



news release

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CANADA RATIFIES COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON THE TRANSFER OF SENTENCED PERSONS

The Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the Honourable Elmer MacKay, Solicitor General of Canada, announce the ratification by Canada today of the European Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons, signed at Strasbourg on March 21, 1983. The Convention will enter into force on July 1, 1985, and will be binding on Canada from September 1, 1985. The instrument of ratification was deposited by the Honourable Andrée Champagne, Minister of State for Youth, during her official visit to Strasbourg, headquarters of the Council of Europe. Canada is not a member of the Council of Europe and this marks the first time it has endorsed a convention developed by the Council. Drawing on Canada's experience in the transfer of offenders, Canadian experts participated actively in the drafting of the Convention.

In addition to Canada, five countries, France, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, have so far ratified the Convention. Other states among the 21 members of the Council of Europe are expected to become parties to it.

Under the Convention Canadians imprisoned in countries which are party to it will be allowed to serve the remainder of their sentences in Canada. The transfer of sentenced persons will take place only at their request and after all rights of appeal have been exhausted in the sentencing country. Also, all transfers will be subject to approval of both the countries involved.

...2

The transfer program is designed to promote the rehabilitation of offenders by enabling them to serve the remainder of their sentences in the country of which they are nationals, close to family and friends. The Ministry of the Solicitor General will be responsible for the implementation of arrangements under the Convention. At present 74 Canadians are serving jail terms in member States of the Council of Europe.

This is Canada's seventh treaty on the transfer of offenders: bilateral agreements are in force with France, Mexico, Peru, and the United States, while those with Bolivia and Thailand await ratification.

Enquiries on this Convention should be directed to Consular Policy Division, Department of External Affairs (613) 996-9872, or to the Special Assistant, Media Relations, Ministry of the Solicitor General, (613) 996-0220.