

Subpart T—Totalization Agreements

AUTHORITY: Secs. 205(a), 233, and 702(a)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(a), 433, and 902(a)(5)).

SOURCE: 44 FR 42964, July 23, 1979, unless otherwise noted.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 404.1901 Introduction.

(a) Under section 233 of the Social Security Act, the President may enter into an agreement establishing a totalization arrangement between the social security system of the United States and the social security system of a foreign country. An agreement permits entitlement to and the amount of old-age, survivors, disability, or derivative benefits to be based on a combination of a person's periods of coverage under the social security system of the United States and the social security system of the foreign country. An agreement also provides for the precluding of dual coverage and dual social security taxation for work covered under both systems. An agreement may provide that the provisions of the social security system of each country will apply equally to the nationals of both countries (regardless of where they reside). For this purpose, refugees, stateless persons, and other non-nationals who derive benefit rights from nationals, refugees, or stateless persons may be treated as nationals if they reside within one of the countries.

(b) The regulations in this subpart provide definitions and principles for the negotiation and administration of totalization agreements. Where necessary to accomplish the purposes of totalization, we will apply these definitions and principles, as appropriate and within the limits of the law, to accommodate the widely diverse characteristics of foreign social security systems.

§ 404.1902 Definitions.

For purposes of this subpart—

Act means the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 301 *et seq.*).

Agency means the agency responsible for the specific administration of a social security system including responsibility for implementing an agree-

ment; the Social Security Administration (SSA) is the *agency* in the U.S.

Agreement means the agreement negotiated to provide coordination between the social security systems of the countries party to the agreement. The term agreement includes any administrative agreements concluded for purposes of administering the agreement.

Competent authority means the official with overall responsibility for administration of a country's social security system including applicable laws and international social security agreements; the Commissioner of Social Security is the *competent authority* in the U.S.

Period of coverage means a period of payment of contributions or a period of earnings based on wages for employment or on self-employment income, or any similar period recognized as equivalent under the social security system of the U.S. or under the social security system of the foreign country which is a party to an agreement.

Residence or *ordinarily resides*, when used in agreements, has the following meaning for the U.S. *Residence* or *ordinarily resides* in a country means that a person has established a home in that country intending to remain there permanently or for an indefinite period of time. Generally, a person will be considered to have established a home in a country if that person assumes certain economic burdens, such as the purchase of a dwelling or establishment of a business, and participates in the social and cultural activities of the community. If residence in a country is established, it may continue even though the person is temporarily absent from that country. Generally, an absence of six months or less will be considered temporary. If an absence is for more than six months, residence in the country will generally be considered to continue only if there is sufficient evidence to establish that the person intends to maintain the residence. Sufficient evidence would include the maintenance of a home or apartment in that country, the departure from the country with a reentry permit, or similar acts. The existence of business or family associations sufficient to warrant

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the person's return would also be considered.

Social security system means a social insurance or pension system which is of general application and which provides for paying periodic benefits, or the actuarial equivalent, because of old-age, death, or disability.

[44 FR 42964, July 23, 1979, as amended at 62 FR 38452, July 18, 1997]

§ 404.1903 Negotiating totalization agreements.

An agreement shall be negotiated with the national government of the foreign country for the entire country. However, agreements may only be negotiated with foreign countries that have a social security system of general application in effect. The system shall be considered to be in effect if it is collecting social security taxes or paying social security benefits.

§ 404.1904 Effective date of a totalization agreement.

Section 233 of the Social Security Act provides that a totalization agreement shall become effective on any date provided in the agreement if—

(a) The date occurs after the expiration of a period during which at least one House of Congress has been in session on each of 60 days following the date on which the agreement is transmitted to Congress by the President; and

(b) Neither House of Congress adopts a resolution of disapproval of the agreement within the 60-day period described in paragraph (a) of this section.

[49 FR 29775, July 24, 1984]

§ 404.1905 Termination of agreements.

Each agreement shall contain provisions for its possible termination. If an agreement is terminated, entitlement to benefits and coverage acquired by an individual before termination shall be retained. The agreement shall provide for notification of termination to the other party and the effective date of termination.

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BENEFIT PROVISIONS

§ 404.1908 Crediting foreign periods of coverage.

(a) *General.* To have foreign periods of coverage combined with U.S. periods of coverage for purposes of determining entitlement to and the amount of benefits payable under title II, an individual must have at least 6 quarters of coverage, as defined in section 213 of the Social Security Act, under the U.S. system. As a rule, SSA will accept foreign coverage information, as certified by the foreign country's agency, unless otherwise specified by the agreement. No credit will be given, however, for periods of coverage acquired before January 1, 1937.

(b) *For quarters of coverage purposes.*
(1) Generally, a quarter of coverage (QC) will be credited for every 3 months (or equivalent period), or remaining fraction of 3 months, of coverage in a reporting period certified to SSA by the other country's agency. A reporting period used by a foreign country may be one calendar year or some other period of time. QCs based on foreign periods of coverage may be credited as QCs only to calendar quarters not already QCs under title II. The QCs will be assigned chronologically beginning with the first calendar quarter (not already a QC under title II) within the reporting period and continuing until all the QCs are assigned, or the reporting period ends. Example: Country XYZ, which has an annual reporting period, certifies to SSA that a worker has 8 months of coverage in 1975, from January 1 to August 25. The worker has no QCs under title II in that year. Since 8 months divided by 3 months equals 2 QCs with a remainder of 2 months, the U.S. will credit the worker with 3 QCs. The QCs will be credited to the first 3 calendar quarters in 1975.

(2) If an individual fails to meet the requirements for currently insured status or the insured status needed for establishing a period of disability solely because of the assignment of QCs based on foreign coverage to calendar quarters chronologically, the QCs based on foreign coverage may be assigned to different calendar quarters within the