fact, is an additional protection for you, because you may not want to be subject to the compulsory voting that operates in some EU countries.

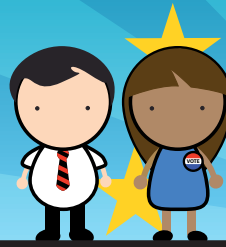
Your host EU country may require you to show your identity documents and give your last home-country address in order to verify that you are a citizen of the Union. Voters in European elections may also have to show that they would be entitled to vote if they were living in their country of origin. Candidates may also have to show evidence that they would be entitled to stand if they were still in their own country. For more information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/nav/en/citizens/services/eu-guide/living/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/nav/en/citizens/services/eu-guide/living/index_en.html)

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# EU4U?

**Question:**

What can I do if I lose my passport in a country with no British/Irish embassy?

**Answer:**

If you are an EU citizen and the place you are visiting does not have an embassy for your country, you are entitled to protection from the diplomatic or consular authorities of any EU member state represented there. This protection will be under the same conditions as given to nationals of that embassy's state.

When you seek such help, you must produce a passport or identity card as proof of nationality. If these documents have been stolen or lost, the embassy may accept another proof of nationality.

To assist, the embassy works closely with your member state. It ensures that you receive the same standard of treatment as one of its own nationals would, and it acts as the channel of communication between you and your member state.

The protection offered by embassies of other EU states may cover:

- assistance in cases of death;
- assistance in cases of serious accident or illness;
- assistance in cases of arrest or detention;
- assistance to victims of violent crime; and
- the relief and repatriation of distressed Union citizens.

This list is, however, not exhaustive.

For more information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/fsj/citizenship/diplomatic/fsj\\_citizenship\\_diplomatic\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/citizenship/diplomatic/fsj_citizenship_diplomatic_en.htm)

**Question:**

What should I do if I feel my human rights have been violated by one of the EU institutions?

**Answer:**

If you are a citizen of an EU member state or reside in an EU member state, you can make a complaint to the European Ombudsman.

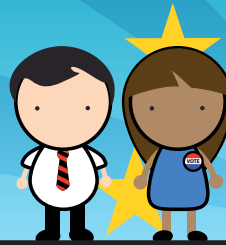
Complaints can be lodged by post, fax or email. A complaint guide and form is available from the Ombudsman's office and can be downloaded from the Ombudsman's website:

<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/atyourservice/ataglance.faces>

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EU4U?

**Question:**

What happens if I become ill when travelling in the EU?

**Answer:**

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) allows you to access state-provided healthcare in all member states of the EU. The EHIC allows you access to the same state-provided healthcare as a resident of the country you are visiting. However, many countries expect the patient to pay towards their treatment, and even with an EHIC, you might be expected to do the same. You may be able to seek reimbursement for this cost when you are back in the UK if you are not able to do so in the other country.

For more information:

<http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/healthcareabroad/ehic/pages/introduction.aspx>

**Question:**

Can I bring home anything I have bought in another EU country?

**Answer:**

There are no limits on what a private person can buy and take with them when they travel between EU countries, as long as the products are for personal use and not for resale (with exception of new means of transport).

Member states include taxes (VAT and excise) in the price of the products, and so no further taxes are due when you return home.

For more information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/common/travellers/within\\_eu/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/travellers/within_eu/index_en.htm)