

**United Nations**

**Convention relating to the status of Refugees**

Geneva, 28 July 1951

**Declarations under section B of article 1 of the Convention**<sup>1</sup>

**(a) "Events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951"**

Malta  
Turkey

**(b) "Events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951"**

all other European States mentioned below

**Declarations other than those made under section B of article 1  
and Reservations**

(Unless otherwise indicated, the declarations and reservations were made upon ratification, accession or succession)

***Austria***

The Convention is ratified:

(a) Subject to the reservation that the Republic of Austria regards the provisions of article 17, paragraphs 1 and 2 (excepting, however, the phrase "who was already exempt from them at the date of entry into force of this Convention for the Contracting State concerned, or . . ." in the latter paragraph) not as a binding obligation, but merely as a recommendation.

(b) Subject to the reservation that the provisions of article 22, paragraph 1, shall not be applicable to the establishment and maintenance of private elementary schools, that the "public relief and assistance" referred to in article 23 shall be interpreted solely in the sense of allocations from public welfare funds (*Armenversorgung*), and that the "documents or certifications" referred to in article 25, paragraphs 2 and 3 shall be construed to mean the identity certificates provided for in the Convention of 30 June 1928 relating to refugees.

***Belgium***

1. In all cases where the Convention grants to refugees the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country, this provision shall not be interpreted by the Belgian Government as necessarily involving the régime accorded to nationals of countries with which Belgium has concluded regional customs, economic or political agreements.

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<sup>1</sup> All Declarations and Reservations compiled by the ERICarts Institute from the UN website <http://www.ohchr.org/english/countries/ratification/2.htm>

2. Article 15 of the Convention shall not be applicable in Belgium; refugees lawfully staying in Belgian territory will enjoy the same treatment, as regards the right of association, as that accorded to aliens in general.

### **Cyprus**

With confirmation of the reservations made by the Government of the United Kingdom upon application of the Convention to the territory of Cyprus.

### **Denmark**

25 March 1968

"[Subject to] the following reservation:

The obligation in article 17, paragraph 1, to accord to refugees lawfully staying in Denmark the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country as regards the right to engage in wage-earning employment shall not be construed to mean that refugees shall be entitled to the privileges which in this respect are accorded to nationals of Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden."

### **Estonia**

"[Subject to the following] reservations ...:

1) to articles 23 and 24 as follows:

'The Republic of Estonia considers articles 23 and 24 merely as recommendatory, not as legally binding.'

2) to article 25 as follows:

'The Republic of Estonia shall not be bound to cause a certificate to be delivered by an Estonian authority, in place of the authorities of a foreign country, if documentary records necessary for the delivery of such a certificate do not exist in the Republic of Estonia'.

3) to article 28, paragraph 1 as follows:

'The Republic of Estonia shall not be obliged within five years from the entry into force of the present Convention to issue travel documents provided in article 28.' "

### **Finland**

"[S]ubject to the following reservations:

(1) A general reservation to the effect that the application of those provisions of the Convention which grant to refugees the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country shall not be affected by the fact that special rights and privileges are now or may in future be accorded by Finland to the nationals of Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden or to the nationals of any one of those Countries;

(2) A reservation to article 7, paragraph 2, to the effect that Finland is not prepared, as a general measure, to grant refugees who fulfil the conditions of three years residence in Finland an exemption from any legislative reciprocity which Finnish law may have stipulated as a condition governing an alien's eligibility for same right or privilege;

(3) A reservation to article 8 to the effect that that article shall not be binding on Finland;

(4) A reservation to article 12, paragraph 1, to the effect that the Convention shall not modify the rule of Finnish private international law, as now in force, under which the personal status of a refugee is governed by the law of his country of nationality;

(5) A reservation to article 24, paragraph 1 (b) and paragraph 3 to the effect that they shall not be binding on Finland;

(6) A reservation to article 25, to the effect that Finland does not consider itself bound to cause a certificate to be delivered by a Finnish authority, in the place of the authorities of a foreign country, if the documentary records necessary for the delivery of such certificate do not exist in Finland;

(7) A reservation with respect to the provisions contained in paragraph 1 of article 28. Finland does not accept the obligations stipulated in the said paragraph, but is prepared to recognize travel documents issued by other Contracting States pursuant to this article."

### **France**

In depositing its instrument of ratification, the Government of the French Republic, acting in accordance with article 42 of the Convention, makes the following statements:

(a) It considers that article 29, paragraph 2, does not prevent the application in French territory of the provisions of the Act of 7 May 1934 authorizing the levying of the Nansen tax for the support of refugee welfare, resettlement and relief work.

(b) Article 17 in no way prevents the application of the laws and regulations establishing the proportion of alien workers that employers are authorized to employ in France or affects the obligations of such employers in connexion with the employment of alien workers.

### **Greece**

"In cases or circumstances which, in its opinion, would justify exceptional procedure for reasons of national security or public order, the Hellenic Government reserves the right to derogate from the obligations imposed by the provisions of article 26."

### **Ireland**

"[S]ubject to the following declarations and reservations:

...

2. The Government of Ireland understands the words 'public order' in article 32 (1) and the words 'in accordance with due process of law' in article 32 (2) to mean, respectively, 'public policy' and 'in accordance with a procedure provided by law'.

3. With regard to article 17 the Government of Ireland do not undertake to grant to refugees rights of wage-earning employment more favourable than those granted to aliens generally.

4. The Government of Ireland undertake to give effect to article 25 only insofar as may be practicable and permissible under the laws of Ireland.

5. With regard to article 29 (1) the Government of Ireland do not undertake to accord to refugees treatment more favourable than that accorded to aliens generally with respect to

...

(c) Income Tax (including Surtax)."

## **Latvia**

### "Reservation

In accordance with paragraph 1 of article 42 of the [said Convention], the Republic of Latvia declares that it does not consider itself bound by the article 8 and the article 34 of the Convention.

### Reservation

In accordance with paragraph 1 of the article 42 of the [said Convention], the Republic of Latvia, in respect of the article 26 of the Convention, reserves the right to designate the place or places of residence of the refugees whenever considerations of national security or public order so require.

### Reservation

In accordance with paragraph 1 of the article 42 of the [said Convention], the Republic of Latvia declares that the provisions of paragraphs 1 and 2 of the article 17 and article 24 of the Convention it considers as recommendations and not legal obligations.

### Reservation

In accordance with paragraph 1 of the article 42 of the [said Convention], the Republic of Latvia declares that in all cases where the Convention grants to refugees the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country, this provision shall not be interpreted by the Government of the Republic of Latvia as necessarily involving the regime accorded to nationals of countries with which the Republic of Latvia had concluded regional customs, economic, political or social security agreements."

## **Liechtenstein**

Subject to the following reservations:

*Ad article 17:* With respect to the right to engage in wage-earning employment, refugees are treated in law on the same footing as aliens in general, on the understanding, however, that the competent authorities shall make every effort insofar as possible, to apply to them the provisions of this article.

*Ad article 24, paragraphs 1 (a) and (b), and paragraph 3:* Provisions relating to aliens in general on training, apprenticeship, unemployment insurance, old-age and survivors insurance shall be applicable to refugees. Nevertheless, in the case of old-age and survivors insurance, refugees residing in Liechtenstein (including their survivors if the latter are considered as refugees) are already entitled to normal old-age or survivors' benefits after paying their contributions for at least one full year, provided that they have resided in Liechtenstein for ten years-of which five years without interruption have immediately preceded the occurrence of the event insured against. Moreover, the one-third reduction in benefits provided in the case of aliens and stateless persons under article 74 of the Act on Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, is not applicable to refugees. Refugees residing in Liechtenstein who, on the occurrence of the event insured against, are not entitled to old-age or survivors' benefits, are paid not only their own contributions but any contributions which may have been made by the employers.

## **Luxembourg**

Upon signature:

Subject to the following reservation: in all cases where this Convention grants to refugees the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country, this provision shall not be interpreted as necessarily involving the régime accorded to nationals of countries with which the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has concluded regional, customs, economic or political agreements.

15 November 1984

Interpretative statement:

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg considers that the reservation made by the Republic of Guatemala concerning the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951 and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugee of 31 January 1967 does not affect the obligations of Guatemala deriving from those instruments.

## **Malta**

"Article 7, paragraph 2, articles 14, 23, 27 and 28 shall not apply to Malta, and article 7, paragraphs 3, 4 and 5, articles 8, 9, 11, 17, 18, 31, 32 and 34 shall apply to Malta compatibly with its own special problems, its peculiar position and characteristics."

## **Netherlands**

Reservation made upon signature and confirmed upon ratification:

This signature is appended subject to the reservation that in all cases where this Convention grants to refugees the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country this provision shall not be interpreted as involving the régime accorded to nationals of countries with which the Netherlands has concluded regional, customs, economic or political agreements.

Declarations:

(1) With reference to article 26 of this Convention, the Netherlands Government reserves the right to designate a place of principal residence for certain refugees or groups of refugees in the public interest.

(2) In the notifications concerning overseas territories referred to in article 40, paragraph 2, of this Convention, the Netherlands Government reserves the right to make a declaration in accordance with section B of article 1 with respect to such territories and to make reservations in accordance with article 42 of the Convention.

Interpretative declaration:

In depositing the instrument of ratification by the Netherlands, . . . I declare on behalf of the Netherlands Government that it does not regard the Amboinese who were transported to the Netherlands after 27 December 1949, the date of the transfer of sovereignty by the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia, as eligible for the status of refugees as defined in article 1 of the said Convention.

## **Norway**

"The obligation stipulated in article 17 (1) to accord to refugees lawfully staying in the country the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country in the same circumstances as regards the right to engage in wage-earning employment, shall not

be construed as extending to refugees the benefits of agreements which may in the future be concluded between Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden, or between Norway and any one of these countries, for the purpose of establishing special conditions for the transfer of labour between these countries."

### ***Poland***

The Republic of Poland does not consider itself bound by the provisions of article 24, paragraph 2, of the Convention.

### ***Portugal***

13 July 1976

"In all cases in which the Convention confers upon the refugees the most favoured person status granted to nationals of a foreign country, this clause will not be interpreted in such a way as to mean the status granted by Portugal to the nationals of Brazil."

### ***Spain***

(a) The expression "the most favourable treatment" shall, in all the articles in which it is used, be interpreted as not including rights which, by law or by treaty, are granted to nationals of Portugal, Andorra, the Philippines or the Latin American countries or to nationals of countries with which international agreements of a regional nature are concluded.

(b) The Government of Spain considers that article 8 is not a binding rule but a recommendation.

(c) The Government of Spain reserves its position on the application of article 12, paragraph 1. Article 12, paragraph 2, shall be interpreted as referring exclusively to rights acquired by a refugee before he obtained, in any country, the status of refugee.

(d) Article 26 of the Convention shall be interpreted as not precluding the adoption of special measures concerning the place of residence of particular refugees, in accordance with Spanish law.

### ***Sweden***

With the following reservations:

*First*, a general reservation to the effect that the application of those provisions of the Convention which grant to refugees the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country shall not be affected by the fact that special rights and privileges are now or may in future be accorded by Sweden to the nationals of Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway or to the nationals of any one of those countries; and, *secondly*, the following reservations: a reservation to article 8 to the effect that that article shall not be binding on Sweden; a reservation to article 12, paragraph 1, to the effect that the Convention shall not modify the rule of Swedish private international law, as now in force, under which the personal status of a refugee is governed by the law of his country of nationality . . .; a reservation to article 17, paragraph 2, to the effect that Sweden does not consider itself bound to grant a refugee who fulfils any one of the conditions set out in subparagraphs (a)-(c) an automatic exemption from the obligation to obtain a work permit; a reservation to article 24, paragraph 1 (b), to the effect that notwithstanding the principle of national treatment for refugees, Sweden shall not be bound to accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals in respect of the possibility of entitlement to a national pension under the provisions of the National Insurance Act; and likewise to the effect that, in so far as the right to a supplementary pension under the said

Act and the computation of such pension in certain respects are concerned, the rules applicable to Swedish nationals shall be more favourable than those applied to other insured persons; a reservation to article 24, paragraph 3, to the effect that the provisions of this paragraph shall not be binding on Sweden; and a reservation to article 25, to the effect that Sweden does not consider itself bound to cause a certificate to be delivered by a Swedish authority, in the place of the authorities of a foreign country, if the documentary records necessary for the delivery of such a certificate do not exist in Sweden.

## **Turkey**

Upon signature:

The Turkish Government considers moreover, that the term "events occurring before 1 January 1951" refers to the beginning of the events. Consequently, since the pressure exerted upon the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, which began before 1 January 1951, is still continuing, the provision of this Convention must also apply to the Bulgarian refugees of Turkish extraction compelled to leave that country as a result of this pressure and who, being unable to enter Turkey, might seek refuge on the territory of another contracting party after 1 January 1951.

The Turkish Government will, at the time of ratification, enter reservations which it could make under article 42 of the Convention.

Reservation and declaration made upon ratification:

No provision of this Convention may be interpreted as granting to refugees greater rights than those accorded to Turkish citizens in Turkey;

The Government of the Republic of Turkey is not a party to the Arrangements of 12 May 1926 and of 30 June 1928 mentioned in article 1, paragraph A, of this Convention. Furthermore, the 150 persons affected by the Arrangement of 30 June 1928 having been amnestied under Act No.3527, the provisions laid down in this Arrangement are no longer valid in the case of Turkey. Consequently, the Government of the Republic of Turkey considers the Convention of 28 July 1951 independently of the aforementioned Arrangements . . .

The Government of the Republic understands that the action of "re-availment" or "reacquisition" as referred to in article 1, paragraph C, of the Convention-that is to say: "If (1) He has voluntarily re-availed himself of the protection of the country of his nationality; or (2) Having lost his nationality, he has voluntarily reacquired it"-does not depend only on the request of the person concerned but also on the consent of the State in question.

## **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

"(i) The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland understand articles 8 and 9 as not preventing them from taking in time of war or other grave and exceptional circumstances measures in the interests of national security in the case of a refugee on the ground of his nationality. The provisions of article 8 shall not prevent the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from exercising any rights over property or interests which they may acquire or have acquired as an Allied or Associated power under a Treaty of Peace or other agreement or arrangement for the restoration of peace which has been or may be completed as a result of the Second World War. Furthermore, the provisions of article 8 shall not affect the treatment to be accorded to any property or interests which at the date of entry into force of this Convention for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are under the control of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland by reason of a state of war which exists or existed between them and any other State.

(ii) The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland accept paragraph 2 of article 17 with the substitution of "four years" for "three years" in sub-paragraph (a) and with the omission of sub-paragraph (c).

(iii) The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in respect of such of the matters referred to in sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph 1 of article 24 as fall within the scope of the National Health Service, can only undertake to apply the provisions of that paragraph so far as the law allows; and it can only undertake to apply the provisions of paragraph 2 of that Article so far as the law allows.

(iv) The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland cannot undertake to give effect to the obligations contained in paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 25 and can only undertake to apply the provisions of paragraph 3 so far as the law allows.

#### Commentary

In connexion with sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph 1 of article 24 relating to certain matters within the scope of the National Health Service, the National Health Service (Amendment) Act, 1949, contains powers for charges to be made to persons not ordinarily resident in Great Britain (which category would include refugees) who receive treatment under the Service. While these powers have not yet been exercised it is possible that this might have to be done at some future date. In Northern Ireland the health services are restricted to persons ordinarily resident in the country except where regulations are made to extend the Service to others. It is for these reasons that the Government of the United Kingdom while they are prepared in the future, as in the past, to give the most sympathetic consideration to the situation of refugees, find it necessary to make a reservation to sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph 1 of article 24 of the Convention.

The scheme of Industrial Injuries Insurance in Great Britain does not meet the requirements of paragraph 2 of article 24 of the Convention. Where an insured person has died as the result of an industrial accident or a disease due to the nature of his employment, benefit cannot generally be paid to his dependants who are abroad unless they are in any part of the British Commonwealth, in the Irish Republic or in a country with which the United Kingdom has made a reciprocal agreement concerning the payment of industrial injury benefits. There is an exception to this rule in favour of the dependants of certain seamen who die as a result of industrial accidents happening to them while they are in the service of British ships. In this matter refugees are treated in the same way as citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies and by reason of paragraphs 3 and 4 of article 24 of the Convention, the dependants of refugees will be able to take advantage of reciprocal agreements which provide for the payment of United Kingdom industrial injury benefits in other countries. By reason of paragraphs (3) and (4) of article 24 refugees will enjoy under the scheme of National Insurance and Industrial Injuries Insurance certain rights which are withheld from British subjects who are not citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies.

No arrangements exist in the United Kingdom for the administrative assistance for which provision is made in article 25 nor have any such arrangements been found necessary in the case of refugees. Any need for the documents or certifications mentioned in paragraph 2 of that article would be met by affidavits."

The Government of the Republic of Turkey is not a party to the Arrangements of 12 May 1926 and of 30 June 1928 mentioned in article 1, paragraph A, of this Convention. Furthermore, the 150 persons affected by the Arrangement of 30 June 1928 having been amnestied under Act No.3527, the provisions laid down in this Arrangement are no longer valid in the case of Turkey. Consequently, the Government of the Republic of Turkey considers the Convention of 28 July 1951 independently of the aforementioned Arrangements . . .

The Government of the Republic understands that the action of "re-availment" or "reacquisition" as referred to in article 1, paragraph C, of the Convention-that is to say: "If

(1) He has voluntarily re-availed himself of the protection of the country of his nationality;  
or (2) Having lost his nationality, he has voluntarily reacquired it"-does not depend only on the request of the person concerned but also on the consent of the State in question.