



# Consular protection

EU citizens' rights to consular assistance outside the EU, how to get assistance and EU rules on consular protection.

## Consular assistance when outside the EU

As an EU citizen, you are entitled to seek help from the embassy or consulate of any other EU country if you find yourselves in a situation where you need advice or assistance outside the EU, with no embassy or consulate from your own country to help you (you are "unrepresented").

Unrepresented EU citizens are entitled to receive consular protection under the same conditions as the nationals of that country. This is a right set out in Articles 20(2)c and 23 of the EU Treaty and Article 46 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The EU is working to further improve consular protection for EU citizens.

For more information, visit the [website on consular protection for EU citizens abroad](#)

## When and how to get assistance

EU citizens must find themselves in a situation where they need advice or assistance outside the EU, with no embassy or consulate from their own country to help them: they must be "unrepresented".

EU citizens who seek help from the embassy or consulate of another EU country must be able to prove that they are EU citizens by showing a valid passport or identity card. If the EU citizen is unable to produce such a document, the embassy or consulate must accept other documents as proof.

If necessary, the identity of the person concerned will be verified with the authorities of his/her country.

The help that may be provided by embassies/consulates of (other) EU countries include assistance for example in cases of:

- death
- serious accident or serious illness
- arrest or detention
- being a victim of crime
- relief and repatriation in case of an emergency
- need for an emergency travel document (e.g., in case of loss or theft of passport)

To see whether your country has an embassy or consulate in the country where you are, visit the [website on consular protection for EU citizens abroad](#)

For help with problems or to file a complaint, visit [Your rights](#)



## EU rules on consular protection

The Commission launched on 12 September 2017 [a public consultation on the EU emergency travel document](#) to gather views on how the existing rules have worked in practice and how they could be modernised to reinforce the right of unrepresented EU citizens to consular protection.

An EU Directive on consular protection for unrepresented European citizens living or travelling outside the EU was adopted on 20 April 2015.

Member States should implement those rules in their national law by 1 May 2018.

The new rules clarify when and how EU citizens in distress in a country outside the EU have the right to assistance from other EU countries' embassies or consulates, how EU countries should coordinate their assistance,.

This applies in particular in crisis situations (such as in case of a natural disaster or armed conflict) and who should pay for the costs of consular protection. The aim is to make cooperation between consular authorities easier and to strengthen European citizens' right to consular protection.

- [directive](#)
- [press release](#)

In 1996, EU countries agreed on a common format for an [EU emergency travel document](#) to provide help to EU citizens without a travel document abroad in a country in which their own country has no embassy or consulate able to issue a travel document.