

**No. 21791**



**FRANCE  
and  
BELGIUM**

**Convention abolishing legalization of public documents.  
Signed at Paris on 9 November 1981**

*Authentic texts: French and Dutch.*

*Registered by France on 30 March 1983.*



**FRANCE  
et  
BELGIQUE**

**Convention sur la suppression de la légalisation des actes  
publics. Signée à Paris le 9 novembre 1981**

*Textes authentiques : français et néerlandais.*

*Enregistrée par la France le 30 mars 1983.*

## [TRANSLATION — TRADUCTION]

CONVENTION<sup>1</sup> ABOLISHING LEGALIZATION OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

The Government of the French Republic and the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium,

Desiring to facilitate the production in either of the Contracting States of public documents drawn up in the other Contracting State, and wishing to supplement in their mutual relations the provisions of the Hague Convention of 5 October 1961 abolishing the requirement of legalization for foreign public documents,<sup>2</sup> in accordance with its article 3 (2), have decided to conclude this Convention.

*Article 1.* Public documents executed in either Contracting State shall not require legalization, authentication or certification or any similar formality, including the apostil, in the territory of the other Contracting State.

These documents must bear a seal or an official stamp, the signature of the competent authority if they are originals, or certification as true copies if they are official copies.

*Article 2.* For the purposes of this Convention, the following, whether originals or official copies, are deemed to be public documents:

1. The following judicial and extrajudicial documents:
  - Documents emanating from jurisdictions and those emanating from public ministries established within those jurisdictions;
  - Judicial documents which are deposited or registered with a court;
  - Documents drawn up by ministerial officers, officials and specially authorized persons under the jurisdiction of the judicial authority, such as clerks of the court, process servers, experts and sworn translators;
2. Notarized documents and specifically notarial certificates concerning documents deposited as drafts with notaries;
3. Documents drawn up by diplomatic agents and consular officers of either State, if the diplomatic mission or consular post has its seat in the other State or in a third State;
4. Administrative documents.

*Article 3.* Official declarations attached to private agreements, such as references to registration, endorsements for a certain date, certifications of signature, certifications of true copies and certifications of fidelity and integrity, shall also constitute public documents for the purposes of this Convention, when they emanate from the authorities referred to in article 2.

<sup>1</sup> Came into force on 1 January 1982, i.e., the first day of the second month following the last of the notifications (effected on 27 and 28 November 1981) by which the Contracting Parties had informed each other of the completion of the required constitutional procedures, in accordance with article 7.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 527, p. 189.

*Article 4.* For the purposes of this Convention, legalization means the formality by which the diplomatic or consular agents of the State in whose territory the document has to be produced certify the authenticity of the signature, the capacity in which the person signing the document has acted and, where appropriate, the identity of the seal or stamp which it bears.

*Article 5.* 1. When a public document as referred to in articles 2 and 3 is produced in either State and there are serious reasons for doubting the authenticity of the signature, the capacity in which the person signing the documents acted and, where appropriate, the identity of the seal or stamp which it bears, a request for verification may be addressed directly:

—In the French Republic, to the Civil Service of the Office of International Judicial Assistance of the Ministry of Justice;

—In Belgium, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2. These authorities shall be responsible for transmitting the reply of the competent person, body or authority.

*Article 6.* 1. The requests for verifications and information referred to in article 5 of this Convention shall, where possible, be accompanied by the original or a photocopy of the document.

2. The request and the enclosures sent to the competent French authority shall be in the French language or accompanied by a translation into that language. The request and the enclosures sent to the competent Belgian authority shall be in one of the Belgian national languages or accompanied by a translation into that language.

3. Fulfilment of such requests shall not entail the payment of any charge or fee.

*Article 7.* Each Contracting Party undertakes to notify the other of the completion of the procedures required by its Constitution for the entry into force of this Convention, which shall take effect on the first day of the second month following the last of these notifications. This Convention abrogates the Declaration exchanged between France and Belgium on 29 November 1922 abolishing the requirement of legalization of extracts from civil registration documents,<sup>1</sup> that Declaration becoming null and void when this Convention enters into force.

This Convention shall remain in force until the expiry of one year from the date when either Contracting Party shall have notified the other of its wish to terminate it.

DONE at Paris on 9 November 1981 in duplicate in the French and Dutch languages, both texts being equally authentic.

For the Government  
of the French Republic:

[Signed]

MEADMORE

For the Government  
of the Kingdom of Belgium:

[Signed]

PATERNOTTE DE LA VAILLÉE

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1353, No. II-922.