



You are a citizen of Europe!

THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NORTHERN IRELAND



HOW YOUR SOLICITOR CAN ASSIST YOU IN RELATION TO EUROPEAN LAW

The Treaty of Rome established the European Community in 1957.

Since the United Kingdom joined the European Community in 1972 you have become a Citizen of Europe.

The Treaty laid down the basic principles for the work of the Community, now known as the European Union. The basic principles are the “Four Freedoms” of movement of goods, persons, services and capital.

Whether you are a private individual, an employee or own your own business European Union law will affect your rights and obligations. In many cases it will affect you most advantageously and your solicitor will be able to advise you about this. Your solicitor will have access through the Law Society to the information resources service of the Northern Ireland Centre in Europe, of which the Law Society of Northern Ireland is a sponsor.

As a private individual you may be going on holidays to Europe or thinking of buying a second home there. You might even think of retiring to a warmer climate!

Your solicitor will be able to advise where to get information and legal advice in other countries about buying property in European countries, on your consumer rights there, on the transfer of money, and on your entitlement to pensions and health benefits; even simple matters such as the validity of your driving licence.

As an employee, the “Four Freedoms” allow you to seek employment within another European country and to have your qualifications recognised in other countries.

European Union law has also affected the Equal Opportunities legislation, training programmes, health and safety measures.

Your solicitor, through the Law Society of Northern Ireland’s Library, and through Northern Ireland Solicitors’ European Group seminars, will have access to European Union Directives which affect your work and will therefore be able to direct you to sources in the European country where you can obtain professional advice and assistance.

If you are in business you will already know about the business expansion opportunities which the European Union has brought. There will be opportunities for seeking contracts through Europe and already it is easier to move goods from place to place and to find capital. However corresponding obligations have been introduced e.g. changes in product liability standards, insurance requirements, financial services, transport and so on... your solicitor will be able to point you in the right direction.

No matter what your circumstances European Union law will be affecting you both within Northern Ireland and in the European country where you may be doing business. As always your solicitor is the best person to advise you on how to approach these issues - he/she has access to national and European contacts; he/she is independent and he/she has your best interests at heart.

See Your Solicitor First.

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