

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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CONSULAR FORMALITIES

Communication from the Government of Sweden

The following communication has been received from the Government of Sweden.

1. In the course of the discussion on consular formalities during the twenty-first session, the Swedish delegation indicated that, if some countries found it difficult to remove expeditiously all consular formalities in accordance with recommendations by the CONTRACTING PARTIES, it would be appreciated if they would, at an early stage, move at least some way towards that goal. In this connexion special mention was made of the need to abolish the requirements for presentation of documents long before the departure of a vessel.
2. The Swedish Government wishes to point out that, while certain countries at present maintaining consular formalities do not require documents to be presented for legalization before the departure of the ship, others still require such documents to be presented for legalization as long as twenty-four, and in some cases even forty-eight and seventy-two hours before departure. It is evident that the submission of documents long before the departure of the ship may lead to great difficulties, taking into consideration that certain data regarding shipments, such as weight and price, are often not known to the exporter until the goods have been taken aboard. The reason for these regulations seems to be that documents used to be despatched as ship's mail.
3. The Swedish Government wishes to draw attention to the code of rules for the administration of the remaining consular formalities contained in the Recommendations of 1957, and in particular to Rule 5 which suggests that "there should be no requirement for consular documents to be presented for consular legalization or certification prior to exportation; if possible, these documents should be accepted up to the date of importation".

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