

No. 23658

**BULGARIA
and
LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

Consular Convention. Signed at Sofia on 8 November 1983

*Authentic texts: Bulgarian, Lao and French.
Registered by Bulgaria on 12 December 1985.*

**BULGARIE
et
RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE POPULAIRE LAO**

Convention consulaire. Signée à Sofia le 8 novembre 1983

*Textes authentiques : bulgare, lao et français.
Enregistrée par la Bulgarie le 12 décembre 1985.*

[TRANSLATION — TRADUCTION]

CONSULAR CONVENTION¹ BETWEEN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA AND THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Desiring to develop the consular relations between the two countries in a spirit of mutual friendship and co-operation and on the basis of the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in internal affairs,

Have decided to conclude this Convention and have agreed as follows:

PART I. DEFINITIONS

Article 1. For the purposes of this Convention, the terms listed below shall have the following meanings:

- a) "Consular post" means a consulate-general, consulate, vice-consulate or consular agency;
- b) "Consular district" means the territory assigned to a consular post for the exercise of consular functions;
- c) "Head of consular post" means the person responsible for acting in that capacity;
- d) "Consular officer" means any person, including a head of consular post, entrusted with the performance of consular functions. This term shall also include persons attached to the consular post for training;
- e) "Consular employee" means a person other than a consular officer who performs administrative, technical or other functions in a consular post;
- f) "Member of a consular post" means any consular officer or any consular employee;
- g) "Consular premises" means buildings or parts of buildings, including the residence of a head of consular post and the grounds ancillary thereto, whatever their ownership, used for the purposes of a consular post;
- h) "Consular archives" means all papers, documents, correspondence, seals, stamps, films, magnetic tapes and consular records, as well as codes and ciphers and the cabinets and other furniture intended for their safekeeping;
- i) "Ship of the sending State" means any ship flying the flag of that State, excluding warships;
- j) "Aircraft of the sending State" means any aircraft, excluding military aircraft, registered in that State in accordance with its laws and bearing its identification marks.

¹ Came into force on 7 April 1985, i.e., 30 days after the exchange of the instruments of ratification, which took place at Vientiane on 8 March 1985, in accordance with article 49 (1).

PART II. OPENING OF A CONSULAR POST AND
APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF A CONSULAR POST

Article 2. 1. A consular post may be opened in the receiving State only with the consent of that State.

2. The seat of a consular post, its classification and consular district shall be determined by agreement between the sending State and the receiving State.

3. A consular officer must be a national only of the sending State.

Article 3. 1. Before the appointment of the head of a consular post, the sending State must ascertain through the diplomatic channel that the person in question will be recognized by the receiving State as the head of the consular post.

2. The sending State shall forward to the receiving State the commission of appointment of the head of the consular post. The commission of appointment shall indicate the full name of the head of the consular post, his rank, the consular district in which he will exercise his functions, and the seat of the consular post.

3. On receipt of the commission of appointment of the head of the consular post, the receiving State shall issue an exequatur to him within the shortest possible time.

4. The head of the consular post may begin to exercise his functions as soon as the receiving State has issued the exequatur to him.

5. Pending the issue of the exequatur, the receiving State may issue to the head of the consular post a provisional authorization for the exercise of his functions.

6. After the exequatur or provisional authorization referred to in paragraph 5 has been obtained, the receiving State shall take all necessary steps to enable the head of the consular post to exercise his functions and to enjoy the rights, facilities, privileges and immunities provided by this Convention and by the laws of the receiving State.

Article 4. 1. If for some reason the head of a consular post is unable to exercise his functions or if the position is vacant, the sending State may entrust the functions of temporary head of the consular post to a consular officer of the post or of another consular post or to a member of the diplomatic staff of its diplomatic mission in the receiving State. The sending State shall so inform the receiving State in advance through the diplomatic channel.

2. A temporary head of a consular post shall enjoy the rights, facilities, privileges and immunities provided in this Convention for the head of a consular post.

Article 5. The sending State shall notify the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the receiving State in writing of:

- a) The appointment of members of a consular post, except for a head of consular post, their arrival, their final departure or the termination of their functions, as well as any other changes in their status which may take place during their service in the consular post;
- b) The arrival and final departure of a member of the family of a member of a consular post residing in his household and, when necessary, the fact that a person has become or ceased to be a member of such family;
- c) The recruitment or dismissal of persons having their permanent residence in the receiving State.

Article 6. 1. The competent authorities of the receiving State shall issue free of charge to members of a consular post an appropriate document certifying their rank or functions.

2. The provisions of paragraph 1 of this article shall apply to members of the family of a member of a consular post residing in his household.

Article 7. The receiving State may at any time, without having to explain its decision, notify the sending State that the head of a consular post or some other consular officer is *persona non grata* or that a consular employee is unacceptable. The sending State must then recall the person in question or terminate his functions in the consular post. If the sending State fails within a reasonable time to fulfill this obligation, the receiving State may cease to recognize the person concerned as a consular officer or consular employee.

PART III. FACILITIES, PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF A CONSULAR POST AND MEMBERS OF A CONSULAR POST

Article 8. 1. The receiving State shall ensure the necessary conditions for the normal operation of a consular post and shall take all necessary measures to enable its members to carry out their official duties and to enjoy the facilities, rights, privileges and immunities provided by this Convention and by the laws of the receiving State.

2. The receiving State shall treat members of a consular post with respect and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the protection of their persons, freedom and dignity.

Article 9. 1. The coat of arms of the sending State and the name-plate of the consular post in the language of the sending State and of the receiving State may be attached to the building of a consular post.

2. The national flag of the sending State may be flown from the building of a consular post and from the residence of the head of a consular post.

3. The national flag of the sending State may be flown on the official means of transport of the head of a consular post when they are being used by him.

Article 10. 1. The sending State may, in accordance with the laws of the receiving State, acquire or lease land, buildings or parts of buildings needed for a consular post or for the living quarters of consular officers and consular employees who are not nationals of the receiving State or do not have their permanent residence therein. The sending State may also construct buildings and develop land in accordance with the laws of the receiving State.

2. The receiving State shall, where necessary, give the sending State its assistance and support in this matter.

Article 11. 1. Consular premises shall be inviolable. The authorities of the receiving State may not enter consular premises without the consent of the head of the consular post, the head of the diplomatic mission of the sending State or the person designated by one of them to give such consent.

2. The provisions of paragraph 1 of this article shall also apply to the living quarters of members of a consular post who are not nationals of the receiving State or do not have their permanent residence therein.

Article 12. Consular archives shall be inviolable at all times and in all places.

Article 13. 1. A consular post shall be entitled to communicate with the Government, diplomatic missions and other consular posts of the sending State, wherever they may be located. For this purpose a consular post may use all appropriate means of communication, cipher and code, diplomatic or consular couriers, and diplomatic or consular bags. When public means of communication are used, a consular post shall be charged the same rates as a diplomatic mission. A consular post may install or use a radio transmitter only with the consent of the receiving State.

2. The official correspondence of a consular post, irrespective of the means of communication used, and consular bags shall be inviolable, provided that they bear external visible marks indicating their official character, and the authorities of the receiving State may not detain or open them.

3. Consular couriers of the sending State shall enjoy in the territory of the receiving State the same rights, privileges and immunities as diplomatic couriers.

4. A consular bag may be entrusted to the captain of a ship or of an aircraft. He must be provided with an official document indicating the number of packages contained in the bag but he shall not be considered a consular courier. A consular officer may, directly and without obstruction, receive a consular bag from the captain of an aircraft or of a ship or deliver a consular bag to him.

Article 14. Consular officers shall enjoy personal inviolability. Consular employees shall also enjoy personal inviolability, provided that they are not nationals of the receiving State or do not have their permanent residence therein. They shall not be subject to any form of arrest or detention.

Article 15. 1. Consular officers and consular employees, provided that they are not nationals of the receiving State or do not have their permanent residence therein, shall enjoy immunity from the jurisdiction of the receiving State, except in the case of a civil action:

- a) Concerning private immovable property located in the territory of the receiving State, unless they possess such immovable property on behalf of the sending State for consular purposes;
- b) Concerning succession, in respect of which they are involved as executors, administrators, heirs or legatees as private persons and not on behalf of the sending State;
- c) Arising from a contract, under which they have not entered into direct or indirect commitments as representatives of the sending State;
- d) Brought by a third party for damage resulting from an accident in the receiving State caused by a motor vehicle.

2. No enforcement measures may be taken against the persons mentioned in paragraph 1 of this article, except in the cases referred to in subparagraphs *a)*, *b)*, *c)* and *d)* and provided that such measures do not infringe the inviolability of their persons or living quarters.

3. Members of the family of a member of a consular post residing in his household who are not nationals of the receiving State and do not have their permanent residence therein shall enjoy immunity from jurisdiction to the same extent as members of a consular post, and coercive measures may not be taken against them.

4. The sending State may waive the immunity from the jurisdiction of the receiving State of a member of a consular post or of a member of his family residing with him. In all cases the waiver must be express and in writing. Waiver of immunity from the jurisdiction of the receiving State shall not be held to imply waiver of immunity with respect to the enforcement of the court's decision, which shall require a separate waiver.

5. If a person enjoying immunity from the jurisdiction of the receiving State under this article initiates legal proceedings, he may not invoke immunity from jurisdiction with regard to any counter-claim related to the principal claim.

Article 16. 1. Consular officers and consular employees who are not nationals of the receiving State or do not have their permanent residence therein shall not be required to give evidence as witnesses, and no coercive measure may be taken against them if they decline to give evidence.

2. Consular employees who are nationals of the receiving State and have their permanent residence therein may decline to give evidence with regard to matters relating to the performance of their duties.

3. The provisions of this article shall also apply to members of the family of members of a consular post residing in their household who are not nationals of the receiving State or do not have their permanent residence therein.

Article 17. 1. Consular officers shall be exempt from any compulsory service and from any military service in the receiving State.

2. The provisions of paragraph 1 of this article shall also apply to consular employees and to members of the family of members of a consular post residing in their household who are not nationals of the receiving State or do not have their permanent residence therein.

Article 18. 1. Consular officers shall be exempt from the requirements of the laws of the receiving State regarding registration of aliens and residence permits.

2. The provisions of paragraph 1 of this article shall also apply to consular employees and to members of the family of members of a consular post residing in their household who are not nationals of the receiving State or do not have their permanent residence therein.

Article 19. The receiving State shall ensure freedom of movement and travel in its territory for members of a consular post and members of their family residing with them, except for areas to which access is prohibited or regulated for reasons of State security.

Article 20. 1. The sending State shall be exempt in the receiving State from all dues and taxes on:

- a) Land, buildings or parts of buildings used for consular purposes or as living quarters for members of a consular post, provided that such land or buildings are owned by the sending State or leased on its behalf.
- b) Contracts and documents relating to the acquisition of such immovable property, provided that it is used by the sending State exclusively for consular purposes.

2. The provisions of paragraph 1 of this article shall not apply to dues and taxes charged in payment for specific services rendered.

Article 21. The sending State shall be exempt in the territory of the receiving State from all dues and taxes on movable property, or on the acquisition of such property, provided that it is owned by or in the possession of the sending State or is used by it for consular purposes.

Article 22. Consular officers or consular employees who are not nationals of the receiving State or do not have their permanent residence therein shall be exempt from dues and taxes levied in the receiving State on their pay or salary.

Article 23. 1. Consular officers or consular employees and members of their family residing in their household who are not nationals of the receiving State or do not have their permanent residence therein shall be exempt from all national or regional dues and taxes.

2. The provisions of paragraph 1 of this article shall not apply to:

- a) Indirect taxes of a kind which are normally incorporated in the price of goods or services;
- b) Dues and taxes on private immovable property situated in the territory of the receiving State, subject to the provisions of article 15, paragraph 1 a);
- c) Estate and inheritance taxes and taxes on the transfer of property levied by the receiving State;
- d) Dues and taxes on private income of any kind originating in the receiving State;
- e) Registration, court and other fees, subject to the provisions of article 20;
- f) Dues and taxes levied in payment for specific services rendered.

Article 24. 1. All articles, including means of transport, imported into the receiving State and intended for the official use of a consular post shall be exempt from customs duties and taxes to the same extent as articles imported into the receiving State and intended for the official use of the diplomatic mission of the sending State.

2. Consular officers and members of their family shall be exempt from customs inspection.

3. Consular officers and consular employees and members of their family residing in their household who are not nationals of the receiving State or do not have their permanent residence therein shall be exempt from customs duties and taxes in respect of their baggage and other articles intended for their personal use to the same extent as the corresponding categories of the staff of the diplomatic mission of the sending State.

4. The term "the corresponding categories of the staff of the diplomatic mission" used in paragraph 3 of this article means the members of the diplomatic staff in the case of consular officers, and the members of the diplomatic mission who perform administrative and technical functions in the case of consular employees.

Article 25. In the event of the death of a member of a consular post or of a member of his family who resided in his household, the receiving State:

- a) Shall permit the export of the movable property of the deceased, with the exception of any articles acquired in the receiving State, the export of which was prohibited at the time of his death;

- b) Shall not levy estate, succession or inheritance duties or duties on transfers with respect to movable property, the presence of which in the receiving State was due solely to the presence in that State of the deceased as a member of a consular post or member of the family of a member of a consular post.

Article 26. Persons enjoying facilities, privileges and immunities under this Convention shall be required, without prejudice to such facilities, privileges and immunities, to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving State, including those relating to traffic and the insurance of means of transport.

Article 27. A consular post may levy consular fees in the territory of the receiving State. The sums collected as fees shall be exempt from all dues and taxes in the receiving State.

PART IV. CONSULAR FUNCTIONS

Article 28. Consular officers shall have the right:

- a) To protect the rights and interests of the sending State and of its physical and juridical persons;
- b) To contribute to the development of the economic, trade, scientific, tourism, cultural and sporting relations between the sending State and the receiving State;
- c) To monitor by all legal means conditions and developments in the political, economic, trade, scientific and cultural fields and to communicate information about them to the sending State and the persons concerned.

Article 29. 1. Consular officers shall have the right to exercise the functions provided in this Convention within the limits of the consular district. They may also exercise other consular functions which are in conformity with the laws of the sending State, provided that the sending State does not object thereto.

2. In the exercise of his functions, a consular officer has the right to communicate verbally or in writing with:

- a) The competent local authorities in the consular district and the representatives of the central authorities in that district;
- b) The competent central authorities of the receiving State, subject to the laws and customs of that State.

3. With the consent of the receiving State, consular officers may exercise consular functions outside the consular district.

Article 30. 1. Consular officers shall have the right:

- a) To accept statements relating to problems of nationality;
- b) To register nationals of the sending State who are staying temporarily or permanently in the consular district;
- c) To register births and deaths of nationals of the sending State;
- d) To receive all statements concerning the family relations of nationals of the sending State;
- e) To solemnize marriages in accordance with the laws of the sending State, provided that both parties to the marriage are nationals of the sending State;
- f) To maintain registers of the civil status of nationals of the sending State.

2. Consular officers shall communicate to the competent authorities of the receiving State all registrations of birth, marriage and death of nationals of the sending State made at the consular post, if the laws of the receiving State so require.

Article 31. Consular officers shall have the right:

- a) To legalize all documents issued by the authorities of the sending State and of the receiving State and to make copies and extracts from such documents;
- b) To legalize the signature of nationals of the sending State on documents, provided that their content is not detrimental to the receiving State.

Article 32. Consular officers shall have the right:

- a) To translate all documents and to certify the translations;
- b) To receive statements and to issue documents required by the laws of the sending State or of the receiving State;
- c) To draw up documents and to exercise all consular functions, provided that such action is in conformity with the laws of the sending State;
- d) To complete the formalities relating to any compulsory service, including the military-service obligations of nationals of the sending State;
- e) To issue certificates of origin and other similar documents to be produced in the receiving State.

Article 33. Consular officers shall have the right to draw up in notarial form and in accordance with the laws of the sending State:

- a) Contracts and other legal instruments concluded between nationals of the sending State and unilateral instruments of such nationals, provided that such contracts and instruments do not relate to the creation, transfer or cessation of rights to immovable property situated in the receiving State;
- b) Wills of nationals of the sending State, and to accept wills for safekeeping;
- c) Contracts and other legal instruments relating exclusively to property situated in the sending State or to problems requiring solution in that State, regardless of the nationality of the parties.

Article 34. Documents and copies, translations and extracts of documents drawn up or certified by a consular officer shall have in the receiving State the same validity and the same force as documents drawn up, translated or legalized by the competent authorities of the receiving State. The authorities of the receiving State shall be obliged to recognize such documents only if they are in conformity with the laws of the receiving State.

Article 35. Consular officers shall have the right:

- a) To issue passports or other travel documents to nationals of the sending State, to amend them, to extend their validity, or to withdraw them;
- b) To issue entry and transit visas valid in the sending State.

Article 36. 1. The authorities of the receiving State shall inform a consular post of cases where it is necessary to appoint a guardian or a trustee for a national of the sending State who has not reached the age of majority or is not in a position to perform legal acts.

2. A consular officer may, in accordance with the laws of the sending State, appoint guardians or trustees for nationals of the sending State, provided that such appointment is permitted by the laws of the receiving State, and to propose persons to perform such functions.

Article 37. Consular officers shall have the right to transmit judicial instruments and other documents to nationals of the sending State.

Article 38. Consular officers shall have the right, in accordance with the laws of the receiving State, to represent nationals and juridical persons before the courts and other authorities of the receiving State, to take appropriate steps to provide them with legal assistance when they are unable to do so themselves owing to absence or for any other reason, and to protect their rights and interests in good time.

Article 39. 1. Consular officers shall have the right to communicate with all nationals of the sending State in the consular district, to visit them, to give them advice and to assist them in their dealings with the judicial and administrative authorities in the receiving State, including dealings in matters raised by such authorities, and to provide them with the assistance of a lawyer or interpreter.

2. Nationals of the sending State shall have the right to communicate with a consular officer and to visit him.

3. The receiving State shall not limit in any way the access of nationals of the sending State to a consular post.

Article 40. 1. The competent authorities of the receiving State shall inform a consular post of the sending State immediately, and in any event within five working days, of any case where a national of the sending State has been detained or deprived of his freedom in any way, and they shall also communicate the reasons for such action.

2. Consular officers shall have the right to make contact with a national who has been detained or deprived of his freedom in any way and to communicate with him in the language of the sending State within a maximum period of eight days from the date of the notification that the national has been detained or deprived of his freedom in any way. Any communication addressed to a consular officer by such national must also be delivered to the consular post within the same time-limit by the competent authorities of the receiving State.

3. A consular officer shall have the right to visit a national of the sending State who is serving a sentence of deprivation of freedom in the receiving State and to communicate with him in the language of the sending State.

4. Such visits shall be authorized within the time-limits prescribed by the laws of the receiving State but within a maximum period of one week from the date of the request.

5. A consular officer shall have the right to deliver to a national of the sending State to whom the provisions of this article apply parcels containing food, clothing, medicines and books in the amounts and at the intervals prescribed by the laws and regulations of the receiving State.

6. When criminal proceedings are taken against a national of the sending State, the authorities of the receiving State shall inform a consular officer of the charges and of the date, hour and place of the trial. The consular officer shall have the right to attend the trial.

7. The competent authorities of the receiving State must immediately inform a national of the sending State who has been detained or deprived of his freedom in any way or who is serving a sentence of imprisonment in the receiving State of his rights under this article.

8. The rights referred to in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of this article shall be exercised in accordance with the laws of the receiving State, it being understood however that such laws shall not render the said rights inoperative.

Article 41. Consular officers shall have the right to accept for safekeeping sums of money, articles and documents remitted to them by nationals of the sending State or on behalf of such nationals, provided that such action is in conformity with the laws of the receiving State.

Article 42. 1. The competent authorities of the receiving State shall inform a consular post, within the shortest possible time, of the death of a national of the sending State and shall communicate to the post all the information in its possession concerning the estate, heirs and legatees, and concerning the existence of a will and the opening of a succession in the receiving State when an heir or legatee is a national of the sending State.

2. Consular officers may represent nationals of the sending State before the authorities of the receiving State, in accordance with the laws of the receiving State, in matters relating to succession even without having received full powers to do so if such nationals are not in a position to protect their rights and interests in good time owing to absence or for any other valid reason.

3. Consular officers in the district in which the succession is opened shall have the right:

- a) To request the competent authorities of the receiving State to take appropriate action, as provided by the laws of that State, to draw up an inventory, and to safeguard and administer the estate;
- b) To be present in person or through a representative when the inventory is made and the property is sealed, and to monitor the procedure undertaken for this purpose.

4. If, on completion of the succession procedure in the territory of one of the Contracting Parties, movable property of the estate or the proceeds of the sale of movable or immovable property is due to heirs or legatees residing in the territory of the other Contracting Party and if they are unable to receive the succession in person or through their agent, the property or the proceeds of its sale shall be handed over to a consular officer, provided that such action is permissible under the laws of the receiving State.

5. The property or the proceeds from its sale referred to in paragraph 4 of this article shall be handed over to the consular officer, subject to the foreign-exchange laws in force in the receiving State, after payment of obligations arising out of the succession and notified within the time-limits prescribed by the laws of the receiving State has been made or guaranteed.

6. When a national of the sending State who does not have a permanent residence in the receiving State dies in the receiving State during a temporary stay, the articles which he had with him shall be handed over to a consular officer without formality, except for articles which were acquired in the receiving State and were subject to an export prohibition at the time of the death.

Article 43. Consular officers shall have the right to give help and assistance to ships of the sending State and to the members of their crew during their stay in the territorial or inland waters of the receiving State. Consular officers may take any action to ensure application of the laws of the sending State relating to navigation. For this purpose they may also visit the ships of the sending State and receive visits from the captain or members of the crew of such ships, in accordance with the laws in force in the ports of the receiving State.

Article 44. Without prejudice to the rights of the authorities of the receiving State, consular officers shall have the right:

- a) To question the captain or a member of the crew of a ship of the sending State, to verify, receive and certify the ship's papers, to accept statements concerning the voyage, and to carry out other acts designed to facilitate the ship's entry and stay in port and its departure.
- b) To rule on any disputes between the captain and the members of the crew, including disputes relating to contracts of service and working conditions;
- c) To take action concerning the recruitment or dismissal of the captain or a member of the crew;
- d) To make any arrangements for the hospitalization or repatriation of the captain or any other member of the crew;
- e) To receive, draw up or sign any statements or other documents relating to navigation as may be required by the laws of the sending State;
- f) To receive statements and certificates of birth and death drawn up by the captain on board the ship, and wills received by him during the voyage;
- g) To render assistance to the captain or any other member of the crew in communicating with the courts or other competent authorities of the receiving State.
- h) To draw up maritime protests on the basis of statements by the captain of a ship of the sending State.

Article 45. 1. When the courts or other competent authorities of the receiving State intend to take coercive measures or to start an official investigation on board a ship of the sending State which is in the territorial or inland waters of the receiving State, such authorities shall be obliged to notify a consular officer to this effect. The notification must be made before the measures are initiated, in order that the consular officer may be present when they are carried out. If the consular officer or his representative is prevented from being present, the competent authorities of the receiving State shall, at his request, provide him with a full account of the actions taken.

2. The provisions of paragraph 1 of this article shall also apply when it is necessary for the competent authorities of the port area to question on shore the captain, a member of the crew or a passenger of a ship of the sending State.

3. Except at the request of the ship's captain or of a consular officer, the judicial or other competent authorities of the receiving State shall not interfere in the relations between the members of the crew with respect to working relationships, discipline or the internal order of the ship, provided that the public order, security and laws of the receiving State are not violated.

4. The provisions of paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article shall not apply to customs, health and passport inspections, the port controls of the maritime authorities,

the saving of human life at sea, the prevention of pollution of the sea, or to other actions taken at the request or with the consent of the ship's captain.

Article 46. 1. If a ship of the sending State has run aground, been wrecked or swept ashore or has suffered some other accident in the territorial or inland waters of the receiving State or if any article belonging to such ship or forming part of the cargo of a shipwrecked vessel which is owned by the sending State or by a national of the sending State has been found in the receiving State, the competent authorities of the receiving State shall immediately so inform a consular officer of the sending State. They shall also inform him of the action taken to save human life, the ship, its cargo and other property on board the ship and articles belonging to the ship or forming part of its cargo which have been separated from the ship.

2. The consular officer may render every assistance to the shipwrecked vessel, the members of its crew and its passengers. For this purpose he may request the assistance of the competent authorities of the receiving State. Such authorities shall be obliged to render him the necessary assistance with respect to the action which he takes.

3. In the absence of the owner or of a person authorized by him, the consular officer shall be deemed authorized to take the same actions which the owner could himself have taken with respect to:

- a) A ship of the sending State, its cargo or any article belonging to the ship or forming part of its cargo which has become separated from the ship, or
- b) A cargo or any article forming part of the cargo of a shipwrecked vessel which is owned by the sending State or by a national of the sending State and is found in the territorial or inland waters of the receiving State or brought to a port of the receiving State.

4. Customs duties shall not be levied in the territory of the receiving State on a shipwrecked vessel or its cargo, provided that they are not intended for subsequent use in the receiving State.

Article 47. The provisions of articles 43, 44, 45 and 46 shall also apply to aircraft of the sending State.

PART V. GENERAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 48. 1. The provisions of this Convention shall also apply to consular services provided by a diplomatic mission.

2. The names of the members of the diplomatic mission entrusted with consular functions shall be notified to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the receiving State.

3. The members of the diplomatic staff referred to in paragraph 2 of this article shall continue to enjoy the privileges and immunities afforded to them by virtue of their diplomatic status.

Article 49. 1. This Convention shall be ratified and shall enter into force 30 days after the exchange of the instruments of ratification, which shall take place at Vientiane.

2. This Convention is concluded for an indefinite period; either of the Contracting Parties may terminate it by giving six months' prior notice in writing.

DONE at Sofia on 8 November 1983 in two original copies, each in the Bulgarian, Lao and French languages, all the texts being equally authentic. In the event of differing interpretations of the articles of this Convention, the French text shall prevail.

For the People's Republic
of Bulgaria:

[LUBEN GOTZEV]

For the Lao People's Democratic
Republic:

[SOULIVONG FRAZITIDET]
