

Postal Convention between Belgium and
Great Britain,
signed at Brussels, 14 August/London,
28 August 1857

THIS Convention, together with the Detailed Regulations of 14/29 August 1857 by which it was supplemented, is reproduced from *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. LVI, pp. 989, 603. The Convention, which was drawn up also in French and which was further supplemented by the Detailed Regulations of 20/24 July 1865 and modified by the Convention of 20 May 1865, was replaced by that of 17 February 1876. It is printed also in *Hertslet's Commercial Treaties*, vol. XII, p. 182, and by Garcia de la Vega, *Traité etc. concernant le Royaume de Belgique*, vol. III, p. 315.

ENGLISH TEXT

THE Director-General of the Railways, Posts, and Telegraphs of Belgium, furnished with full powers from the Minister of Public Works of Belgium, having the Administration of the Posts under his Department, on the one part; and the Secretary of the General Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, furnished with full powers from his Grace the Postmaster-General of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, on the other part.

With reference to Article I of the Additional Convention concluded between the Kingdom of Belgium and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland on the 8th January, 1857, authorizing

the Post Offices of the two countries to agree upon and to carry into effect by mutual consent any alterations in the rates of postage to be collected under the terms of the Convention of the 19th of October, 1844, upon letters, newspapers, and printed papers of every kind exchanged between Belgium and the United Kingdom, as well as any alterations in any other of the postal arrangements established between the two countries, whenever by mutual consent the two Governments shall have decided that such alterations would be beneficial to the Post Office service of their respective countries; have agreed as follows:

CHAPTER I.—*General Regulations.*

ART. I. There shall be a periodical and regular exchange of correspondence between Belgium and Great Britain, as well for letters, patterns of goods, newspapers, and printed papers of every kind, originating in the two States, as for articles of the same nature originating in or destined for the countries the correspondence of which is forwarded through Belgium or through the United Kingdom.

II. The exchange of correspondence between the two offices shall be effected through the following Post Offices, viz.:

On the side of Belgium:

1. Ostend; local office, travelling office.
2. Antwerp.
3. Travelling office established on the line of railway between Ghent and Mouscron.
4. Travelling office established on the line of railway between Brussels and Quiévrain.

On the side of Great Britain:

1. Dover.
2. London.
3. Hull.

III. Independently of the offices of exchange which are named in the preceding Article, others may be established at any other places on the coast or in the interior of each of the two countries between which direct communications may hereafter be deemed necessary.

CHAPTER II.—*Postage of International Letters.*

IV. Persons desirous of sending ordinary letters, either from Belgium to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and those British Colonies and Possessions at which the Post Office of Great Britain maintains Post Offices, or from the United Kingdom

of Great Britain and Ireland and the British Colonies and Possessions to Belgium, shall have the option, viz.:

1. Of leaving the whole postage of such letters to be paid by the receiver.

2. Of paying the said postage to the place of destination.

Payment for a part of the distance shall not be permitted.

V. The inhabitants of both countries may send registered letters from one country to the other, and as far as it shall be found practicable, to the countries the correspondence of which shall be transmitted through the respective offices.

The postage of the letters mentioned in the present Article shall be fixed according to the combined rates of the two countries; it must in all cases be paid to the place of destination.

Those letters shall not give rise to the recovery of any postage duty or tax to be paid by the receivers.

VI. The option of forwarding letters paid or unpaid, specified in Article IV preceding, in favour of ordinary letters from the two countries, shall be applicable to letters and packets containing patterns of goods.

Patterns of goods shall be liable to the postage of letters.

VII. The postage to be collected in Belgium on paid letters addressed to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, as well as on unpaid letters or letters insufficiently prepaid by means of postage stamps, originating in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, is fixed as follows:

1st. At 40 centimes for each single paid letter.

2ndly. At 80 centimes for each single unpaid letter.

3rdly. And at double the amount of the deficiency for each letter insufficiently prepaid by means of postage stamps.

Reciprocally, the postage to be collected in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland on paid letters addressed to Belgium, as well as on unpaid letters or letters insufficiently prepaid by means of postage stamps originating in Belgium, is fixed as follows:

1st. At 4d. for each single paid letter.

2ndly. At 8d. for each single unpaid letter.

3rdly. And at double the amount of the deficiency for each letter insufficiently prepaid by means of postage stamps.

The rates of postage mentioned in the present Article shall be subject in each country to the following progression of weight:

1st. For every letter of which the weight shall not exceed 15 grammes (half an ounce), one single rate.

2ndly. Exceeding 15 grammes (half an ounce) and not exceeding 30 grammes (1 ounce), 2 rates.

3rdly. Exceeding 30 grammes (1 ounce) and not exceeding 60 grammes (2 ounces), 4 rates.

4thly. Exceeding 60 grammes (2 ounces) and not exceeding 90 grammes (3 ounces), 6 rates.

And so on, adding 2 rates per 30 grammes or fraction of 30 grammes (1 ounce or fraction of 1 ounce).

The progressive scale determined by the present Article shall be applicable not only to the international correspondence, but also to that originating in or destined for other countries, and passing in transit in ordinary mails over the Belgian territory or over the territory of the United Kingdom.

It is agreed that in everything that relates to the execution of the present Article the British ounce shall be considered as equivalent to 30 grammes.

VIII. The two offices shall mutually account to each other for the portion of the postage of the correspondence exchanged between them which is due to each.

In order to simplify this operation, all letters contained in one and the same mail, and belonging to the same class, shall be weighed in bulk and delivered at the following rates:

The Post Office of Belgium shall pay to the British Post Office:

1st. For paid letters or letters insufficiently prepaid in Belgium by means of postage stamps addressed to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the sum of 4d. per ounce British.

2ndly. And for unpaid letters originating in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and destined for Belgium the sum of 8d. per ounce British.

Reciprocally, the British Post Office shall pay to the Post Office of Belgium:

1st. For paid letters or letters insufficiently prepaid in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland by means of postage stamps, as well as for letters prepaid in the British colonies and possessions in which the British Office maintains Post Offices, addressed to Belgium, the sum of 40 centimes per 30 grammes, net weight.

2ndly. For unpaid letters originating in Belgium, and destined for the United Kingdom, the sum of 80 centimes per 30 grammes, net weight.

3rdly. For unpaid letters also originating in Belgium, and destined for the British colonies and possessions in which the British Office maintains Post Offices, the sum of 40 centimes per 30 grammes, net weight.

IX. The stipulations of the preceding Articles are applicable not only to the letters composing the ordinary mails, but also to those forwarded by the special opportunities mentioned in Article XIII of the Convention of the 19th of October, 1844.

CHAPTER III.—*Transit of Foreign Correspondence.*§ 1.—*Transit in ordinary Mails.*

X. The Belgian Post Office shall continue to convey without charge to the British Office all the letters which the said office shall transmit to it in ordinary mails to be forwarded to other States of the continent in transit through Belgium; and also those originating in the said States and destined for Great Britain, which may be sent in ordinary mails by the same route.

Those letters shall be forwarded as well by the British Office to that of Belgium as by this last office to that of Great Britain without any charge or expense. The office of Belgium, however, reserves to itself the right to levy upon the other offices concerned a transit rate, the amount of which shall not exceed 20 centimes per 30 grammes, net weight.

XI. The Post Office of Belgium shall pay to the Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for the paid correspondence originating in Belgium, or in the States of the continent, the correspondence of which is forwarded through Belgium, and forwarded by way of the United Kingdom addressed to the colonies and countries beyond sea, as well as for the unpaid correspondence originating in the colonies and countries beyond sea, forwarded by way of the United Kingdom and destined for Belgium or for the States of the continent, the correspondence of which is forwarded through Belgium, as follows:

1st. For the transit over the territory of the United Kingdom, 2d. per single letter.

2ndly. The sea rate paid by the British public upon letters originating in or addressed to the colonies and countries beyond sea.

On its side the Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland shall pay to the Post Office of Belgium for the postage of correspondence originating in the United Kingdom, forwarded by way of Belgium, and destined for the colonies and countries beyond sea, as well as that originating in the colonies and countries beyond sea, and forwarded by way of Belgium addressed to the United Kingdom, as follows:

1st. 20 centimes per 30 grammes net weight, for the transit over the Belgium territory.

2nd. 80 centimes per 30 grammes net weight, for the sea rate, in all one franc per 30 grammes net weight.

§ 2.—*Transit in closed Mails.*

XII. The Belgian Government engages to grant to the British Government the transit in closed mails through its territory of the

correspondence of the United Kingdom, the British colonies and possessions, and other countries beyond sea to the various States of the Continent, the correspondence of which shall be transmitted through Belgium, as also of the correspondence from those States for the United Kingdom, the British colonies and possessions and other countries beyond sea at the rate of 20 centimes per 30 grammes net weight for letters, and of 80 centimes per kilogramme for newspapers and printed papers of every kind.

Nevertheless letters, newspapers, and printed papers exchanged in closed mails by way of Belgium between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands are excepted from the provisions of the present Article.

XIII. Should the British Post Office deem it advisable to transmit through Belgium the closed mails containing the correspondence between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the British Colonies and Possessions, and other countries beyond sea, on the one side, and on the other side, the East Indies and other countries, the correspondence of which shall be transmitted by way of the East Indies, the Post Office of Belgium engages to effect the conveyance of the said correspondence through the Belgium territory, at the transit rates fixed by Article XII of the present Convention.

XIV. The Belgian Government further engages to convey, also in closed mails, at the rates respectively fixed on behalf of the Belgian Post Office by Articles XI and XX of the present Convention, letters, newspapers, and printed papers of every kind between the United Kingdom, the British Colonies and Possessions, and other countries beyond sea, on the one side, and, on the other side, the several States of the two Continents of America, the correspondence of which may be forwarded at the expense of the Belgian Post Office, either by private ships, by Government vessels, or by vessels freighted by order of Government dispatched from or bound to the ports of Belgium.

XV. The British Government engages on its part to grant at the rates respectively fixed on behalf of the British Post Office by Articles XI and XX of the present Convention for conveyance in ordinary mails, the transit in closed mails of letters, newspapers, and printed papers of every kind, addressed from Belgium to the several States of America or to other foreign countries; and also from those States and foreign countries to Belgium which may be conveyed either by private ships, by Government vessels, or by vessels freighted by order of Government dispatched from or bound to the ports of the United Kingdom.

XVI. The mails which shall be exchanged in conformity with Article II of the present Convention between the Belgian Post

Offices established on the lines of railway from Ghent to Mouscron, and from Brussels to Quiévrain, on the one side, and the British Post Offices of London and Dover, on the other side, shall be forwarded through the medium of the Post Office of France.

In addition to the rates fixed by Article VII of the present Convention the correspondence, whether paid or unpaid, which the public of the two countries may wish to send by the route of France, shall be subject to a supplementary rate of 2 décimes, or pence, per single letter.

This correspondence shall be forwarded on either side, according to the conditions established by Articles VIII and XI of the preceding Articles.

The Post Office of Belgium shall pay the transit rates of 40 centimes for every 30 grammes, net weight, for letters, and of 1 centime per newspaper for newspapers which will be due to the Post Office of France for the conveyance of the letters and newspapers mentioned in the present Article, through the French territory. These rates shall be repaid to the Belgian Post Office by the British Post Office in respect of those of the said letters and newspapers upon which the latter office shall have collected the postage.

CHAP. IV.—*Newspapers and Printed Papers.*

§ 1.—*International Newspapers and Printed Papers.*

XVII. Newspapers, gazettes, periodical works, stitched or bound books, pamphlets, sheets of music, catalogues, prospectuses, announcements and notices of various kinds, whether printed, engraved, or lithographed, which shall be sent either from Belgium to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland to Belgium, shall be prepaid on each side to destination.

It is expressly agreed, that the printed papers which each of the two offices shall deliver to the other as paid to destination in virtue of the present Article, shall not on any pretext, except in the case of insufficient prepayment, provided for by Article XVIII following, be charged with any rate or duty whatever to be paid by the receiver.

It is nevertheless understood that this provision does not in any way invalidate the right of either office to refuse to deliver printed papers, the importation of which may be prohibited by the laws and regulations of the country to which they are transmitted.

XVIII. The mutual transmission of newspapers and printed papers of every kind mentioned in Article XVII preceding shall not give rise to any account: each office shall retain the postage which it shall have collected.

These printed papers, duly paid, shall be put under bands, and shall not contain any writing, figures, or manual mark whatsoever.

Printed papers which are not in conformity with these conditions shall be treated as letters and charged accordingly.

Newspapers and other printed papers insufficiently prepaid by means of postage stamps shall be charged with double the amount of the deficiency. The produce of this charge shall be retained by the office which collects it.

§ 2.—*Newspapers and Printed Papers in Transit.*

XIX. Newspapers published in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and addressed to persons residing in the several States of the Continent, the correspondence of which shall be transmitted through Belgium, and also newspapers forwarded from the said States to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland shall continue to be delivered by one office to the other without charge.

The Post Office of Belgium reserves to itself, however, the right to levy upon the above-mentioned States for the conveyance of the newspapers through the Belgium territory a transit rate of 2 centimes for every newspaper.

XX. The Post Office of Belgium shall pay to the British Post Office for the conveyance across the United Kingdom of newspapers and other printed papers in transit which the Post Office shall convey through its territory on account of the Belgium Post Office the sum of 5*d.* per pound of printed papers, net weight.

The Post Office of Belgium shall further pay to the British Post Office for the sea conveyance of newspapers and other printed papers which the British mail packets shall convey on account of the Post Office of Belgium the sum of 5*d.* per pound of printed papers, net weight.

The same sum of 5*d.* per pound, net weight, shall also be paid by the Post Office of Belgium to the British Post Office for the sea postage of newspapers and other printed papers which the Post Office of Belgium shall forward or receive by way of Great Britain, and by means of private ships leaving or arriving at the ports of the United Kingdom.

In consideration of the expense incurred by the British Post Office for the conveyance of mails across the Isthmus of Suez, or the Isthmus of Darien, the Post Office of Belgium shall further pay to the British Post Office for newspapers and other printed papers, which the Post Office of Belgium shall forward or receive by British mail packets, and by way of either isthmus, viz.:

A. For the conveyance of newspapers and other printed papers