

Unemployment benefits when moving within the European Union (EU)

(applies to the EU, EEA (Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland) and Switzerland)

When is a person entitled to receive Latvian unemployment benefits if their last employment was in another EU Member State?

In which EU Member State must a person claim unemployment benefits?

- **General rule – unemployment benefits must be claimed in the country of last employment**, i.e., in the EU Member State where the person was employed and socially insured immediately before becoming unemployed.
- **If a person's last employment was in another EU Member State, but during that employment they permanently resided in Latvia** (maintaining a close connection with Latvia as their place of habitual residence), the person **may claim unemployment benefits in Latvia**.

For information!

The determining factor for receiving unemployment benefits in Latvia as the country of residence is that during the person's last employment they lived not in the Member State where they were employed and socially insured, but in the Member State where the unemployment benefit is being claimed, i.e., Latvia.

How is a person's country of habitual residence determined?

When assessing whether a person who worked in another EU Member State maintained Latvia as their country of habitual residence and center of interests, the following factors are taken into account:

- the duration and continuity of residence in the territories of the relevant Member States;
- the nature, stability, and duration of any employment or work activity;
- marital status and family ties;
- engagement in unpaid activities;
- housing situation, in particular the permanence of accommodation;
- the Member State in which the person is considered resident for tax purposes.

Other factors may also be considered to demonstrate that the person's habitual residence remained in Latvia during employment in another EU Member State.

Which categories of workers are entitled to receive unemployment benefits from Latvia?

The following categories of workers are specifically entitled to receive Latvian unemployment benefits if they were employed and socially insured in another EU Member State but resided in Latvia:

- cross-border workers (*a person employed or self-employed in one Member State but residing in another Member State, to which they usually return daily or at least once a week*);

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Cross-border workers must always claim unemployment benefits in their country of residence.

- seasonal workers;
- persons employed on ships (seafarers);
- persons working in two or more Member States;
- persons covered by the agreement referred to in Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004.

Other categories of workers may also be entitled to Latvian unemployment benefits if, while working in another EU Member State, they maintained their habitual residence in Latvia.

What needs to be arranged after the termination of employment in another EU Member State?

The competent employment authority of the country of employment must be requested to issue a **U1 document** “Periods to be taken into account for the payment of unemployment benefits”. The U1 document includes information such as employment and social insurance periods, the reason for termination of employment, and other relevant details. The information provided in the U1 document will be taken into account by the State Social Insurance Agency (SSIA) when determining eligibility for unemployment benefits in Latvia.

What to do to apply for unemployment benefits in Latvia?

Register with the State Employment Agency (SEA) and obtain the status of unemployed.

Submit to the SSIA:

- **an application for unemployment benefits**, specifying: the country of employment, employer’s name and address, start and end dates of employment, and the social insurance number in the country of employment.
- **a questionnaire on the determination of permanent residence** during employment in another EU/EEA country.
- **the U1 document** or documents proving employment in another EU Member State (e.g., certificates, copies of employment contracts, copies of the last tax calculation notice, income statements from the previous employer, or any other documents proving employment in another EU country).

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If the U1 document is not submitted together with the application for unemployment benefits, the VSAA will request it from the competent authority of the relevant EU Member State.

How to submit an application and documents to VSAA for unemployment benefits?

The application for unemployment benefits, the questionnaire, and supporting documents can be submitted to the SSIA:

- in person at any VSAA client service center;
- electronically, using a secure electronic signature with a timestamp;
- by post.

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To receive unemployment benefits starting from the day you are granted unemployed status, the application for unemployment status at the State Employment Agency (NVA) and the application for unemployment benefits at VSAA must be submitted on the same day. If the application for unemployment benefits is submitted later, the benefit will be granted starting from the date the application is submitted.

How is the unemployment benefit calculated?

If a person's permanent residence during employment in another EU country was in Latvia, then when determining the right to Latvian unemployment benefits, the insurance periods from other EU countries will also be taken into account to meet the conditions set out in Latvian legislation:

- The total insurance period must be at least one year;
- Mandatory social insurance contributions for unemployment must have been made or due for at least 12 months within the last 16 months before obtaining unemployment status.

The calculation of the unemployment benefit will take into account income earned in Latvia (if any), as well as income earned in the last country of employment, provided there is no overlap.

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The amount of the unemployment benefit is calculated based on income (salary) during the 12-month period ending two months before the month in which unemployment status is granted.

Contact for consultations:

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