

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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CONSULAR FORMALITIES

Action Pursuant to the Recommendation on the Abolition of Consular Formalities

In 1952 the CONTRACTING PARTIES recommended, consequent to a suggestion made by the ICC, that all governments requiring consular formalities should abolish this requirement "at the earliest possible date and, in any case, not later than 31 December 1956". For the interim period special provisions were included in this Recommendation which aim at a liberal application of the consular requirements still maintained. It was in particular recommended that during this period governments should progressively reduce the incidence of consular fees. In 1957, in reaffirming the Recommendation of the Abolition of Consular Formalities, the CONTRACTING PARTIES introduced the idea that countries should, during the interim period, shift the levying of consular fees from the country of exportation to the importing country.

Many of the countries which required consular formalities in 1952 removed this obligation fully or partially as a consequence of this Recommendation. Ceylon, Belgium (see last paragraph of this document), France, the United Kingdom and the United States eliminated their requirement of consular formalities. Brazil, Chile and Turkey, maintaining the requirement of consular formalities, introduced considerable relaxations.

According to information available there are, however, still a number of countries which continue to require consular formalities.

1. Countries requiring regular consular formalities:

Brazil	Dominican Republic	Peru
Chile	Haiti	Turkey
Cuba	Nicaragua	Uruguay

2. Countries applying consular visas in special circumstances:

- Greece (consular visa for goods transhipped through a country for which higher duty rates are applied claiming the lower rates to which goods from the country of origin are entitled)
- Indonesia (consular visa for goods imported from Singapore)
- Israel (consular visa on certain quality certificates for whisky)
- Sweden (consular visa on inspection certificate for live bees)
- United States (consular visa: for anti-smuggling purposes in the case of alcoholic liqueurs imported by vessels under 500 metric tons; for wild animals and birds; for certain animal by-products).

At the seventeenth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, in connexion with the regular review of progress provided for in the Recommendation on the Abolition of Consular Formalities, a number of delegations, whose governments maintain consular formality requirements, indicated that they would be submitting reports in the near future. The CONTRACTING PARTIES therefore decided to refer the review of action taken to the Council (documents L/1459 of 4 May 1961 and SR.17/10). However, to date only two replies have been received: one from Belgium, which stated that since 20 October 1960 no consular formalities are required, and the other from the United States, which stated that there has been no change since the previous report (see document L/721 of 29 October 1957).