Digital Borders, Digital Proof: How GECs Simplify Social Security and A1 Compliance

For decades, social security coordination for internationally mobile employees relied on paper certificates, self-reported travel, and a fair degree of good faith. That era is ending. Across Europe and beyond, authorities are moving toward verifiable digital proof of coverage, a shift with direct implications for how organizations structure their globally mobile workforce.

Initiatives such as the European Social Security Pass (ESSPASS) are pushing toward digital, cross-border-checkable proof of coverage, making it far easier for authorities to spot gaps in A1 and posted-worker compliance than under legacy paper systems. Where an A1 certificate was once produced on request and rarely scrutinized in real time, the direction of travel is now toward continuous, checkable verification.

The underlying compliance obligation hasn't become simpler in the meantime, but rather, it has broadened. Even brief physical presence in a jurisdiction can trigger payroll and social security reporting, independent of any taxable company presence there. Employee segments that historically required less rigorous documentation, such as business travellers and short-term assignees, are increasingly caught in this same scrutiny. The OECD's Inclusive Framework has flagged exactly this complexity, launching a public consultation in January 2026 on the compliance uncertainty created by short-term travel, longer relocations, and cross-border remote work.

These trends are having a compounding effect for organizations with fragmented workflows for mobile employees who sit across multiple local entities. In many such cases, A1 certificates and posted-worker documentation are typically requested and tracked separately by whichever local HR or payroll team happens to administer each individual. Under real-time digital verification, any gap, such as a lapsed certificate, a missing filing, or an assignment that has extended beyond its documented period of coverage, becomes visible to the relevant authorities immediately, not months later during an internal audit.

Regional mobility hubs face a sharper version of the same problem: triggering A1 checks and posted-worker notifications at the point a trip is requested, rather than after travel is booked, requires consistent process discipline across every location involved. It is difficult to guarantee consistency, when that responsibility is distributed across many local teams with uneven familiarity with the requirements.

A Global Employment Company addresses this issue at its root. As the single legal employer for its mobile population, a GEC can house responsibility for A1 applications, totalization elections, and posted-worker notifications within one dedicated team operating one consistent process, rather than scattering it across Home Country HR, Host Country HR, and multiple Shared Service Centres. This doesn't remove the underlying legal complexity of cross-border social security coordination, but it does concentrate accountability and cut the number of handoffs at which a filing can be missed.

GECs can also make it easier to support the proactive documentation that digital verification rewards. Rather than producing an A1 certificate reactively when a host country asks for one, a centralized function is better placed to trigger the process automatically the moment an assignment or trip is confirmed, keeping one current coverage record for the entire mobile population.

As digital verification becomes the global standard rather than an exceptional case, the organizations most exposed will be those still relying on fragmented and reactive social security processes for a population that increasingly includes business travellers and short-term assignees alongside traditional expatriates.

For mobility leaders weighing whether a GEC remains relevant in 2026, tools like the European Social Security Pass offer a concrete answer: centralized employment structures are no longer just administratively convenient. They are increasingly well matched to the compliance environment regulators are actively building.