

Arrangement of 30 June 1928 relating to the Legal Status of Russian and Armenian Refugees

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The undersigned representatives of Governments, having taken part in the Conference concerning Russian and Armenian refugees, called together at Geneva by the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on June 28, 1928, in execution of the Resolution adopted by the Eighth Ordinary Session of the League of Nations.

Having considered the arrangement of May 12, 1926, concerning the delivery of identity Certificates to Russian and Armenian refugees, by which the previous Arrangements of July 5, 1922 and May 31, 1924, were completed and amended, and

Having agreed that it is necessary to define more clearly the legal status of Russian and Armenian refugees,

Adopt the following resolutions:

- (1) It is recommended that the High Commissioner for refugees shall, by appointing representatives in the greatest possible number of countries, render the following services, in so far as such services do not lie within the exclusive competence of the national authorities:
 - (a) Certifying the identity and the position of the refugees;
 - (b) Certifying their family position and civil status, in so far as these are based on documents issued or action taken in the refugees' country of origin;
 - (c) Testifying to the regularity, validity, and conformity with the previous law of their country of origin, of documents issued in such country;
 - (d) Certifying the signature of refugees and copies and translations of documents drawn up in their own language;
 - (e) Testifying before the authorities of the country to the good character and conduct of the individual refugee, to his previous record, to his professional qualifications and to his university or academic standing;
 - (f) Recommending the individual refugee to the competent authority, particularly with a view to his obtaining visas, permits to reside in the country, admission to schools, libraries, etc.

The above-mentioned representatives shall be appointed and shall act in agreement with the governments concerned. In countries in which persons or bodies already act unofficially in such a capacity, the High Commissioner may utilise their services.

Each Government shall be free to decide whether documents issued by such representatives may be recognised as having an official character. It is recommended in any case that the governments shall take the greatest possible account of such documents. It is also recommended that any fees charged to refugees not in a condition of indigence in respect of the delivery of documents or the fulfillment of the above-mentioned formalities shall be moderate.

It is understood that the activities of such representative shall be of an entirely non-political character and shall involve no encroachment whatsoever on the duties incumbent on the authorities of the country of residence.

- (2) It is recommended that the personal statute of Russian and Armenian refugees shall be determined in countries in which the previous law of their respective countries is no longer recognised, either by reference to the law of their country of domicile or of usual residence, or, failing such country, by reference to the law of the country in which they residence. This recommendation shall not lessen in any way the validity as far as concerns the personal status of refugees of documents granted by the religious authorities competent respectively in the case of the Russian and Armenian refugees, in countries where the competence of such authorities is recognised.

That rights resulting from marriages contracted and documents issued under the previous national law of the refugees shall be regarded as acquired rights (matrimonial system, rights of married women, etc) provided that where necessary the formalities prescribed by the law of the country of residence are fulfilled;

That the refugees be authroised, so far as the essential laws of their place or residence permit, to stipulate that their marriage shall be based on complete separation of property and that the right of the wife to dispose freely of her property shall no be affected by the fact of her marriage.

(3) It is recommended that in regard to divorce the national law of a Russian or Armenian refugee shall be regarded as being either the law of his country of domicile or usual residence, or, failing such country, the law of the country in which he resides.

(4) It is recommended that the exercise of certain rights and the benefit of certain privileges granted to foreigners on condition of reciprocity shall not be refused to Russian and Armenian refugees on the ground that reciprocity cannot be obtained in their case.

(5) It is recommended that the benefit of legal assistance and if possible exemption from the cautio judicatum solvi shall be granted to Russian and Armenian refugees irrespective of reciprocity.

(6) It is recommended that restrictive regulations concerning foreign labour shall not be rigorously applied to Russian and Armenian refugees in their country of residence.

(7) It is recommended that measures for expelling foreigners or for taking other such action against them be avoided or suspended in regard to Russian and Armenian refugees in cases where the person concerned is no in a position to enter a neighbouring country in a regular manner. This recommendation does not apply in the case of a refugee who enters a country in intentional violation of the national law. It is also recommended that in no case should the identity papers of such refugees be withdrawn.

(8) It is recommended that Russian and Armenian refugees be placed in regard to taxation on the same footing as nationals of the country in which they reside.

(9) It is recommended that the identity certificates of refugees be visés and extended in the simplest possible manner and with the minimum of formalities; that the refugees should not be subjected to special regulations in respect of travelling within the country in which they reside; that in the form of identity certificate for refugees the words "This certificate is valid for the return journey to the country by which it was delivered during the period of its validity. It shall cease to be so valid if at any time the bearer enters the territory of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (in the case of Russian refugees) or of Turkey (in the case of Armenian refugees)" be substituted for the words "This certificate is not valid for the return journey, etc."

The undersigned recommend the adoption of he above resolutions to the states represented at the Conference, and to the Members and Non-members of the League of Nations. They express the hope that the representatives of the Governments at the next session of the assembly of the League of Nations may be in a position to announce the actin, if any, to be taken in pursuance of the provisions of the present Arrangement.

Done at Geneva, June 30, 1928.	
Germany:	MARTIUS
Austria:	E. PELUGL ad referendum.
Belgium:	E. MEYERS
Bulgaria	D. MIKOFF
France:	NAVAILLES
	M. PAON
Latvia:	The reservation made in regard to Article 1 is mentioned in the minutes. Charles DUZMANS

Poland:	I accept the whole arrangement with the exception of Article 1-ad referendum. Léon MALHOMME
Roumania:	C. ANTONIADE
Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes:	Const. FOTITCH
Switzerland:	DELAQUIS
Greece:	My signature to this Arrangement is subject to the following reservations:
	(1) That it shall be possible for my government, whenever it may consider necessary, to withdraw its acceptance of the recommendation that the High Commissioner should be granted the right of rendering the above mentioned services to the refugees through his representative.
	(2) That my Government recognised only a single person as the accredited representative of the High Commissioner, to be appointed by the High Commissioner, subject to its consent. The said representative shall not have the right to appoint other assistant or deputy representatives or to delegate his duties in case of absence to any organisation whatsoever of refugees.
	(3) That the Hellenic Government does not undertake to grant a return visa to refugees who leave its territory, and reserves to the Hellenic authorities the right to decide in each individual cases, as it arises, whether or no a return visa shall be granted on the passports of refugees who leave the country and whether or no it shall permit travelling from place to place inside Greece.
	V. DENDRAMIS
Estonia:	Subject to the declaration made at the time of the final vote on the Arrangement and recorded in the minutes. This declaration will be repeated in definitive form in a letter which the Estonian Government will forward to the High Commissioner.
	A. SCHMIDT

APPENDIX

Arrangement of 30 June 1928 relating to the Legal Status of Russian and Armenian Refugees

Signatories:	Date of signature;	Accessions to the Arrangement:	
			Date of definitive adhesions:
Austria	30.6.1928	Austria	31.5.1929
Belgium	"	Belgium	25.4.1929
Bulgaria	"	Bulgaria	23.10.1928
Estonia	"	Czechoslovakia	16.5.1928
France	"	Estonia	27.2.1929
Germany	"	France	11.1.1930

Greece	"	Germany	5.3.1929
Lithuania	"	Roumania	22.9.1928
Poland	"	Switzerland	4.9.1928
Roumania	"	Yugoslavia	18.4.1929
Switzerland	"		
Yugoslavia	"		