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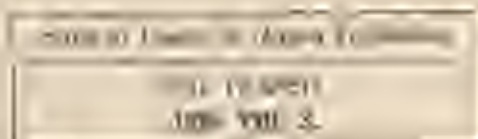
COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT

PASSPORT SYSTEM

REPLIES FROM GOVERNMENTS

to the

Enquiry on the Application of the Recommendations
of the Passport Conference of 1926.



(Communicated to the Council
and the Members of the League.)

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LEAGUE OF NATIONS

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT

PASSPORT SYSTEM

Replies from Governments to the Enquiry on the Application of the Recômmendations of the Passport Conference of 1926

G R E E C E

(Translation.)

January 6th, 1939.

The Greek Government cannot contemplate the adoption of the recommendations for a return to the position existing before 1914 in regard to the passport system. There are various serious objections to such a course, the chief of which relate to public safety.

The Greek Government is nevertheless applying the recommendations of the Passport Conference held at Geneva in 1926 and is endeavouring to simplify and facilitate visa formalities for foreign passports, more particularly for the summer tourist period (visas at reduced fees, residence permits valid for four months). Further, special facilities are granted to groups of tourists, teachers or students, persons covered by collective passports and passengers on vessels calling at Greek ports. Special facilities are also granted for frontier traffic and for transit.



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LEAGUE OF NATIONS

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSIT

PASSPORT SYSTEM

RESULTS OF THE ENQUIRY UNDERTAKEN REGARDING THE APPLICATION BY GOVERNMENTS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PASSPORT CONFERENCE OF 1926 ¹

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

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¹ Document C.320.M.119.1926.VIII.

FREE CITY OF DANZIG

[Translation from the German.]

June 24th, 1937.

The Government of the Free City of Danzig is at present giving the widest application to the recommendations adopted by the Passport Conference, held at Geneva in 1926.

As regards the application of these recommendations, the Government of the Free City of Danzig has the honour to submit the following observations :

SECTION 1

II.— A. *Issue of Passports.*

1. — The passports issued by the Government of the Free City of Danzig are of the “international type”.

2. — The duration of validity is five years, as recommended by the Passport Conference.

3. — No special limitations are imposed on the extent of validity of Danzig passports.

4. — The fees charged come within the limits of the recommendation adopted.

B. *Visas.*

1-10. — Admission to, passage through and residence in the territory of the Free City of Danzig are not dependent on a visa or any other permit.

C. *Facilities for the obtaining of Passports and Visas.*

Travellers and emigrants are not exposed to loss of time in obtaining passports. Passports are issued as soon as applied for.

D. Control at Frontiers.

Control at frontiers is carried out on the lines of the recommendation adopted.

SECTIONS 2 AND 3 REGARDING EMIGRANTS
AND PERSONS WITHOUT NATIONALITY

For reasons of national security, the Government of the Free City of Danzig must insist on emigrants and Stateless persons who hold identity documents in which their nationality is not specified, obtaining an endorsement on such document permitting them, during its validity, to return to the country by whose authorities it was issued.

FRANCE

[*Translation.*]

April 15th, 1938.

The French Government has taken the following steps to comply with recommendations adopted by the Passport Conference held at Geneva in May 1926.

A. *Issue of Passports.*

1. *Type of Passport.* — The French Government has adopted a form of passport conforming to the “international type”.

2. *Duration of Validity.* — French passports are not at present valid for more than one year.

3. *Extent of Validity.* — Passports are as a rule issued for all countries : restrictions are imposed only in exceptional cases.

4. *Fees.* — A fee of 20 francs is charged for French passports issued in France, and of 50 francs for French passports issued abroad by diplomatic or consular authorities.

5. *Nansen Passports and Other Identification Papers.* — The French Government further issues certificates of identity (Nansen passports) to certain refugees (Russian, Armenian, Saar, etc.), identity and travelling documents to foreigners of undetermined nationality, and safe-conducts to various political refugees who are unable to obtain national passports from their consular authorities.

B. *Visas.*

1. *Issue of Visas.* — Except in the case of holders of identity certificates (Nansen passports) and special identity or travelling documents, French diplomatic and consular authorities are not required to refer to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the

purpose of granting visas for passports of foreigners residing within their respective areas.

2. *Categories of Visas.* — Visas may be transit visas without break of journey, or with break of journey for from one to fifteen days, or entry visas valid for from sixteen days to not more than two years, provided the passport is valid for such period.

3. *Fees.* — A fee of 10 francs is charged for transit visas and of 75 francs for entry visas. These charges may be reduced in certain cases (workers, students, persons attending congresses or conferences or economic or intellectual meetings, etc.). Visas may even be issued free to indigent persons and to workers allowed to take up paid employment in France, as also in certain exceptional cases which are left to the discretion of the authorities concerned.

4. *Exemptions.* — Although visas are the rule, the nationals of certain countries are exempt, as the result of agreements concluded on a basis of reciprocity, from the necessity of obtaining them. The countries thus exempted are Brazil, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland (temporarily), Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay and, lastly, the United Kingdom, Ireland and British territories the nationals of which possess the status of British subjects.

Nationals of Belgium and Luxemburg do not require either visas or passports. They are admitted to France in virtue of an official identity card with a photograph of the holder and an indication of his nationality. Similar provisions are applicable to Swiss nationals who do not stay in France for more than two months. A national passport which has elapsed less than five years previously is accepted in lieu of an identity card.

C. *Facilities for Tourists.*

Instructions have been issued to the French diplomatic and consular authorities for the issue with the fewest possible formalities of a tourist visa, valid for fifteen days, to foreigners not residing within the area of the French consulate to which they apply.

Foreign tourists may be admitted to France in virtue of a collective list certified by their national authorities and visaed by the competent French consul. The object of these facilities is to relieve the foreign tourists of the necessity of obtaining individual passports, the issue of which in certain cases costs a fairly large sum.

Furthermore, a Decree was issued on February 23rd, 1936, instituting a tourist card (*carte touristique*), which is issued

free of charge and is valid for not more than six months. It relieves tourists of the necessity for obtaining foreigners' identity cards after two months residence in France.

D. *Questions relating to Emigrants.*

The French Government has acceded to the Arrangement for the issue of a transit card for emigrants, which was signed at Geneva on June 14th, 1929.

HUNGARY

[*Translation.*]

August 24th, 1938.

The Royal Hungarian Government has put into effect the recommendations adopted by the Passport Conference held at Geneva in 1926, so far as those recommendations were consistent with the vital interests of the safety of the State and the public, and with financial and economic interests.

SECTION I. — GENERAL QUESTIONS

I. — The Government has done all in its power to facilitate the passage of the frontier, always taking into consideration the interests referred to above and the question of reciprocity.

II, A. — The new passport forms introduced in 1937 correspond to the international type. They are made of chemically-treated paper; they contain forty-four pages, and are provided with a recently-patented system for fixing photographs.

Hungarian passports are issued as a general rule for one year, and, in cases in which good cause is shown, for two or even three years.

In principle, passports may be issued for all countries, restrictions being imposed only in exceptional cases.

The fee for the issue of a passport within the country is 20 pengö for the well-to-do and 4 pengö for persons of modest means. To the very poor, passports are issued gratis.

The fees for passports issued abroad are higher.

Apart from family and collective passports, the competent authorities grant numerous special reductions.

In short, the passport fees are so fixed as to offer no obstacle to Hungarian nationals wishing to travel or settle abroad.

II, B. — Visas have been abolished on a basis of reciprocity with the following countries : Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Portugal, Finland, Japan and Uruguay.

The Government has abolished visas for United States citizens and British subjects without insisting on reciprocity. It will not decline to consider similar action in the future under certain conditions.

The Government has already introduced a very liberal system of facilities for crossing the frontier, obtaining visas and breaking the journey in the case of travellers in transit.

It was not found possible to introduce two-year visas, but one-year visas carrying the right to an unlimited number of frontier crossings have been introduced for nationals of all States.

The present visa fees, fixed by the scale put into force in 1930, were established with an eye to the interests of the revenue.

By way of bilateral agreements, Hungary has introduced exemption from visa fees in regard to the following countries : Norway, Latvia and Estonia. Negotiations with the same object are in progress between Hungary and various other countries.

This apart, the competent Hungarian authorities are very generous in meeting any specific request for a visa gratis or at a reduced fee.

II, C, and D. — The Government has already done everything in its power to facilitate the issue of passports and visas, and to simplify and expedite frontier control formalities. These facilities will remain under comprehensive consideration by the Government.

SECTION III. — PERSONS WITHOUT NATIONALITY

Specimens of two different identity- and travel-documents for persons without nationality are also enclosed.¹

¹ One of these documents is a "Nansen" identity-certificate ; the other is an identity- and travel-document for foreigners, in the form of a passport, and bears a note that the holder is authorised to return to Hungary. These documents may be consulted in the archives of the Secretariat of the League of Nations.

ICELAND

[Translation.]

March 14th, 1938.

A. *Issue of Passports.*

1. *Type of Passport.* — The passports in use in Iceland are ordinary passports and diplomatic passports. In accordance with an Agreement reached between Iceland, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, nationals on any one of these countries may enter the others without possessing a passport, provided only that they hold a so-called “Northern Travelling-Card” (*Nordisk Rejsekort*). This travelling-card costs 0.25 Icelandic crown and is valid for six months.

2. *Duration of Validity.* — As a general rule, Icelandic passports are valid for a period of three years. A student going abroad may, however, obtain a passport valid for five years.

3. *Extent of Validity.* — In most cases, Icelandic passports bear a statement to the effect that they are valid for foreign countries.

4. *Fees.* — The fee charged for the issue of a passport is 8.88 Icelandic crowns.

B. *Visas.*

Agreements (in force) for the abolition of passport visas have been concluded between Iceland and the following countries : Austria, Belgium, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Czechoslovakia, Free City of Danzig, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United States of America.

C. *Facilities for the obtaining of Passports and Visas.*

All appropriate measures have been taken to simplify, in the interest of travellers, formalities connected with the issue of passports and visas.

D. *Control at Frontiers.*

This question does not arise as Iceland is an island.

IRAQ

March 26th, 1938.

SECTION 1. GENERAL QUESTIONS

I. *Passport Regime.*

The Royal Government of Iraq is prepared to consider the question of concluding such agreements.

II. *Facilities to be granted.*

A. *Issue of Passports.*

1. The Iraqi passport conforms with the recommendations made in the report except as regards the perforation of pages. Steps are being taken to adopt the system of perforation recommended. There would be no objection to mentioning the passport-holder's name in every visa, and instructions will be issued to that effect.

2. The provisions now in force in Iraq regarding the duration of validity of passports are that the Iraqi passport is valid for one year from the date of issue and may be renewed for four further periods, provided that the period of each renewal does not exceed one year and that it cannot be renewed after five years from the date of issue.

3. The arrangements applied in Iraq regarding the extent of validity of passports provide that the names of the countries which the holder desires to visit are first entered, but other countries may be entered later.

4. The fees charged for the issue of passports in Iraq amount to 750 fils, and a fee of 375 fils is charged for each renewal. These fees are hardly sufficient to meet the expenditure involved.

B. *Visas.*

1. The Royal Government of Iraq is prepared to negotiate with other Governments with a view to concluding agreements

for the abolition of entrance visas on a reciprocal basis. It has already been decided : (a) to abolish the entrance visa in respect of Swiss nationals ; (b) to exempt the nationals of Trans-Jordan from an entrance visa, provided that they obtain the same at the (frontier) town of Ramadi ; (c) to exempt foreigners who may arrive at Iraqi passport ports not in possession of an entrance visa from the stipulation made in Article 5 (a) of the Iraqi Residence Law, provided that they shall be granted the said visa by the Director of the Residence Bureau after it has been established by him, first, that their failure to obtain the visa in question was due to exceptional reasons and, secondly that there is no objection to their entry into Iraq ; and (d) to exempt nationals of the United States of America from the entrance visa, when they arrive by steamer at Iraqi ports, for the duration of the stay of the steamer at such ports.

2. It is considered that the steps taken under (c) above in respect of foreigners are quite sufficient to ensure facilities to travellers who desire to break their journey.

3. The Royal Government of Iraq is in agreement as to the necessity for facilitating all transactions pertaining to the granting of visas, and is bearing in mind the recommendation in question.

4. The recommendations made in this paragraph are actually applied in Iraq.

5. The Royal Government of Iraq is acting in this respect on the principle of reciprocity. In view, however, of the fact that Iraqi nationals are not granted, by any other country, entrance and transit visas which are valid for a period of two years and for an unlimited number of journeys, the Iraqi Government does not issue this kind of visa. Under the Iraqi law now in force, two kinds of visas exist, viz. : (a) an ordinary visa which entitles the holder to enter Iraq once only and to reside therein for an unlimited period unless he commits an act which necessitates his deportation ; and (b) a transit visa which entitles the holder to enter Iraq once only and to reside therein for a period not exceeding three months, on the expiry of which he should either leave the country or apply for the extension of his period of residence.

6. Iraqi visas are valid for entry into Iraq from any passport post on the Iraqi frontiers.

7. The principle of reciprocity is at present acted upon by the Royal Government of Iraq in this respect — *i.e.*, they charge the nationals of each State the equivalent of the charge by such States to Iraqi nationals. The existing general scale is 10 gold francs for ordinary visas and one gold franc for transit visas.

8. This recommendation is at present applied in Iraq.

9. This recommendation will be taken into consideration.

10. The Iraqi Government has no objection to considering this question on the basis of reciprocity. As regards exit visas, these have been abolished in Iraq.

C. Facilities for obtaining Passports and Visas.

The departments concerned at all times accord every facility for the issue and delivery of passports and visas within the shortest possible time without causing the applicants any journeys or hardships.

D. Control of Frontiers.

In view of the fact that in Iraq no railways exist which are linked with those of neighbouring countries, this recommendation does not apply to Iraq at the present time.

SECTION 2. QUESTIONS RELATING TO EMIGRANTS

I. Transit Card for Emigrants

This recommendation will be considered on receipt of the draft arrangement to which reference is made.

II. Special Identity Documents for Emigrants

No observation.

SECTION 3. PERSONS WITHOUT NATIONALITY

No observation.

SECTION 4. MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

1. No observation.

2. It is thought that the arrangement referred to in paragraph (1) (c) — B. Visas — of this letter ensures the application of this recommendation.

3. The Iraqi Government is prepared to adopt this recommendation whenever applications of this nature are submitted to it, subject of course to the provisions of Iraqi laws in force.

NORWAY

[*Translation.*]

April 7th, 1938.

In order to specify passport formalities in accordance with the recommendations of the Passport Conference held at Geneva in 1926, "identity and travelling documents" (passports) were introduced in Norway for Stateless persons (the Nansen passport is still issued to Russian and Armenian refugees). Reference is invited to the circular letter of January 16th, 1929, attached hereto, from the Norwegian Ministry of Justice.¹

Secondly, an agreement was concluded in 1929 between the Nordic countries — Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway — under which those countries reciprocally exempted their nationals from the necessity for producing passports, the passport having been replaced by a legitimation document specially mentioned in the agreement — namely, the Nordic travelling-card. Under the terms of the agreement, this travelling-card is not issued to persons travelling in search of work.

Copies of the circular letters from the Norwegian Ministry of Justice, dated June 7th and 18th, 1929, relating to the afore-said Nordic travelling-card, are also attached.²

Further, Norway has concluded agreements for the abolition of the visa on terms of reciprocity, with a large number of countries.

There are, in addition, special provisions concerning the use of navigation certificates, etc., which take the place of passports in certain cases.

¹ This circular letter, which can be consulted in the archives of the Secretariat, contains detailed provisions regarding the issue and renewal of identity and travelling documents for Stateless persons and the conditions under which similar documents issued by the authorities of other countries are accepted by the Norwegian authorities.

² These circular letters can be consulted in the archives of the Secretariat.

POLAND

[Translation from the Polish.]

June 23rd, 1938.

Poland has largely complied with the recommendation of the Passport Conference of 1926 regarding facilitating the passage of frontiers by means of bilateral agreements. Apart from the minor frontier traffic and transit agreements, etc., already concluded and still being concluded, Poland has negotiated several tourist traffic and compensation agreements with a number of States, such as Hungary, Yugoslavia, Sweden, Italy, Bulgaria, France, Czechoslovakia, etc. These agreements, which provide for the abolition of restrictions on traffic between Poland and the said countries, the reduction of passport fees and foreign exchange facilities, have achieved their object from the standpoint of the Conference's recommendations, since traffic to Poland has very considerably increased in the last two years. From the standpoint of Polish interests, however, this increase in traffic is open to a number of reservations.

In 1936, a new Passport Law was issued, together with regulations for its administration.

The type of passport established by these regulations is similar to that previously used and corresponds on the whole to the document recommended by the Paris Conference of 1920. For the reasons given at the time, it is impossible to comply in detail with those recommendations and with the recommendations contained in the 1926 report, nor is this necessary, since the existing model fully satisfies requirements.

The term of validity of the passport has been fixed at three years, though in practice passports are seldom issued for such a long period.

The territorial extent of a passport's validity may include all countries and, if the applicant so requests, passports are issued "for all European countries" or even "for countries outside Europe also". For considerations of State, however, the passport authorities may always restrict the extent of a passport's validity and cannot waive this right.

Futhermore, owing to the conclusions of the various tourist traffic and other agreements mentioned above, the territorial

validity of passports issued under such agreements is necessarily confined to the country in question.

Under the above-mentioned regulations of 1936, passport fees have been considerably reduced and, in addition, Polish law and tourist traffic agreements provide for further reductions; the statistics of passports issued during the past year show that the fee for a single passport amounts on the average to not much more than 40 zloty.

The Polish authorities do not consider it possible under present circumstances to accept the recommendation of the Conference regarding a further reduction in passport fees, in order to facilitate journeys abroad, since both the economic situation of Poland and the need to maintain equilibrium in the balance of payments and to avoid the export of capital operate in favour of restricting the number of journeys, more particularly as any facilities granted in international traffic react unfavourably on Polish interests. The number of persons leaving Poland for abroad is incomparably greater than the number of foreigners travelling in Poland. Accordingly, any reduction in passport fees or the abolition of other restrictions could only be effected to the extent that Poland is afforded other advantages in compensation for facilitating journeys abroad — in no case could this be applied to all journeys abroad.

The view advanced by the Sub-Committee in favour of a return to the conditions obtaining before 1914 — *i.e.*, the abolition of the obligation to possess a passport — is at present inadmissible and could in no case be accepted by the Polish authorities, though they realise the benefits which such a departure would confer on international tourist traffic. The Polish authorities will be unable for a long time to come to forgo the control of persons leaving for, or coming from, abroad.

As regards visas, the Polish authorities maintain their former view that it is impossible to abolish the obligation to have a visa, either as a general rule or in virtue of international agreements.

As regards facilities for the obtaining of passports and visas and control at frontiers, the Polish authorities would point out that passport control at frontiers has been still further simplified and is effected comparatively promptly, so that train stops at almost all frontier stations have recently been considerably curtailed. Simultaneous examination at frontier stations has been modified to the extent that, in consequence of the expiration of the Upper Silesia Convention, such examination has been abolished at stations in the territory of Polish and German Upper Silesia, with the exception of Bytom (Beuthen); the possibility of introducing simultaneous examination on the Polish-Roumanian frontier is under consideration. There is no intention at the moment of extending the system of simultaneous examination to other frontiers.
