

HAGUE CONFERENCE ON PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL LAW

*“Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects
of International Child Abduction”*

PRESS RELEASE

MARCH 2001

**“A child has a fundamental right to maintain contact with both
parents”**

From **22 to 28 March next**, the fourth ‘**review meeting**’ on **child abduction** will be held in **The Hague**.

“The Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction” is a multi-lateral convention which seeks to protect children from the harmful effects of abduction and retention across international boundaries by providing a procedure to bring about the prompt return of these children to the country of their habitual residence.

The Convention was drawn up in 1980 by the *Hague Conference on Private International Law*. The convention deals with those situations where one of the two parents retains the child out of the country without the agreement of the other parent. In that case, the child often encounters emotional problems, because it is unable to maintain contact with both parents. The principle underpinning the convention is that a child is legally entitled to be in contact with both parents.

Since 1980, 65 countries have committed themselves to the convention. Representatives from the countries involved have met three times since then to discuss the practical implementation of the convention. During the conference in March, the practical problems surrounding implementation of the convention will once again be considered at various levels: **cooperation between central authorities, the practical application of the Convention and its interpretation by judges.**

The objective of this Conference amongst other things is to arrive at recommendations for ‘best practices’, good principles of practice that will be proposed by the participating countries, and to arrive at strategic recommendations in further support of the Convention.

Clearly, the subject is treated very seriously at international level, as demonstrated by the high-level delegations that most countries will send to attend. A total of nearly 200 experts will participate in the Conference. Apart from official national delegations, including Government officials and judges, a number of International Non-governmental and Intergovernmental organisations will participate in this Conference.

It is not only important for as many countries as possible to acknowledge the importance of the “*Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1980*” and to ratify and comply with this and other ‘Hague’ conventions; it is of particular importance for the children that the conventions are made public on a national and international scale, so that they can operate to their best effect. In order to achieve this aim, hard financial backers are required to support the work of the Hague Conference, in particular in improving implementation of the conventions in participating countries.

For further information regarding the content of the conference and the participants, please contact:

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What is the Hague Conference on Private International Law?

The Hague Conference is an intergovernmental organisation, aimed at the harmonisation of private international law. The name derives from the fact that it originally related to a series of ad hoc conferences, the first of which took place in 1893. In 1951, the Conference became a permanent organisation, based in The Hague. The core activity continues to be the preparation and organisation of international meetings in the field of ‘private international law’. The meetings relate to a wide range of legislative subjects, one of which is ‘child abduction’. The purpose of the meetings is to negotiate on, conclude and implement multilateral conventions. **In addition, the Hague Conference tries to stimulate as many countries as possible to ratify particular conventions.** Furthermore, it prepares sessions to improve the implementation of conventions already concluded. The Hague Conference has a very limited budget and is financed by the participating countries.