

# Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961

## Commentaries on Practical Application

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## Table of contents

A.	<b>Text of the Convention</b> .....	15
B.	<b>Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention concerning Acquisition of Nationality</b> .....	31
C.	<b>Optional Protocol concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes</b>	33
D.	<b>Law on the Vienna Convention of 18 April 1961 on Diplomatic Relations of 06 August 1964</b> .....	36
E.	<b>Detailed Presentation of the Individual Articles</b> .....	38
	<b>Preamble</b> .....	38
	Article 1 [Definitions of terms] .....	46
	Article 2 [Establishment of diplomatic relations] .....	55
	Article 3 [Functions of a diplomatic mission] .....	60
	Article 4 [Agrément] .....	75
	Article 5 [Accreditation for more than one State] .....	78
	Article 6 [Head of the mission to more than one State] .....	83
	Article 7 [Free discretion of the sending State] .....	85
	Article 8 [Nationality of the diplomatic staff] .....	89
	Article 9 [Persona non grata] .....	93
	Article 10 [Notification; Content] .....	99
	Article 11 [Size of the mission] .....	105
	Article 12 [Additional offices of the diplomatic mission] .....	109
	Article 13 [Taking up of function by a head of mission] .....	113
	Article 14 [Classes of diplomatic agents] .....	115
	Article 15 [Definition of class] .....	118
	Article 16 [Precedence of the heads of mission] .....	119
	Article 17 [Precedence of the heads of mission; notification] .....	121
	Article 18 [Reception of the heads of mission] .....	123
	Article 19 [Representation of the head of the mission] .....	124
	Article 20 [Flag of the sending State] .....	128

## Table of contents

Article 21	<b>[Accommodation of the mission]</b> . . . . .	129
Article 22	<b>[Inviolability of the mission]</b> . . . . .	132
Article 23	<b>[Exemption from dues and taxes]</b> . . . . .	167
Article 24	<b>[Archives of the mission]</b> . . . . .	174
Article 25	<b>[Performance of the functions]</b> . . . . .	178
Article 26	<b>[Freedom of movement]</b> . . . . .	183
Article 27	<b>[Free communication for official purposes]</b> . . . . .	186
Article 28	<b>[Fees for official duties]</b> . . . . .	204
Article 29	<b>[Inviolability of a diplomatic agent]</b> . . . . .	205
Article 30	<b>[Inviolability of a diplomatic agent's residence]</b> . . . . .	217
Article 31	<b>[Diplomatic immunity]</b> . . . . .	224
Article 32	<b>[Waiver of diplomatic immunity]</b> . . . . .	245
Article 33	<b>[Social security provisions]</b> . . . . .	250
Article 34	<b>[Exemption from dues and taxes]</b> . . . . .	258
Article 35	<b>[Exemption from public services]</b> . . . . .	269
Article 36	<b>[Duty-free import]</b> . . . . .	271
Article 37	<b>[Members of the family of a member of the mission; privileges and immunities]</b> . . . . .	283
Article 38	<b>[Limited immunity]</b> . . . . .	296
Article 39	<b>[Duration of the diplomatic privileges and immunities]</b> . . . . .	304
Article 40	<b>[Transit of diplomatic agents through third-party countries]</b> . . . . .	317
Article 41	<b>[Observance of the laws of the receiving States]</b> . . . . .	325
Article 42	<b>[Prohibition of other professional or commercial activity]</b> . . . . .	340
Article 43	<b>[Termination of a diplomatic agent's function]</b> . . . . .	345
Article 44	<b>[Facilities accorded to diplomatic agents in the case of armed conflicts]</b> . . . . .	349
Article 45	<b>[Severance of diplomatic relations]</b> . . . . .	352
Article 46	<b>[Protection of the interests of third States]</b> . . . . .	364
Article 47	<b>[Prohibition of discriminatory treatment of States]</b> . . . . .	367
Article 48	<b>[Entitlement to signature]</b> . . . . .	370
Article 49	<b>[Ratification]</b> . . . . .	371

Table of contents

Article 50	<b>[Accession]</b> .....	372
Article 51	<b>[Entry into force]</b> .....	373
Article 52	<b>[Notification by the UN Secretary-General]</b> .....	374
Article 53	<b>[Safekeeping of the agreement]</b> .....	375
F.	<b>Overview table</b> .....	376
G.	<b>List of the Signatories to the VCDR</b> .....	381
H.	<b>Index</b> .....	392
I.	<b>Bibliography</b> .....	398

## **A. Text of the Convention**

### **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations**

THE STATES PARTIES TO THE PRESENT CONVENTION –

RECALLING THAT peoples of all nations from ancient times have recognized the status of diplomatic agents,

HAVING IN MIND the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations concerning the sovereign equality of States, the maintenance of international peace and security, and the promotion of friendly relations among nations,

BELIEVING an international convention on diplomatic intercourse, privileges and immunities would contribute to the development of friendly relations among nations, irrespective of their differing constitutional and social systems,

REALIZING that the purpose of such privileges and immunities is not to benefit individuals but to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of diplomatic missions as representing States,

AFFIRMING that the rules of international customary law should continue to govern questions not expressly regulated by the provisions of the present Convention –

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

#### **Article 1 [Definitions of terms]**

For the purpose of the present Convention, the following expressions shall have the meanings hereunder assigned to them:

- a) The “head of the mission” is the person charged by the sending State with the duty of acting in that capacity;
- b) The “members of the mission” are the head of the mission and the members of the staff of the mission;
- c) The “members of the staff of the mission” are the members of the diplomatic staff, of the administrative and technical staff and of the service staff of the mission;
- d) The “members of the diplomatic staff” are the members of the staff of the mission having diplomatic rank;
- e) A “diplomatic agent” is the head of the mission or a member of the diplomatic staff of the mission;

## Text of the Convention

- f) The “members of the administrative and technical staff” are the members of the staff of the mission employed in the administrative and technical service of the mission;
- g) The “members of the service staff” are the members of the staff of the mission in the domestic service of the mission;
- h) A “private servant” is a person who is in the domestic service of a member of the mission and who is not a staff member of the sending State;
- i) The “premises of the mission” are the buildings or parts of buildings and the land ancillary thereto, irrespective of ownership, used for the purposes of the mission including the residence of the head of the mission.

### Article 2 [Establishment of diplomatic relations]

The establishment of diplomatic relations between States, and of permanent diplomatic missions, takes place by mutual consent.

### Article 3 [Functions of a diplomatic mission]

- (1) The functions of a diplomatic mission consist, inter alia, in:
  - a) Representing the sending State in the receiving State;
  - b) Protecting in the receiving State the interests of the sending State and of its nationals, within the limits permitted by international law;
  - c) Negotiating with the Government of the receiving State;
  - d) Ascertaining by all lawful means conditions and developments in the receiving State, and reporting thereon to the Government of the sending State;
  - e) Promoting friendly relations between the sending State and the receiving State, and developing their economic, cultural and scientific relations.
- (2) Nothing in the present Convention shall be construed as preventing the performance of consular functions by a diplomatic mission.

### Article 4 [Agrément]

- (1) The sending State must make certain that the agrément of the receiving State has been given with regard to the person it proposes to accredit as head of the mission to that State.
- (2) The receiving State is not obliged to give reasons for a refusal of agrément to the sending State.

Article 5  
**[Accreditation for more than one State]**

- (1) After it has given due notification to the receiving States concerned, the sending State may accredit a head of mission or assign any member of the diplomatic staff, as the case may be, to more than one State, unless there is express objection by any of the receiving States.
- (2) If the sending State accredits a head of mission to one or more other States, it may establish a diplomatic mission headed by a chargé d'affaires ad interim in each State where the head of mission is not permanently registered.
- (3) A head of mission or any member of the diplomatic staff of the mission may act as representative of the sending State to any international organization.

Article 6  
**[Head of the mission to more than one State]**

Two or more States may accredit the same person as head of mission to another State, unless the receiving State objects to this.

Article 7  
**[Free discretion of the sending State]**

Subject to the provisions of Articles 5, 8, 9 and 11, the sending State may freely appoint the members of the staff of the mission. In the case of military, naval or air attachés, the receiving State may require their names to be submitted beforehand for its approval.

Article 8  
**[Nationality of the diplomatic staff]**

- (1) Members of the diplomatic staff of the mission should be of the nationality of the sending State on principle.
- (2) Members of the diplomatic staff of the mission may only be appointed from among persons having the nationality of the receiving State with the consent of that State; this consent may be withdrawn at any time.
- (3) The receiving State may reserve the same right with regard to nationals of a third State who are not also nationals of the sending State.

Article 9  
**[Persona non grata]**

- (1) The receiving State may notify the sending State that the head of the mission or any member of the diplomatic staff of the mission is persona non grata or that any other member of the staff of the mission is not acceptable. It may do this at any time and without giving reasons. In these cases, the sending State shall either recall the person concerned or terminate his functions with the mission as appropriate. A person may be declared non grata or not acceptable before arriving in the sovereign territory of the receiving State.
- (2) If the sending State refuses to carry out its obligations under paragraph 1 of this Article or fails to do so within a reasonable period, the receiving State may refuse to recognize the person concerned as a member of the mission.

Article 10  
**[Notification; content]**

- (1) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the receiving State, or such other ministry as may be agreed, shall be notified of:
- a) The appointment of members of the mission, their arrival and their final departure or the termination of their functions with the mission;
  - b) The arrival and final departure of a person belonging to the family of a member of the mission and, where appropriate, the fact that a person has become or ceased to be a member of the family of a member of the mission;
  - c) The arrival and final departure of private servants in the employ of persons referred to in part a) of this paragraph and, where appropriate, the fact that they are leaving the employ of such persons;
  - d) The engagement and discharge of persons resident in the receiving State as members of the mission or private servants entitled to privileges and immunities.
- (2) Advance notification of arrival and final departure shall also be given where possible.

Article 11  
**[Size of the mission]**

- (1) In the absence of a specific agreement as to the size of the mission, the receiving State may require that the size of a mission be kept within the limits it deems to be reasonable and normal considering the circumstances and conditions in the receiving State and the needs of the particular mission.
- (2) Equally, within similar bounds and on a non-discriminatory basis, the receiving State may refuse to accept staff members of a particular category.



Article 12  
**[Additional offices of the diplomatic mission]**

The sending State may not establish offices forming part of the mission in localities other than those in which the mission itself is registered without the prior express consent of the receiving State.

Article 13  
**[Taking up of function by a head of mission]**

- (1) The head of the mission is considered to have taken up his functions in the receiving State as of the date when he has either presented his credentials or has notified the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the receiving State, or such other ministry as may be agreed, of his arrival and a true copy of his credentials has been presented to this ministry, in accordance with the practice prevailing in the receiving State which shall be applied in a uniform manner.
- (2) The order of presentation of credentials or of a true copy thereof will be determined by the date and time of the arrival of the head of the mission.

Article 14  
**[Classes of diplomatic agents]**

- (1) Heads of mission are divided into three classes as follows:
  - a) That of ambassadors or nuncios accredited to Heads of State, and other heads of mission of equivalent rank;
  - b) That of envoys, ministers and internuncios accredited to Heads of State;
  - c) That of chargés d'affaires accredited to Ministers of Foreign Affairs.
- (2) Except as concerns precedence and etiquette, there shall be no differentiation between heads of mission by reason of their class.

Article 15  
**[Definition of class]**

The class to which the heads of their missions are to be assigned shall be agreed between States.

Article 16  
**[Precedence of the heads of mission]**

- (1) Heads of mission shall take precedence in their respective classes in the order of the date and time of their taking up their functions in accordance with Article 13.

Text of the Convention

- (2) Alterations in the credentials of a head of mission which do not involve any change of class shall not affect his precedence.
- (3) This Article is without prejudice to any custom accepted by the receiving State regarding the precedence of the representative of the Holy See.

Article 17

**[Precedence of heads of mission; notification]**

The precedence of the members of the diplomatic staff of the mission shall be notified by the head of the mission to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or such other ministry as may be agreed.

Article 18

**[Reception of the heads of mission]**

The procedure to be observed in each State for the reception of heads of mission shall be uniform in respect of each class.

Article 19

**[Representation of the head of the mission]**

- (1) If the post of head of the mission is vacant, or if the head of the mission is unable to perform his functions, a chargé d'affaires ad interim shall act as head of the mission provisionally. The name of the chargé d'affaires ad interim shall be notified either by the head of the mission or, if he is unable to do so, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the sending State to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the receiving State or such other ministry as may be agreed.
- (2) In cases where there is no member of the diplomatic staff of the mission present in the receiving State, a member of the administrative and technical staff may, with the consent of the receiving State, be designated by the sending State to be in charge of the current administrative affairs of the mission.

Article 20

**[Flag of the sending State]**

The mission and its head shall have the right to use the flag and emblem of the sending State on the premises of the mission, including the residence of the head of the mission, and on his means of transport.

Article 21  
**[Premises for the mission]**

- (1) In accordance with its laws, the receiving State shall either facilitate the acquisition of premises necessary for the mission of the sending State on its sovereign territory, or assist the sending State in obtaining premises in some other way.
- (2) If necessary, it shall also assist missions in obtaining suitable living accommodation for their members.

Article 22  
**[Inviolability of the mission]**

- (1) The premises of the mission shall be inviolable. The agents of the receiving State may not enter them, except with the consent of the head of the mission.
- (2) The receiving State is under a special obligation to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of the mission against any intrusion or damage and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity.
- (3) The premises of the mission, their furnishings and other property thereon and the means of transport of the mission shall be immune from any search, requisition, attachment or execution.

Article 23  
**[Exemption from dues and taxes]**

- (1) The sending State and the head of the mission shall be exempt from all national, regional or municipal dues and taxes in respect of the premises of the mission, whether owned, rented or leased, other than such as represent payment for specific services rendered.
- (2) The exemption from taxation referred to in this Article shall not apply to such dues and taxes payable under the law of the receiving State by persons contracting with the sending State or the head of the mission.

Article 24  
**[Archives of the mission]**

The archives and documents of the mission shall be inviolable at all times and wherever they may be located.

Article 25  
**[Performance of the functions]**

The receiving State shall accord full facilities for the performance of the functions of the mission.

Article 26  
**[Freedom of movement]**

Subject to its laws and regulations concerning zones into which entry is prohibited or regulated for reasons of national security, the receiving State shall ensure to all members of the mission freedom of movement and travel in its territory.

Article 27  
**[Free communication for official purposes]**

(1) The receiving State shall permit and protect free communication on the part of the mission for all official purposes. In communicating with the Government and the other missions and consulates of the sending State, wherever situated, the mission may employ all appropriate means, including diplomatic couriers and messages in code or cipher. However, the mission may only install and use a wireless transmitter with the consent of the receiving State.

(2) The official correspondence of the mission shall be inviolable. "Official correspondence" means all correspondence relating to the mission and its functions.

(3) The diplomatic bag shall not be opened or detained.

(4) The packages constituting the diplomatic bag must be visibly marked as such and may only contain diplomatic documents or articles intended for official use.

(5) The diplomatic courier, who shall be provided with an official document indicating his status and the number of packages constituting the diplomatic bag, shall be protected by the receiving State in the performance of his functions. He shall enjoy personal inviolability and shall not be liable to any form of arrest or detention.

(6) The sending State or the mission may designate diplomatic couriers ad hoc. In such cases the provisions of paragraph 5 of this Article shall also apply, except that the immunities mentioned therein shall cease to apply when such a courier has delivered the diplomatic bag in his charge to the consignee.

(7) A diplomatic bag may be entrusted to the captain of a commercial aircraft scheduled to land at an authorized port of entry. He shall be provided with an official document indicating the number of packages constituting the diplomatic bag, but he shall not be considered to be a diplomatic courier. The mission may send one of its members to take possession of the diplomatic bag from the captain of the aircraft directly and unhindered.

Article 28  
**[Fees for official duties]**

The fees and charges levied by the mission in the course of its official duties shall be exempt from all dues and taxes.

Article 29  
**[Inviolability of a diplomatic agent]**

The person of a diplomatic agent shall be inviolable. He shall not be liable to any form of arrest or detention. The receiving State shall treat him with due respect and shall take all appropriate steps to prevent any attack on his person, freedom or dignity.

Article 30  
**[Inviolability of a diplomatic agent's residence]**

- (1) The private residence of a diplomatic agent shall enjoy the same inviolability and protection as the premises of the mission.
- (2) His papers, correspondence and, except as provided in paragraph 3 of Article 31, his property, shall likewise enjoy inviolability.

Article 31  
**[Diplomatic immunity]**

- (1) A diplomatic agent shall enjoy immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the receiving State. He shall also enjoy immunity from its civil and administrative jurisdiction, except in the following cases:
  - a) A real action relating to private immovable property situated in the sovereign territory of the receiving State, unless he holds it on behalf of the sending State for the purposes of the mission;
  - b) An action relating to succession in which the diplomatic agent is involved as executor, administrator, heir or legatee as a private person and not on behalf of the sending State;
  - c) An action relating to any professional or commercial activity exercised by the diplomatic agent in the receiving State outside his official functions.
- (2) A diplomatic agent is not obliged to give evidence as a witness.
- (3) No measures of execution may be taken in respect of a diplomatic agent except in the cases coming under subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c) of paragraph 1 of this Article, and provided that the measures concerned can be taken without infringing the inviolability of his person or his residence.
- (4) The immunity of a diplomatic agent from the jurisdiction of the receiving State does not exempt him from the jurisdiction of the sending State.

Article 32  
**[Waiver of diplomatic immunity]**

- (1) The immunity from jurisdiction of diplomatic agents and of persons enjoying immunity under Article 37 may be waived by the sending State.
- (2) The waiver must always be expressly declared.
- (3) The initiation of proceedings by a diplomatic agent or by a person enjoying immunity from jurisdiction under Article 37 shall preclude him from invoking immunity from jurisdiction in respect of any counterclaim directly connected with the principal claim.
- (4) Waiver of immunity from jurisdiction in civil or administrative proceedings shall not be held to imply waiver of immunity in regard to the execution of the judgment, for which a separate waiver shall be necessary.

Article 33  
**[Social security provisions]**

- (1) Subject to the provisions of paragraph 3 of this Article, with respect to services rendered for the sending State a diplomatic agent shall be exempt from social security provisions which may be in force in the receiving State.
- (2) The exemption provided for in paragraph 1 of this Article shall also apply to private servants who are in the sole employ of a diplomatic agent, on condition that they:
  - a) are not nationals of or permanently residing in the receiving State; and
  - b) are covered by the social security provisions which may be in force in the sending State or a third State.
- (3) A diplomatic agent who employs persons to whom the exemption provided for in paragraph 2 of this Article does not apply shall observe the obligations which the social security provisions of the receiving State impose upon employers.
- (4) The exemption provided for in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article shall not preclude voluntary participation in the social security system of the receiving State provided that such participation is permitted by that State.
- (5) The provisions of this Article shall not affect bilateral or multilateral agreements concerning social security which have already been concluded, and shall not prevent the conclusion of such agreements in the future.

Article 34  
**[Exemption from dues and taxes]**

A diplomatic agent shall be exempt from all dues and taxes, personal or real, national, regional or municipal, except:

- 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 sovereign territory of the receiving State, unless he holds it on behalf of the sending State for the purposes of the mission;
- c) Estate, succession or inheritance duties levied by the receiving State, subject to the provisions of paragraph 4 of Article 39;
- d) Dues and taxes on private income having its source in the receiving State and capital taxes on investments made in commercial undertakings in the receiving State;
- e) Charges levied for specific services rendered;
- f) Registration, court or record fees, mortgage dues and stamp duty, with respect to immovable property, subject to the provisions of Article 23.

Article 35  
**[Exemption from public services]**

The receiving State shall exempt diplomatic agents from all personal services, from any form of public service, and from military obligations such as those connected with requisitioning, military contributions and billeting.

Article 36  
**[Duty-free import]**

- (1) The receiving State shall, in accordance with such laws and regulations as it may adopt, permit entry of and grant exemption from all customs duties, taxes, and related charges other than charges for storage, cartage and similar services, on:
- a) Articles for the official use of the mission;
  - b) Articles for the personal use of a diplomatic agent or members of his family forming part of his household, including the articles intended for his furnishings and equipment.
- (2) The personal baggage of a diplomatic agent shall be exempt from inspection, unless there are serious grounds for presuming that it contains articles not covered by the exemptions mentioned in paragraph 1 of this Article, or articles whose import or export is prohibited by the law or controlled by the quarantine regulations of the receiving State. Such inspection shall be conducted only in the presence of the diplomatic agent or his authorized representative.

Article 37  
**[Members of the family of a diplomatic agent; privileges and immunities]**

- (1) If they are not nationals of the receiving State, the members of the family of a diplomatic agent forming part of his household shall enjoy the privileges and immunities specified in Articles 29 to 36.

## Text of the Convention

(2) If they are not nationals of or permanently residing in the receiving State, members of the administrative and technical staff of the mission, together with the members of their families forming part of their respective households, shall enjoy the privileges and immunities specified in Articles 29 to 35; however, the immunity from civil and administrative jurisdiction of the receiving State specified in paragraph 1 of Article 31 shall not extend to acts performed outside the course of their duties. They shall also enjoy the privileges specified in Article 36, paragraph 1, in respect of articles imported at the time of first installation.

(3) Members of the service staff of the mission who are not nationals of or permanently residing in the receiving State shall enjoy immunity in respect of acts performed in the course of their duties, exemption from dues and taxes on the emoluments they receive by reason of their employment and the exemption contained in Article 33.

(4) If they are not nationals of or permanently residing in the receiving State, private servants of members of the mission shall be exempt from dues and taxes on the emoluments they receive by reason of their employment. In all other respects, they may enjoy privileges and immunities only to the extent admitted by the receiving State. However, the receiving State must exercise its jurisdiction over these persons in such a manner as not to interfere unduly with the performance of the functions of the mission.

### Article 38

#### **[Limited immunity]**

(1) Except insofar as additional privileges and immunities may be granted by the receiving State, a diplomatic agent who is a national of or permanently residing in that State shall only enjoy immunity from jurisdiction, and inviolability in regard to official acts performed in the exercise of his functions.

(2) Other members of the staff of the mission and private servants who are nationals of or permanently residing in the receiving State shall enjoy privileges and immunities only to the extent admitted by the receiving State. However, the receiving State must exercise its jurisdiction over those persons in such a manner as not to interfere unduly with the performance of the functions of the mission.

### Article 39

#### **[Duration of the diplomatic privileges and immunities]**

(1) Every person entitled to privileges and immunities shall enjoy them from the moment he enters the sovereign territory of the receiving State on proceeding to take up his post or, if already in its sovereign territory, from the moment the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or other such ministry as may be agreed is notified of his appointment.

(2) When the functions of a person enjoying privileges and immunities have come to an end, such privileges and immunities shall normally cease at the moment he leaves the country, or on expiry of a reasonable period in which to do so, but shall subsist until that time, even in the case of armed conflict. However, with respect to acts performed by such a person in the exercise of his functions as a member of the mission, immunity shall continue to subsist.



(3) In the case of the death of a member of the mission, the members of his family shall continue to enjoy the privileges and immunities to which they are entitled until the expiry of a reasonable period in which to leave the country.

(4) In the event of the death of a member of the mission who is not a national of or permanently residing in the receiving State or a member of his family forming part of his household, the receiving State shall permit the withdrawal of the movable property of the deceased, with the exception of any property acquired in the country whose export was prohibited at the time of his death. Estate, succession and inheritance duties shall not be levied on movable property whose presence in the receiving State was due solely to the presence there of the deceased as a member of the mission or as a member of the family of a member of the mission.

#### Article 40

#### **[Transit of diplomatic agents through third-party countries]**

(1) If a diplomatic agent passes through or is in the territory of a third State which has granted him a passport visa, if such a visa was necessary, while proceeding to take up or to return to his post, or when returning to his own country, the third State shall accord him inviolability and other such immunities as may be required to ensure his transit or return. The same shall apply in the case of any members of his family enjoying privileges or immunities who are accompanying the diplomatic agent, or traveling separately to join him or to return to their country.

(2) In circumstances similar to those specified in paragraph 1 of this Article, third States shall not hinder the passage of members of the administrative and technical or service staff of a mission or of members of their families through their sovereign territory.

(3) Third States shall accord to official correspondence and other official communications in transit, including messages in code or cipher, the same freedom and protection as is accorded by the receiving State. They shall accord to diplomatic couriers who have been granted a passport visa, if such visa was necessary, and diplomatic bags in transit the same inviolability and protection as the receiving State is bound to accord.

(4) The obligations of third States under paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this Article shall also apply to the persons mentioned in those paragraphs, and to official communications and diplomatic bags whose presence in the territory of the third State is a result of force majeure.

#### Article 41

#### **[Observance of the laws of the receiving States]**

(1) Without prejudice to their privileges and immunities, it is the duty of all persons enjoying such privileges and immunities to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving State. They also have a duty not to interfere in the internal affairs of that State.

## Text of the Convention

(2) All official business with the receiving State entrusted to the mission by the sending State shall be conducted with or through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the receiving State or other such ministry as may be agreed.

(3) The premises of the mission must not be used in any manner that is incompatible with the functions of the mission as laid down in the present Convention or by other rules of general international law or by any special agreements in force between the sending and the receiving State.

### Article 42

#### **[Prohibition of other professional or commercial activity]**

A diplomatic agent shall not practice any professional or commercial activity in the receiving State for personal profit.

### Article 43

#### **[Termination of the official function of a diplomatic agent]**

The function of a diplomatic agent comes to an end, inter alia:

- a) On notification by the sending State to the receiving State that the function of the diplomatic agent has come to an end; or
- b) On notification by the receiving State to the sending State that, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 9, it refuses to recognize the diplomatic agent as a member of the mission.

### Article 44

#### **[Facilities accorded to diplomatic agents in cases of armed conflict]**

Even in the case of armed conflict, the receiving State must grant the facilitation necessary for persons enjoying privileges and immunities, other than nationals of the receiving State, and members of the families of such persons, irrespective of their nationality, to be able to leave its sovereign territory at the earliest possible moment. In particular, it must place at their disposal the required means of transport for themselves and their property if necessary.

### Article 45

#### **[Severance of diplomatic relations]**

If diplomatic relations are broken off between two States, or if a mission is permanently or temporarily recalled:

- a) The receiving State must respect and protect the premises, property and archives of the mission, even in the case of armed conflict;

- b) The sending State may entrust the custody of the premises, property and archives of the mission to a third State that is acceptable to the receiving State;
- c) The sending State may entrust the protection of its interests and those of its nationals to a third State that is acceptable to the receiving State.

Article 46

**[Protection of the interests of third States]**

A sending State may undertake the temporary protection of the interests of the third State and of its nationals with the prior consent of a receiving State, and at the request of a third State not represented in the receiving State.

Article 47

**[Prohibition of discriminatory treatment of States]**

- (1) In the application of the provisions of the present Convention, the receiving State shall not discriminate against States in any way.
- (2) However, discrimination shall not be regarded as taking place
  - a) if the receiving State applies any of the provisions of the present Convention restrictively because of a restrictive application of that provision to its mission in the sending State;
  - b) if by custom or agreement States extend to each other more favorable treatment than is required by the provisions of the present Convention.

Article 48

**[Entitlement to signature]**

The present Convention is open for signature to all Member States of the United Nations or any of its specialized agencies, for any States Parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice, and by any other State invited by the General Assembly of the United Nations to become a Party to the Convention as follows: until 31 October 1961 at the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria and subsequently, until 31 March 1962, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Article 49

**[Ratification]**

The present Convention is subject to ratification. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Text of the Convention

Article 50  
**[Accession]**

The present Convention shall remain open for accession by any State belonging to any of the four categories mentioned in Article 48. The instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 51  
**[Entry into force]**

(1) The present Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date of deposit of the twenty-second instrument of ratification or accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

(2) For each State ratifying or acceding to the Convention after the deposit of the twenty-second instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after deposit by such State of its instrument of ratification or accession.

Article 52  
**[Notification by the UN Secretary-General]**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall inform all States belonging to any of the four categories mentioned in Article 48

- a) of signatures to the present Convention and of the deposit of instruments of ratification or accession, in accordance with Articles 48, 49 and 50;
- b) of the date on which the present Convention will enter into force, in accordance with Article 51.

Article 53  
**[Safekeeping of the agreement]**

The original of the present Convention, whose Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish versions are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall send certified copies thereof to all States belonging to any of the four categories mentioned in Article 48.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned Plenipotentiaries, being duly authorized thereto by their respective Governments, have signed the present Convention.

DONE at Vienna this eighteenth day of April, one thousand nine hundred and sixty-one.