

Unemployment benefits in the EU/EEA and Switzerland

Arbetslöshetsersättning inom EU/EES-området och Schweiz

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Within the EU/EEA and in relation to Switzerland there are rules ensuring that persons do not lose their social security rights when moving between member states. The unemployment insurance is part of the social security. This information is aimed at anyone considering to work or who has worked in another country within the EU/EEA and in Switzerland. It is also aimed at anyone from another country within the EU/EEA or Switzerland who is working or will work in Sweden.

Which country's rules apply to you?

Within the EU/EEA and Switzerland you are always subject to only one country's social security legislation. To ensure that persons and institutions always know which country's legislation is applicable, there are special rules to determine the applicable legislation based on the conditions in the individual case. As a general principle you are subject to the legislation of the country where you work. You are then covered by all the rights and obligations in accordance with the social security scheme of that country.

If you work in Sweden, you are covered by the Swedish scheme. If you work in another country within the EU/EEA or in Switzerland, you are covered by that country's scheme. All countries have different rules. Therefore, if you want to work outside Sweden, you must find out which rules that apply in that country.

There are some exemptions to the general principle, for example for posted workers, civil servants and people who work in several countries. In these cases or if you are unsure what applies to you, you should find out which country's legislation is applicable. In Sweden, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan) makes decisions in these cases. If Försäkringskassan determines that Swedish legislation is applicable, this means that you are also covered by Swedish unemployment insurance. You can then continue to be a member or apply to become a member of a Swedish unemployment insurance fund (arbetslöshetskassa).

In which country should you apply for unemployment benefits?

In accordance with the principle that the legislation in the country where you work applies to you, you should also apply for unemployment benefits in that country if you become unemployed. Payment of unemployment benefits is, however, linked to seeking employment in that same country. Therefore, special rules apply to persons who during their employment or self-employment in one country have commuted from their place of residence in another country. Such persons are called cross-border workers or frontier workers. In certain cases it is difficult to determine which country a person has resided in. Which rules apply also depend on how often you have travelled between the two countries, and also whether you are wholly or partially unemployed.

- If you become **wholly unemployed** after having returned at least once every week to your country of residence from the country where you have worked, you should apply for unemployment benefits in your country of residence. If you have lived in Sweden, you should register with the Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen). Contact a Swedish unemployment for information on membership and unemployment benefits. If you wish to become a member of a Swedish unemployment insurance fund, it is important that you apply for membership immediately when you become unemployed.
- If you become **partially or intermittently unemployed** and live in another country from where you last worked, you should apply for unemployment benefits in the country where you last worked. If you last worked in Sweden, you should register with Arbetsförmedlingen, and contact a Swedish unemployment insurance fund.
- A country can also be determined to be your country of residence, although **you have not returned there at least once a week**. If you become wholly unemployed and want to apply for unemployment benefits in Sweden after having worked in another country, you should register with Arbetsförmedlingen. Contact a Swedish unemployment for information on membership and unemployment benefits. If you wish to become a member of a Swedish unemployment insurance fund, it is important that you apply for membership immediately when you become unemployed. The unemployment insurance fund will determine which country is considered to be your country of residence.

Supplementary registration with the employment service in the country where you last worked

If you are wholly unemployed after having lived in one country and worked in another, and are receiving unemployment benefits in your country of residence, you can also register as a jobseeker with the employment service in the country where you last worked. Your obligations and job-seeking activities in your country of residence have priority over those in the country where you last worked. If you are receiving Swedish unemployment benefits, you must actively seek employment in Sweden and be fully prepared to accept suitable employment there, as required under the basic conditions of the Swedish unemployment insurance scheme.

If you decide to register as a jobseeker in the country where you last worked, you must inform the institution that pays your benefits as well as the employment service in your country of residence.

Special rules for certain self-employed frontier workers

Some countries do not have an unemployment insurance scheme for self-employed persons. This may mean that if you become wholly unemployed after living in one country and working as self-employed in another country, then you cannot receive unemployment benefits in your country of residence. You should instead register as a jobseeker with the employment service and apply for unemployment benefits in the country where you last worked as self-employed. This means that if you last worked as self-employed in Sweden and live in another country where there is no unemployment insurance for the self-employed, then you should register with Arbetsförmedlingen when you become unemployed. Contact a Swedish unemployment insurance fund for information about these rules.

You can also register as a jobseeker in your country of residence. Your obligations and job-seeking activities in the country where you last worked as self-employed have priority over those in your country of residence. If you are receiving Swedish unemployment benefits, you must actively seek employment and be prepared to accept suitable employment in Sweden, as required under the basic conditions of the Swedish unemployment insurance scheme. If you decide to register as a jobseeker in the country where you last worked, you must inform your Swedish unemployment insurance fund as well as Arbetsförmedlingen.

If you do not want to be available to the employment service in the country where you last worked as self-employed, but instead exclusively want to be available to the employment service in your country of residence, you can apply to export your unemployment benefits to your country of residence. You can then receive payment of your unemployment benefits for the remaining benefit period when you seek employment in your country of residence, provided that you fulfil the conditions there. Read more about this under 'Seeking employment in another country within the EU/EEA or Switzerland while receiving Swedish unemployment benefits'.

How can periods of employment, self-employment and insurance from another country be taken into account?

Persons who work in a country within the EU/EEA or in Switzerland normally acquire rights to unemployment benefits in accordance with the unemployment insurance scheme of that country. The conditions for qualification vary in each country, but are often composed of a certain amount of work within a set time frame or that sufficient contributions have been paid. Sometimes a combination of both work and contributions is required. The conditions for qualification are generally called 'periods of employment' or periods of insurance. There are corresponding periods for self-employed persons.

All completed periods of insurance, periods of employment or periods of self-employment in one country can, when necessary, be taken into account when you become unemployed in another country. The periods from the country where you previously worked are added to the periods that you have completed in the last country where you worked, according to the rules of that scheme. A condition for aggregation of periods in this way is, as a general rule, that you have worked in the country where you apply for unemployment benefits and therefore are subject to that country's scheme. If you apply for unemployment benefits in Sweden it is, as a general rule, required that you first work in Sweden in order for periods of insurance, employment or self-employment from another EU/EEA country or Switzerland to be taken into account. There can be exemptions from the requirement of having worked in Sweden for persons to whom the EU rules covering persons who have lived in one country and worked in another apply, or to whom the Nordic Convention on Social Security applies.

Contact a Swedish unemployment for more information on membership and unemployment insurance as soon as you start working in Sweden or return to Sweden after working in another EU/EEA country or Switzerland.

Periods of employment, self-employment and insurance are stated on specific documents. To obtain such a document request document U1 from the country where you have previously worked. In Sweden, the unemployment insurance funds issue this document. If you have worked in Sweden, but not been a member of an unemployment insurance fund, contact the unemployment insurance fund Alfa-kassan.

Seeking employment in another EU/EEA country or in Switzerland while receiving Swedish unemployment benefits

Jobseekers who are entitled to unemployment benefits in one country within the EU/EEA and Switzerland can under certain circumstances continue to receive these benefits while seeking employment in another country in the EU/EEA and Switzerland.

To seek employment in another country while receiving Swedish unemployment benefits, you must fulfil certain conditions prior to your departure. In Sweden, you must apply to the Swedish Unemployment Insurance Board (IAF). If you fulfil the conditions, the IAF will issue a document called U2.

In order to continue receiving your unemployment benefits, you must register as a jobseeker in the country you travel to, and submit your document U2. You must fulfil the basic conditions of the Swedish unemployment insurance, as well as the follow the control procedures of the employment service in the country you travel to, and you must be available to the labour market in that country. Read more about the requirements for obtaining document U2 at www.iaf.se.

More information

You can find more information regarding the Swedish unemployment insurance scheme in the brochure 'Financial support for jobseekers'.

Contact details for the Swedish unemployment insurance funds are available at www.samorg.org.

More information about EU social security coordination is available at the [European Commission website](#).

Contact us on 0771-416 416
arbetsformedlingen.se or through your local
public employment office

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