

Fifth meeting of the Specialised Committee on Social Security Coordination

London/Online | UK host | 1 December 2025 |

14:00-16:00 GMT / 15:00-17:00 CET

Hybrid Meeting

Minutes

1. Welcome, opening remarks and adoption of the agenda- Co-chairs

The co-chairs welcomed in person and online meeting participants and thanked them for their attendance. The in-person delegates from both sides introduced themselves. The co-chairs thanked the Secretariats for progressing the items on the agenda.

The agenda consisted of six items and one matter for AOB.

The agenda was formally adopted without modification.

2. Actions taken since last Specialised Committee, including adoption of Decision No.1/2024 and cooperation on the correct application of the Protocol

The co-chairs commended the work of the Specialised Committee and the Secretariats since last year's meeting on 5th June 2024. In particular, they highlighted the adoption of Decision No. 1/2024, which updated certain annexes to the Protocol on Social Security Coordination to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (the TCA Protocol) which came into force on 6 December 2024.

One of the key changes made by this decision was to increase healthcare reimbursement from the default 15% to 20% in countries using an average cost charging model to recover healthcare costs from other countries. These countries are Ireland, Spain, Cyprus, Portugal, Sweden and the UK.

The co-chairs commented on the effective use of the written procedure to adopt this decision, providing effective outcomes in a timely manner.

3. Update on state of play on the possibility to derogate from the rules on applicable legislation

The UK and the EU welcomed the preparatory technical work carried out by the Secretariats to explore the possibility to include a new provision in the implementing rules in Annex SSC-7 to the TCA Protocol, allowing States to derogate from the rules on applicable legislation by common agreement in well-defined situations and in the interest of the persons concerned.

The UK suggested further use of the written procedure to deliver the item, once the relevant internal procedures of both sides for that purpose are completed.

4. Use of Forms and Documents

- Modifications of Portable Documents and Minimum Changes to Structured Electronic Documents

The UK recapped the previous Specialised Committee discussions on the required minimal changes to Portable Documents and Structured Electronic Documents, to distinguish whether documents are issued under the Withdrawal Agreement (WA) or Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). Distinction between the two Agreements is important because the TCA and WA can confer different entitlements for citizens and to enable accurate reporting.

Previous Specialised Committee discussions agreed that any changes should be minimal and reduce administrative burdens. These discussions also noted these changes would contribute to protect citizens' rights. As previously agreed, any changes will need to go through the governance processes of the Administrative Commission for the Coordination of Social Security Systems (AC) and its relevant Ad Hoc groups before being subject to a decision of the Specialised Committee, following any relevant internal procedures of both sides. The UK welcomes the recent steps taken by both sides towards an amended governance process.

The EU reiterated the UK's comments and further emphasised that this was a matter of concrete importance which would benefit citizens. They noted that any changes should be minimal and reiterated the importance of following the established procedures of the AC. The EU confirmed that there will be further discussions on the process for amending Portable Documents and Structured Electronic Documents at the December meeting of the AC. Following this, the Portable Documents and Structured Electronic Documents amendments proposed by the UK and EU to implement the TCA Protocol would be subject to the relevant procedures.

5. Notifications Pursuant to Article SSC.59

The UK recalled previous discussions about the simplification of the procedure for the notification of national legislation, pursuant to Article SSC.59. The UK also stated that they would support any suggestions from the EU to reduce the administrative burdens of this procedure.

The EU explained that the current process should be simplified, stating that work on this item had progressed since the last meeting of the Specialised Committee. They thanked the UK for their cooperation in this matter and stated that they aim to find a way forward for revising the procedure for the notification of national legislation by the next meeting of the Specialised Committee.

The UK was pleased with this update and endorsed the ambition to resolve this by the next Specialised Committee.

6. Implementation and Application of the Protocol: Update

The UK commended the good working relationship and constructive collaboration between the Secretariats and their commitment to delivering improved outcomes for citizens. The most common issues reported regarded Portable Documents S1 and through effective communication these issues are being resolved at the working level.

The EU echoed the UK's comments on the good nature of the Secretariats' working relationship and the implementation of the TCA Protocol. They stated that the frequent close contact between the teams was beneficial, and that the system of ad hoc cooperation that was put in place with the UK often resolved individual cases of possible misapplication of the Protocol. The EU highlighted that further issues continue to arise but expressed confidence that continued collaboration would resolve them.

The UK stated that they would endeavour to resolve these issues and that they were happy with the progress through current channels.

7. Any Other Business

The UK's Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) raised an item concerning moving forward with a combined Financial Provisions Decision concerning AC Decisions S1, S5, S6 and S11 for the purposes of the TCA Protocol. The UK provided a first draft for a combined Decision in February 2025. The UK stated that they hope to have further discussions with the European Commission next year and offered technical sessions to progress the item.

The EU confirmed receipt of this draft and that they were currently assessing this proposal. They stated that this matter was complex and once analysis is complete, they may take up the UK offer of further technical discussions. They committed to further discussion on the topic next year.

8. Concluding remarks- Co-chairs

The UK commented that the brevity of the meeting was a result of the continuous and effective contact between the two Secretariats and that the meeting itself was acknowledgement of this good work. They emphasised that it is necessary to uphold the high standards of the Specialised Committee over the long term.

The EU reiterated the UK's sentiment and agreed that the Secretariats should and will continue to liaise with one another in an agile manner to continue to deliver effective outcomes for citizens.

The co-chairs agreed that the EU would host the next meeting of the Specialised Committee at a similar time next year, operating off a 12-month cycle and that a date would be agreed at a later time.