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January 2009

The information in this booklet is correct at the time of publication.

Social Security Agreement between Ireland and Korea

This leaflet is a brief guide to the Social Security Agreement between Ireland and Korea which came into force on 1 January 2009.

1. What is the purpose of the Agreement?

The main purpose of the Agreement is to protect the pension rights of people who have worked and paid reckonable social security contributions in Ireland and in Korea. The Agreement allows these people to combine the period of contributions in each country, if necessary, to qualify for a pension payment under either Irish or Korean law.

The Agreement also deals with the Social Security status of workers who are sent to work temporarily from Ireland to Korea and vice versa.

2. Who does this Agreement cover?

This Agreement covers those who have paid reckonable social insurance contributions in Ireland and National Pensions Service contributions in Korea. Social welfare payments and allowances from the Agreement may also be paid to your dependants.

3. Which payments are covered by the Agreement?

The payments in Ireland covered by the Agreement are:

- State Pension (Contributory) (payable at age 66)
- State Pension (Transition) (payable between age 65 and age 66)
- Widow's and Widower's (Contributory) Pension
- Guardian's Payment (Contributory)
- Bereavement Grant
- Invalidity Pension

And in Korea

- Old Age Pension
- Disability Pension
- Survivor Pension

For more information, or to make a claim for one of these payments, please see the Korean address on page 11.

4. To which country are social security contributions due?

The general rule is that you pay social security contributions in the country in which you work. Therefore, if you go to work permanently in Korea you will normally be subject to the Korean social security law. Similarly, if you come to work permanently in Ireland you will normally be subject to the Irish social security law and will pay Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions here which may qualify you for one of the Irish payments mentioned at part 3.

The Agreement states, however, that if you are employed or self-employed in both countries, you pay contributions only in the country in which you reside.

Temporary assignments

If you are sent by your Irish employer, whose main place of business is in Ireland, to Korea for a temporary period, you may continue to pay Irish social insurance contributions for the first 5 years of the temporary assignment. This applies whether you continue to work directly for your Irish employer, or for a subsidiary or affiliated company. Your employer may apply for an extension at the end of this period if further time is necessary to complete the work.

Similarly, if a person is sent on temporary assignment by their Korean employer to work in Ireland they will continue to pay Korean contributions and will be exempt from payment of Irish social insurance (PRSI) contributions, which would otherwise be payable, for a period of 5 years. If the assignment exceeds 5 years the person may continue to pay Korean contributions in exceptional circumstances and with agreement from both the Korean and Irish authorities.

If you would like further information see page 11 for details of where to contact.

5. Can I get a refund of my Korean pension contributions when I leave Korea?

No. The effect of the agreement means that these contributions retain a value to you even when you leave Korea. For instance, they would be counted as Irish contributions and would be particularly important if you should need to claim an Irish invalidity pension or widow's pension within a few years of returning to Ireland. Similarly if you did not have enough Irish contributions for State pension on reaching pension age, your Korean contributions would be added to your Irish contributions for this purpose.

6. How does the Agreement benefit me?

You may qualify for a pension under the terms of the Agreement, if you do not have sufficient Irish contributions to qualify for an Irish pension or sufficient Korean contributions to qualify for a Korean pension.

Under the Agreement you may qualify for an Irish pro rata pension based on your combined Irish and Korean contributions, provided you have at least 52 Irish PRSI contributions paid or credited.

You may also qualify for Korean pro rata pension provided you have at least 12 months' contributions under Korean legislation.

It is possible for a person to qualify for payment from both countries at the same time.

We use the following formula to calculate the rate of pro rata pension payable from Ireland.

Total number of Irish Contributions
multiplied by
Amount of pension due if all the contributions were made in
Ireland and then divided by
Total combined contributions in Ireland and Korea.

Example

If you had 5 years reckonable Irish PRSI contributions and 20 years Korean contributions you will get 1/5th of the Irish State Contributory pension that would be payable if all the 25 years contributions were Irish.

The above calculation is based on the appropriate personal rate of pension, including an increase for a Qualified Adult (if applicable), increases for qualified children, the over 80 Allowance, and living alone are payable in full.

Entitlements to Bereavement Grant and Guardian's Payment (Contributory) are paid in full.

7. Does this Agreement affect any payments I may get from other countries?

No, you may qualify for a payment under this Agreement and still claim a payment from another EU State under the EC Regulations on Social Security. This means that you could qualify for a pension from another EU State and a pension under this Agreement.

However, you cannot claim two Irish pensions, for example, if you qualify for one based on a combined contribution record under this Agreement and another based on a combined record with another EU State under EC Regulations, instead you will receive whichever Irish pension is greater.

8. Can I receive any extra benefits with an Irish pension?

If you live in Ireland and receive either an Irish or a Korean social welfare pension you may qualify for free benefits under the Irish social security system, subject to the usual conditions.

These schemes are:

- Household Benefits Package (Electricity/Gas Allowance, Free Television Licence, and Telephone Allowance).
- Fuel Allowance (payable from late September to May).
- Free Travel.

Log on to www.welfare.ie for more information.

9. How do I get my payment?

If you live in Ireland:

If you qualify, you may receive an Irish payment:

- At a chosen post office, or
- Direct to your current or deposit account (**not** a mortgage account) at a financial institution or an An Post Savings Account.
- If you qualify for Invalidity Pension and you get paid at a post office using Electronic Information Transfer (EIT), you may also avail of the Household Budget Service.

If you reside in Korea:

If you qualify for an Irish pension you will receive payment by cheque, unless you request direct payment to an Irish financial institution.

If you reside in another country:

You may receive your pension by direct payment to any financial institutions inside or outside the State. The payment will be in the currency of the country in which you hold the account and will be made every four weeks - one week in advance and three weeks in arrears.

10. Where do I apply or get more information?

If you think you may qualify for a payment under the Agreement contact your local social welfare office in the country in which you live.

For details of payment rates and of reckonable Irish contributions, please see booklet SW19 “Social Welfare Rates of Payment” which highlights each class of Irish social insurance (PRSI) and the benefits each entitles you to.

Log on to www.welfare.ie for more information.

In Ireland you can get further information:

For State Pension, Widow’s/Widower’s Pension, or Guardian’s Payment (Contributory), contact:

Department of Social & Family Affairs
Social Welfare Services
College Road
Sligo

Telephone LoCall: 1890 500 000

Note

The rates charged for using 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary among different service providers.

For Invalidity Pensions, contact:

Department of Social and Family Affairs
Invalidity Pension Section,
Ballinalee Road,
Longford

Telephone LoCall: 1890 92 77 70
(from the Republic of Ireland only)

For **Bereavement Grant** contact Social Welfare Services in Sligo if a pension has been in payment from there. In all other cases, contact:

Department of Social and Family Affairs
Bereavement Grants Section,
Ballinalee Road,
Longford

Telephone LoCall: 1890 92 77 70
(from the Republic of Ireland only)

For more information on **Temporary Assignments** contact:

Department of Social and Family Affairs
P.R.S.I. Special Collections
Cork Road
Waterford

Tel. (051) 356000

If phoning from outside Ireland, dial the international access code (usually 00), then country code 353, and then leave out the 0 from the area code shown in the above numbers.

In Korea, contact:

National Pension Service
7-16 Shincheon-dong
Songpa-gu
Seoul.

Telephone (if residing in Ireland) 0082 2 397 9622

Telephone (if residing in Korea): (02) 397 9622

Website: www.nps.or.kr/

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