

Mobility and pensions: a personal case study

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A few words about my mobility history...

- I'm German. I've lived in
 - Ireland (now - employee)
 - France (postdoc - 2 years employee, 1/2 year stipend)
 - Spain (PhD student – 1 year stipend)
 - UK (postgrad - 1 year stipend)
 - Philippines (“volunteer” - 1 year unpaid)
 - Canada (student - 2 years stipend)
- ... and of course in Germany!



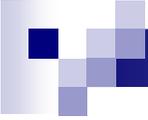
Different pensions schemes I'm in

- State pension schemes in Germany, France, Ireland
- Mandatory supplementary schemes in France and Germany
- Private pensions products in Germany (capital life insurance, “Riester” contract), France and Ireland
- Was told by German pensions advisor that I might be eligible for some benefits in Canada as I lived there for two years...(???)



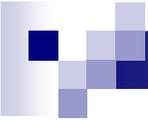
So what's the problem???

- Hard to keep track of all the different schemes and contracts (9 so far... probably more to come)!
- Vesting periods – many different contracts I've paid into for short periods only
- At the time of retirement, will have to collect small amounts from different sources, as contracts aren't portable



Some good experiences!

- Apparently good cooperation between relevant offices regarding state pensions (so far at least!)
 - France/Germany: documentation in both languages, slow but thorough treatment of my questions
 - Ireland/Germany: not much experience so far, but they seem to communicate... (received letter from Irish authorities requesting info related to my pensions in Germany)



And some not so good ones...

- Officer of French supplementary pensions scheme not willing to send mail to address in Germany (“will only use your address of last employment in France”)!!
- German company that sold me the “Riester” contract unaware of legal issues (tax benefits etc. have to be returned upon leaving country – currently under scrutiny (?))
- Advisor of Irish pensions company could not tell me whether the product I bought would be transferable to another country or not... (eventually he found out – it isn’t to Germany!)



And general nuisance related to bureaucracy and paperwork...

- Letter from German state pensions office explaining my entitlements (including contributions made abroad) is 16 pages long.
- They really made an effort, but: I've read it twice, I have a PhD in maths, and I still don't fully understand it!!