

**Convention (No.22) on international co-operation in the matter of  
administrative assistance to refugees**  
*signed at Basel on 3 September 1985*

The signatory States to this Convention, members of the International Commission on Civil Status, being desirous of organising, with a view to the application of Article 25 of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, signed at Geneva on 28 July 1951, international administrative co-operation in order to determine the identity and civil status of refugees, and also having regard to the provisions of the European Convention on the Obtaining Abroad of Information and Evidence in Administrative Matters, done at Strasbourg on 15 March 1978, have agreed as follows:

**Article 1**

1. With a view to the issue of documents or certifications in pursuance of Article 25 of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, signed at Geneva on 28 July 1951, the Contracting State in whose territory a refugee, within the meaning of that Convention and the Protocol of 1967 relating to the Status of Refugees, regularly resides may contact any other Contracting State in whose territory the refugee has previously resided, in order to obtain information on the identity and civil status under which he or she was admitted to or registered in that State.
2. In no event may such a request be submitted to the State of origin of the refugee. In respect of any other State, the State of residence shall refrain from submitting such a request whenever doing so would be liable to affect the safety of the refugee or members of his or her family.
3. The requesting State may not use any information provided in pursuance of this Convention for purposes other than those specified in the first paragraph of this Article.

**Article 2**

1. Exchanges of information shall be effected between the authorities designated under Article 3, either directly or through diplomatic or consular channels, by means of a multilingual form a model whereof is appended to this Convention.
2. The requested authority shall enter on the form, opposite the enquiries of the requesting authority, such information as it possesses, except in cases where it considers that disclosure thereof would be liable to run counter to its public policy or the safety of the refugee or members of his or her family.
3. The form shall be returned as soon as possible free of charge.

**Article 3**

At the time of signature, ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, each State shall indicate the central authority it has designated to make requests for information and to reply thereto. Federal States may designate more than one authority.

**Article 4**

1. All the entries to be made on the form shall be written in Latin characters in detached script; they may also be written in the characters of the language of the requesting authority.
2. If the requesting or the requested authority is not in a position to fill in a space or part of a space, that space or part of a space shall be scored through.

#### **Article 5**

1. Dates shall be written in Arabic numerals, denoting successively, under the symbols Jo, Mo and An, the day, month and year. The day and the month shall be indicated by two figures, and the year by four figures. The first nine days of the month and the first nine months of the year shall be indicated by numbers running from 01 to 09.
2. The name of any place mentioned on the form shall be followed by the name of the State in which that place is situated, whenever that State is not the State of the requesting authority.
3. Only the following symbols shall be used:
  - to indicate male, the letter M, female, the letter F;
  - to indicate nationality, the letters used to designate the country of registration of motor vehicles;
  - to indicate marital status, the letter C to designate a single person, the letters Ma to designate a married person, the letters Dm to indicate the death of the husband, the letters Df to indicate the death of the wife, the letters Div to designate divorce, the letters Sc to designate legal separation and the letter A to indicate annulment of the marriage;
  - to indicate the condition of refugee, the letters REF;
  - to indicate the condition of stateless person, the letters APA.
4. In case of marriage, legal separation or dissolution or annulment of marriage, the date and place of the event shall be entered after the relevant symbol.

#### **Article 6**

1. With the exception of the symbols for dates specified in Article 5, the standard headings on the front of each form shall be printed in at least two languages, including the official language or one of the official languages of the requesting State and the French language.
2. The meaning of the symbols must be indicated at least in the official language or one of the official languages of each of the States which, at the time of signature of this Convention, are members of the International Commission on Civil Status, and in the English language.
3. On the reverse of each form there shall appear:
  - a reference to the Convention, in the languages indicated in paragraph 2 of this Article;
  - a translation of the standard headings, in the languages indicated in paragraph 2 of this Article, if those languages have not been used on the front ;
  - a summary of Articles 4 and 5 of the Convention, at least in the official language or one of the official languages of the requesting authority.
4. Any translation must be approved by the Bureau of the International Commission on Civil Status.

#### **Article 7**

Forms shall be dated and bear the signature and seal of both the requesting and the requested authority. They shall be exempted from legalisation or any equivalent formality in the territory of the Contracting States.

#### **Article 8**

Identity and civil status documents produced by refugees which emanate from the authorities of their countries of origin shall be exempted from any legalisation or equivalent formality in the territory of each State bound by this Convention.

#### **Article 9**

This Convention shall be ratified, accepted or approved and the instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval shall be deposited with the Swiss Federal Council.

#### **Article 10**

1. This Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the third month following the month of deposit of the second instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

2. For a State ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding after its entry into force, the Convention shall take effect on the first day of the third month following the month of deposit by that State of the instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

#### **Article 11**

Any member State of the International Commission on Civil Status, the European Communities or the Council of Europe may accede to this Convention. The instrument of accession shall be deposited with the Swiss Federal Council.

#### **Article 12**

No reservation to this Convention shall be permitted.

#### **Article 13**

1. Any State may, at the time of signature, ratification, acceptance, approval or accession or at any later date, declare that this Convention shall extend to all of the territories for whose international relations it is responsible, or to one or more of them.
2. The Swiss Federal Council shall be notified of such declaration and the extension shall take effect when the Convention enters into force for that State or, subsequently, on the first day of the third month following the month of receipt of the notification.
3. Any declaration of extension may be withdrawn by notification to the Swiss Federal Council, and the Convention shall cease to apply to the designated territory on the first day of the third month following the month of receipt of that notification.

#### **Article 14**

1. This Convention shall remain in force indefinitely.
2. However, any State party to this Convention shall have the option of denouncing it at any time after the expiry of a period of one year from the date of the entry into force of the Convention in respect of that State. Denunciation shall be notified to the Swiss Federal Council and shall take effect on the first day of the sixth month following the month of receipt of that notification. The Convention shall remain in force among the other States.

#### **Article 15**

1. The Swiss Federal Council shall notify the member States of the International Commission on Civil Status and any other State which has acceded to this Convention of:
  - (a) the deposit of any instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession;
  - (b) any date of entry into force of the Convention;
  - (c) any declaration concerning the territorial extension of the Convention or its withdrawal, together with the date on which it will take effect;
  - (d) any denunciation of the Convention and the date on which it will take effect;
  - (e) any declaration made under Article 3.
2. The Swiss Federal Council shall inform the Secretary General of the International Commission on Civil Status of any notification made in pursuance of paragraph 1.
3. On the entry into force of this Convention, a certified copy shall be transmitted by the Swiss Federal Council to the Secretary General of the United Nations for the purposes of registration and publication, in accordance with Article 102 of the United Nations Charter.

In witness whereof the undersigned, duly authorised to this end, have signed this Convention.

Done at Basel, on 3 September 1985, in a single copy in the French language, which shall be deposited in the archives of the Swiss Federal Council and a certified copy of which shall be transmitted, through diplomatic channels, to each of the member States of the International Commission on Civil Status and to the acceding States. A certified copy shall also be sent to the Secretary General of the International Commission on Civil Status.

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### **Territorial scope of the Convention**

*At the time of the deposit of the instrument of acceptance of the Convention, the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands in Bern stated that that acceptance applied as regards the Kingdom in Europe and Aruba.*

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### **Authority designated pursuant to Article 3 to make requests for information and to reply thereto**

*For the Republic of Austria :*

Federal Ministry of the Interior, Herrengasse 7, A – 1014 Wien.

*For the Kingdom of Belgium :*

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Overseas Trade and Development Co-operation, 2 rue Quatre Bas, B – 1000 Brussels.

*For the Kingdom of Spain :*

General Documentation Division, Ministry of the Interior, Amador de los Rios 5, E – 28071 Madrid.

*For the French Republic :*

French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA), Tour Pariféric, 6 rue Emile Raynaud, F – 93306 Aubervilliers.

*For the Republic of Italy :*

Ministero dell'Interno – Direzione Generale Servizi Civili

*For the Kingdom of the Netherlands :*

- as regards the Kingdom in *Europe* : the Head of the Principal Private-Law Division of the Ministry of Justice, Postbox 20 301, NL – 2500 EH The Hague (fax 34 554);
- as regards *Aruba* : the Director of the Central Legal and General Affairs Office of the Ministry of Justice, Smith Boulevard 76, Oranjestad, Aruba (fax 5 060)