



European Treaty Series - No. 63

**EUROPEAN CONVENTION
ON THE ABOLITION OF LEGALISATION
OF DOCUMENTS EXECUTED
BY DIPLOMATIC AGENTS
OR CONSULAR OFFICERS**

London, 7.VI.1968

The member States of the Council of Europe, signatory hereto,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members;

Considering that relations between the member States, as well as relations between their diplomatic agents or consular officers, are increasingly based on mutual trust;

Considering that the abolition of legalisation is likely to strengthen the ties between the member States by making it possible to use foreign documents in the same manner as documents emanating from national authorities;

Convinced of the need to abolish the requirement of legalisation of documents executed by their diplomatic agents or consular officers,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

For the purposes of this Convention, legalisation means only the formality used to certify the authenticity of the signature on a document, the capacity in which the person signing such document has acted and, where appropriate, the identity of the seal or stamp which such document bears.

Article 2

- 1 This Convention shall apply to documents which have been executed by diplomatic agents or consular officers of a Contracting Party, acting in their official capacity and exercising their functions in the territory of any state, and which have to be produced:
 - a either in the territory of another Contracting Party, or
 - b to the diplomatic agents or consular officers of another Contracting Party exercising their functions in the territory of a State which is not a party to this Convention.
- 2 This Convention shall also apply to official certificates, such as those recording the registration of a document or the fact that it was in existence on a certain date, and authentications of signatures, appended by diplomatic agents or consular officers to documents other than those referred to in paragraph 1.

Article 3

Each Contracting Party shall exempt from legalisation documents to which this Convention applies.

Article 4

- 1 Each Contracting Party shall take the measures necessary to avoid the carrying out by its authorities of legalisations in cases where this Convention abolishes legalisation.

- 2 Each Contracting Party shall provide for the verification, where necessary, of the authenticity of the documents to which this Convention applies. Such verification shall not give rise to payment of any taxes or expenses and shall be carried out as quickly as possible.

Article 5

This Convention shall, as between the Contracting Parties, prevail over the provisions of any treaties, conventions or agreements which provide, or shall provide, for legalisation of the authenticity of the signature of a diplomatic agent or consular officer, the capacity in which such person signing the document has acted, and, where appropriate, the identity of the seal or stamp which the document bears.

Article 6

- 1 This Convention shall be open to signature by the member States of the Council of Europe. It shall be subject to ratification or acceptance. Instruments of ratification or acceptance shall be deposited with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.
- 2 This Convention shall enter into force three months after the date of the deposit of the third instrument of ratification or acceptance.
- 3 In respect of a signatory State ratifying or accepting subsequently, the Convention shall come into force three months after the date of the deposit of its instrument of ratification or acceptance.

Article 7

- 1 After the entry into force of this Convention, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe may invite any State not a member of the Council of Europe to accede to this Convention.
- 2 Such accession shall be effected by depositing with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe an instrument of accession which shall take effect three months after the date of its deposit.

Article 8

- 1 Any Contracting Party may, at the time of signature or when depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance or accession, specify the territory or territories to which this Convention shall apply.
- 2 Any Contracting Party may, when depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance or accession or at any later date, by declaration addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, extend this Convention to any other territory or territories specified in the declaration and for whose international relations it is responsible or on whose behalf it is authorised to give undertakings.
- 3 Any declaration made in pursuance of the preceding paragraph may, in respect of any territory mentioned in such declaration, be withdrawn according to the procedure laid down in Article 9 of this Convention.

Article 9

- 1 This Convention shall remain in force indefinitely.
- 2 Any Contracting Party may, in so far as it is concerned, denounce this Convention by means of a notification addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.
- 3 Such denunciation shall take effect six months after the date of receipt by the Secretary General of such notification.

Article 10

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall notify the member States of the Council and any State which has acceded to this Convention of:

- a any signature;
- b any deposit of an instrument of ratification, acceptance or accession;
- c any date of entry into force of this Convention;
- d any declaration received in pursuance of the provisions of Article 8;
- e any notification received in pursuance of the provisions of Article 9 and the date on which denunciation takes effect.

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, have signed this Convention.

Done at London, this 7th June 1968, in English and French, both texts being equally authoritative, in a single copy which shall remain deposited in the archives of the Council of Europe. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall transmit certified copies to each of the signatory and acceding States.