

Updated – 15 October 2020



**REPUBLIC OF SERBIA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

## **PROTOCOL GUIDELINES**

**FOR MEMBERS OF FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, CONSULAR POSTS AND  
OFFICES OF INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**Belgrade, July 2015**

## **Welcome to the Republic of Serbia!**

This guidebook has been issued with the intention of providing to the members of foreign diplomatic missions and consular posts in the Republic of Serbia basic information about their privileges and immunities observed by the Republic of Serbia in accordance with the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, with respect for the principle of reciprocity and relevant laws and regulations of the Republic of Serbia.

Privileges and immunities are also granted to the offices of international governmental organizations and to the members of their international staff, subject to the provisions of relevant bilateral agreements on privileges and immunities of the status of international governmental organizations resident offices in the Republic of Serbia.

Privileges and immunities are guaranteed in order to ensure normal functioning of foreign diplomatic missions, consular posts and offices of international governmental organizations and members of their international staff. In the same time, members of foreign diplomatic missions, consular posts and offices of international governmental organizations are expected to observe the laws and regulations of the Republic of Serbia as a receiving State.

## **Diplomatic Protocol**

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## **PREMISES OF THE MISSION**

The term “premises of the mission” in the Republic of Serbia refers to the buildings or parts of buildings and land ancillary thereto which are used for the official purposes of the foreign diplomatic mission, consular post or office of international governmental organization, irrespective of ownership.

The premises of the mission are inviolable. Authorities of the Republic of Serbia may enter the premises only with the explicit consent or written request of the head of the mission. The mission premises, their furnishings and other objects thereon and its means of transport are immune from search, requisition, attachment or execution. Inviolable is the residence of the head of the mission, as well as the premises where diplomatic agents and administrative and technical staff of the missions are accommodated.

It is a duty of the Republic of Serbia to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of the mission against any intrusion or damage, and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity.

### **Opening of foreign diplomatic mission, consular post or office of international governmental organization**

The Law on Foreign Relations provides for that, upon a request of a foreign State and consequent recommendation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, the Government of the Republic of Serbia shall decide on granting a consent for the opening of a mission of a foreign state or international organization in the Republic of Serbia, including the opening of separate offices of the mission in localities other than those in which the mission itself is established, if such request has been presented.

Upon the decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to grant consent for the opening of a foreign diplomatic mission, consular post or office of international governmental organization in the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of a sending state, or the headquarters of international governmental organization, informs the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Republic of Serbia by a verbal note of the opening date of the mission, post or organization and of the appointment of its head.

Diplomatic mission or consular post shall be registered with the Diplomatic Protocol on the basis of its verbal note which should provide all relevant information and contacts (address, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail address, working hours, diplomatic staff, etc).

Office of international governmental organization (IGO) enjoying privileges and immunities in the Republic of Serbia, shall be registered with the Diplomatic Protocol upon entry into force of a bilateral Agreement concluded between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the respective international governmental organization on the status of the office of the organization and its international staff in the Republic of Serbia. The office of international governmental organization is requested to notify the Diplomatic Protocol by a verbal note of its opening date and to provide relevant contact information.

Diplomatic missions, consular posts and offices of international governmental organizations are obliged to notify regularly the Diplomatic Protocol about any change pertaining to their functioning.

## **Purchase and lease of property**

According to the relevant laws of the Republic of Serbia, foreign states, their missions and their mission staff may, based on reciprocity and upon prior consent of the competent legal authorities of the Republic of Serbia (Ministry of Justice), purchase buildings and apartments, including the land for their construction, to be used for the official purposes of their missions and the residence of the head of mission.

Offices of IGO may purchase or lease premises for their official use or for the use of their international staff if such provision is envisaged by a bilateral agreement on the office status.

Foreign missions may lease buildings or apartments for their official premises or for accommodation of the members of their staff. Leasing will not be conditional either on reciprocity or on the provisions of an agreement.

Under the authorization of the Directorate for the Real Estate of the Republic of Serbia, “DIPOS” a.d. (officially the Diplomatic Housing Enterprise at Serdar Jola Street No.17, Belgrade, telephone: 011/3670-470) is responsible for the management of the immovable properties owned by the Republic of Serbia. Diplomatic missions, consular posts and offices of international governmental organizations may contact “DIPOS” a.d. directly and get information of available business premises and accommodation, as well as of the conditions for their leasing and maintenance.

## **Procedure to obtain approval**

Interested state may send, through its mission in the Republic of Serbia, a note to the MFA of the Republic of Serbia with a request to get approval to purchase property, subject to reciprocity, for the official use of its diplomatic mission or consular post in the Republic of Serbia.

The note of the diplomatic mission or consular post will be forwarded to the Ministry of Justice (Sector for Normative and International and Legal Affairs – Department for International Legal Assistance, Nemanjina Street No.22-26, Belgrade). Upon the receipt of its reply, the MFA of the Republic of Serbia will communicate the same, through diplomatic channels, to the MFA of the sending state.

In the case of the construction of the premises, foreign diplomatic missions or consular posts are recommended, according to the Law on Planning and Construction to hire a firm or any other legal entity enlisted in a respective Registry of entities authorized for the elaboration of urban plans and technical documentation thereof. They are also advised to verify whether employees of such company or legal entity have got necessary qualification and license, as well as professional experience in the elaboration of technical documentation for such type of project. Foreign missions are expected to conclude a contract with the local company specifying details of their contractual duties and obligations. The said Law also specifies the procedure for the construction of a new building and enlists the documentation required to be submitted.

## **Fiscal Exemption from Purchase or Lease Taxation on Immovable Property**

Under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (Article 23) the sending state and the head of its mission are exempted in the Republic of Serbia from all national, regional or municipal dues and taxes in respect of the premises of the mission, whether owned or leased, other than such as represent payment for specific services rendered. The exemption from taxation referred to in the mentioned Article will not apply to such dues and taxes payable under the law of the receiving state by persons contracting with the sending state or with the head of the mission.

Property Tax Law provides for that no taxes on transfer of absolute rights shall be paid, conditional on reciprocity, to the transfer of title of immovable property of diplomatic missions or consular posts of foreign states in the Republic of Serbia.

Property tax is paid neither to the property rights as provided for by an international treaty concluded by the Republic of Serbia on the exemption from property tax payment. Offices of IGO may enjoy this privilege under the condition that such exemption has been envisaged by the provisions of a bilateral agreement on the status of the office of IGO in the Republic of Serbia.

### **Taxes related to Purchase of Immovable Property**

Pursuant to the provisions of the Property Tax Law, the transfer tax on absolute rights shall be paid on transfer against compensation of property rights to real estate exempted from the value added tax (VAT) payment, in accordance with the VAT Law. The Law provides for that the payer of tax on the transfer of absolute rights shall be the seller or transferor of the rights. When transfer against compensation of the property right to a residential (newly built) building and the land occupying that building, is not subject to VAT payment under the Sale Contract, but to the absolute rights transfer tax, a foreign diplomatic mission or consular post purchasing that immovable property is not liable for paying the said tax, but subsidiary guarantor for such tax payment. Seller of the immovable properties is liable, in the capacity of a taxpayer, to submit tax declaration and to pay tax thereof.

Subsidiary guarantor is a second rank debtor, which means that respective foreign mission (to which the property right has been transferred, and which is not liable by the contract for tax payment) shall be liable for the payment of such tax only if competent Tax Office fails to collect the tax from the seller either by means of regular or forced collection.

If the foreign mission, under the Sale Contract of a residential building or a land ancillary thereto, accepts an obligation to pay tax on the basis of transfer of absolute rights (which implies only the case when transfer of property right on specific residential building and land is not subject to VAT payment), the foreign mission shall be recognized as a joint guarantor for the tax payment on the basis of tax on transfer of absolute rights.

Joint guarantor is the debtor of the same rank as taxpayer, which means that Tax Office may, upon its own choice, ask the buyer to pay the tax without any previous attempt to collect the same from the seller.

### **Property Lease**

Foreign mission is not liable to property tax in respect to the building or a part of the building leased for the official purpose of its mission or post, residence of the head of the mission or post, including the residence of the members of its international staff. In this case payer of the tax on property is the owner of the leased property.

### **Inviolability and security of the mission premises**

Foreign diplomatic missions or consular posts enjoy inviolability in the Republic of Serbia in accordance with the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. Offices of IGO will be inviolable in the Republic of Serbia if such obligation has been prescribed by the provisions of a bilateral agreement on the status of the office to be opened.

Republic of Serbia, as a receiving state, attaches special attention to the protection of foreign missions and undertakes appropriate security steps and actions against intrusion and inflicted damage.

Foreign missions seeking additional security measures may address the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by a Verbal Note asking its assistance with the matter. Their request will be promptly forwarded to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia for further consideration and determination of the level of security measures to be taken.

It is the right and obligation of foreign missions to apply their own appropriate measures, by observing the law and regulations of the Republic of Serbia, for the protection of their premises, including the residence of the head of the mission. It is also advisable to get an insurance policy for the property concerned. Foreign missions may hire, if they deem it necessary, a company which will provide private security measures on commercial terms.

**In the case of emergency and imminent danger affecting diplomatic missions, consular posts or offices of international governmental organizations and members of their international staff, the following services may be contacted by phone 24 hours a day:**

**Police - 192**

**Fire & Rescue Service - 193**

**Emergency Medical Service - 194**

Missions may also contact directly the Unit for Security Protection of Certain Persons and Facilities at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia at telephone number 011/3616 509.

**(Temporary) Closure of diplomatic mission, consular post or office of international governmental organization**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the sending state or headquarters of IGO is obliged to inform the MFA of the Republic of Serbia by a verbal note of the (temporary) closure of its mission or office in the Republic of Serbia, and to provide the name of its diplomatic mission or office which will continue representing its interests in the Republic of Serbia on non-residential basis.

Foreign mission which is to be (temporary) closed has to notify the Diplomatic Protocol of the last date of its operation. Furthermore, it is obliged to send a notification of the final departure of all members of its staff and to return their identity (ID) cards, including the ID cards of the members of their family forming part of their household.

Foreign mission which is to be (temporary) closed has to cover all outstanding public utility expenses. It is also expected to return documents and registration plates of the official vehicles registered to the mission.

Foreign mission will be considered closed in the case of absence of registered international member of the staff.

## **HEAD OF MISSION**

### **Agrément**

Under Article 4 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the sending state must make certain that the *agrément* of the receiving state has been given for the person it proposes to accredit as head of the mission to that state.

Request for *agrément* for the new head of the diplomatic mission of a sending state in the Republic of Serbia should be submitted, together with his/her Curriculum Vitae, to the MFA of the Republic of Serbia.

Such request may be made, through diplomatic channels, in any of the traditional ways, whether in the form of a verbal note of the MFA of the sending state to the MFA of the Republic of Serbia, or a letter of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the sending state to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

Request for *agrément* for the new head of the diplomatic mission representing the sending state in the Republic of Serbia on non-residential basis, should be submitted either through the diplomatic mission of the Republic of Serbia in the sending State, or through the diplomatic mission of the Republic of Serbia in the State of permanent residence of the new head of the mission.

### **Arrival of the Head of Mission**

When arriving to Belgrade to take up his/her duties in the Republic of Serbia, the head of mission-designate shall be welcomed at the airport by a representative of the Diplomatic Protocol.

If requested by the mission, the Diplomatic Protocol shall make arrangements for the members of the diplomatic mission coming to welcome the head of mission-designate, to use the VIP Lounge at the “Nikola Tesla” Airport at the time and date indicated in the request.

When a head of mission-designate is scheduled to arrive in the Republic of Serbia by car, the diplomatic mission should send to the Diplomatic Protocol a verbal note informing of the arrival with all the required details (make and registration plates of the vehicle, border crossing, estimated time of arrival) so that the relevant authorities of the Republic of Serbia could be accordingly notified thereof.

### **Presentation of True Copies of the Credentials**

True copies of the Letters of Credence and the Letters of Recall are presented to the Chief of Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, or, in his absence, to his Deputy.

The head of mission-designate who has presented true copies of his credentials, may perform limited official acts in the period pending the presentation of the original Letters of Credence to the President of the Republic of Serbia. During that period, the head of mission-designate may make appointments for calls on the officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia and on diplomatic corps.

### **Call on the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps**

It is customary for the head of mission-designate to pay a courtesy call on the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps before the presentation of original Letters of Credence.

### **Presentation of the Credentials**

The Chief of Diplomatic Protocol shall inform the head of mission-designate of the date and time of the ceremony of the presentation of his/her Letters of Credence and of the Letters of Recall to the President of the Republic of Serbia.

Prior to the ceremony of the presentation of the Letters of Credence and of Recall to the President of the Republic of Serbia, respective diplomatic mission is obliged to submit on time to the Diplomatic Protocol information of the language to be used during the conversation with the President of the Republic of Serbia and a list of no more than five names of the members of the diplomatic mission who will accompany the head of mission-designate at the ceremony (including his/her spouse).

On the date and time set for the occasion, the Chief of the Diplomatic Protocol, or his Deputy, shall arrive by an official car at the residence or office of the head of mission-designate.

The head of mission-designate occupying the seat of honour in the official car and accompanied by the Chief or Deputy Chief of Diplomatic Protocol proceeds to the Serbia Palace where the ceremony of the presentation of the credentials to the President of the Republic of Serbia will take place. The official car will fly two pennants of the Republic of Serbia.

The members of the diplomatic mission escorting the head of mission-designate to the ceremony use the cars of their mission.

The official car stops outside the Serbia Palace at Mihajla Pupina Boulevard No. 2 at Novi Beograd.

The head of mission-designate steps out of the car on the red carpet and stands in front of the Guard of Honour of the Serbian Armed Forces which is lined up on his right hand-side.

Military band strikes a march.

The head of mission-designate, followed by the Chief or Deputy Chief of Diplomatic Protocol, proceeds along the red carpet towards the Guard of Honour of the Serbian Armed Forces and stops in front of the flag of the Republic of Serbia and honours it by a slight bow.

Accompanying members of the diplomatic mission walk about two meters behind the head of mission-designate taking his left hand-side.

The head of mission-designate then proceeds along the red carpet to the end of the front line of the Guard of Honour and turns around facing the Commander of the Guard of Honour to receive his salute. The head of mission-designate acknowledges the salute by a slight bow.

At the Serbia Palace main entrance, the head of mission-designate is welcomed by the Chief of Protocol of the President of the Republic of Serbia.

The head of mission-designate, accompanied by the Chief of Protocol of the President of the Republic of Serbia and the Chief of Diplomatic Protocol, enters a Reception Hall followed by the accompanying members of the diplomatic mission.

President of the Republic of Serbia stands in the middle of the Reception Hall. As a rule, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia or representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chief of Cabinet to the President of the Republic and the President's Foreign Policy Advisor are also present at the Reception Hall.

The head of mission-designate and members of his suite advance and stop at the proper distance and greet the President by a slight bow. The suite of the head of mission-designate stands behind him/her in the order of precedence from left to right.

The Chief of Protocol of the President of the Republic will announce the head of mission-designate to the President by loudly pronouncing his/her full name and the name of the country he/she is representing.

Having been introduced, the head of mission-designate addresses the President with the following words:

**“I have the honour to present to you, Mr. President, the Letters of Credence by which His Excellency (name of the President/Sovereign), President/King of (name of the country), has accredited me as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of (name of the country) to the Republic of Serbia”.**

After that, the head of mission-designate walks up to the President and presents his Letters of Credence and the Letters of Recall of his predecessor (without shaking hands with the President). Members of the suite of the head of mission-designate remain at their places during the entire ceremony of the credentials presentation.

Upon receiving the Letters of Credence and Letters of Recall, the President welcomes the head of the diplomatic mission and they shake hands while being photographed. Then the President introduces the head of the mission to the officials of the Republic of Serbia attending the ceremony. The head of mission introduces members of his suite to the President and the attending officials of the Republic of Serbia.

When the introductions are over, the President invites the head of mission to a drawing room for an informal conversation.

In the meantime, the members of the suite are entertained by two Chiefs or Deputy Chiefs of Protocol.

When the audience with the President is over, the head of mission bids farewell to the President and the attending officials of the Republic of Serbia, and leaves the Serbia Palace escorted by the Chief of Protocol of the President of the Republic of Serbia and the Chief of the Diplomatic Protocol.

On his way out of the Serbia Palace, the military band plays the national anthem of the head of mission’s country.

When the playing of the national anthem is over, the head of mission inspects the Guard of Honour, which is lined up on his right side.

Then the head of mission honours the flag by a slight bow and proceeds to the end of the line-up of the Guard of Honour where he turns around and faces the Commander of the Guard of Honour, receives his salute and, in turn, acknowledges it by a slight bow indicating that the ceremony is over.

The head of mission turns around, enters the official car in the company of the Chief of the Diplomatic Protocol and leaves for his residence or office. This time the official car flies both the pennant (national flag) of the head of mission’s country and the pennant of the Republic of Serbia.

### **Dress code**

For the ceremony, the head of mission and members of his diplomatic suite should be dressed either in a dark suit, national costume of the sending state or diplomatic uniform, upon the choice of the head of diplomatic mission.

## **Order of Precedence**

Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary take up their functions upon presentation of their credentials to the President of the Republic of Serbia.

The order of the presentation of credentials to the President of the Republic is determined by the date and time of the arrival of the heads of diplomatic mission to the Republic of Serbia.

## **Courtesy Calls on Dignitaries of the Republic of Serbia**

Upon the presentation of the credentials, the Diplomatic Protocol, at the request of the respective mission, shall make appointments for the new head of mission to pay a courtesy call on the officials of the Republic of Serbia (Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, etc.), and on the officials of the City of Belgrade and others.

## **Wreath Laying Ceremony**

During his/her term of office, the head of mission may, if he/she wishes so, lay a wreath at the Tomb of Unknown Soldier on the Mount of Avala. The diplomatic mission should determine with the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the date and time for the wreath laying ceremony.

Heads of mission of certain countries may also lay wreaths at the special cemeteries and memorials honouring their countrymen who fought in World War One and World War Two.

## **Absence of the Head of Mission – Appointment of a Chargé d’Affaires a.i.**

The head of mission may authorize a member of the diplomatic staff of the mission to act, in his absence, as a Chargé d’Affaires *ad interim*. Notification to that effect should be made by the mission in advance by a verbal note to the MFA of the Republic of Serbia, as envisaged by Article 19 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The verbal note should provide the name and rank of the Chargé d’Affaires a.i. and the period during which he will act in that capacity.

In the case of absence or inability of the head of mission to appoint Chargé d’Affaires a.i., or in the case when the acting Chargé d’Affaires a.i. is to be replaced by a new one, the appointment to that effect should be made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the sending State which shall notify the MFA of the Republic of Serbia thereof by its verbal note.

In the case when no member of the diplomatic staff of the mission is present in the receiving state, a member of the administrative and technical staff may, with the consent of the MFA of the Republic of Serbia, be designated by the sending state to be in charge of the current administrative affairs of the mission or the post.

## **Final departure of the head of mission**

The Diplomatic Protocol should be notified in advance by a verbal note of the date when the functions of the head of mission come to an end, as well as of the appointment of the Chargé d’Affaires a.i.

When the impending final departure of the head of mission is notified, the Diplomatic Protocol will, at the request of the head of mission concerned, seek and arrange a farewell call of the head

of mission on the officials of the Republic of Serbia (President of the Republic, Speaker of the National Assembly, Prime Minister and other ministers).

The heads of missions are free to arrange directly their own farewell calls on other officials of the Republic of Serbia (state secretaries, assistants ministers, etc).

If final departure is scheduled by plane, the head of mission will be seen off and bid farewell by the Chief of the Diplomatic Protocol, or his Deputy, at the “Nikola Tesla” airport. At the request of the diplomatic mission, Diplomatic Protocol may book a VIP Lounge at the airport for that occasion.

## **NON-RESIDENT HEADS OF MISSION**

### **Initial Visit - Arrival**

Arrangements for greeting an incoming, non-resident head of mission-designate at the “Nikola Tesla” airport in Belgrade are the same as the one envisaged for the resident head of mission.

The Diplomatic Protocol is obliged to provide transportation for the non-resident head of mission-designate from the airport to the hotel where he/she will stay while being in the Republic of Serbia, as well as for the ceremony of the presentation of the credentials.

In the case that non-resident head of mission-designate arrives to the Republic of Serbia by car, he will be greeted by the Chief of Diplomatic Protocol, or his Deputy, at the hotel.

Non-resident head of mission-designate is expected to arrive to Belgrade at least one working day before the date scheduled for the presentation of the credentials to the President of the Republic of Serbia.

No formal farewell shall be arranged for the departure of the non-resident head of mission from the Republic of Serbia after the presentation of credentials.

### **Presentation of the Credentials**

Non-resident head of mission-designate is obliged to preliminary present the Letters of Credence and of Recall to the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in the country where they are both accredited on residential basis.

The presentation of the originals of the Letters of Credence to the President of the Republic of Serbia by a non-resident head of mission-designate shall be organized on a set date for a group of heads of mission-designate

The heads of mission-designate, accompanied by representatives of the Diplomatic Protocol, arrive in front of Serbia Palace. They proceed, one by one, along the red carpet towards the Guards of Honour. After the review of the Guard of Honour of the Serbian Armed Forces, they are accompanied to the Lounge for the presentation of the Letters of Credence, lined-up, with their suites standing behind them.

After the President of the Republic of Serbia has entered the Lounge, the Chief of Protocol of the President presents the non-resident head of mission-designate who then addresses the President with the following words:

**“I have the honour to present to you, Mr. President, the Letters of Credence by which His Excellency (name of the President/Sovereign), President/King of (name of the country), has accredited me as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of (name of the country) to the Republic of Serbia”.**

After that, the non-resident head of mission-designate walks up to the President and presents his Letters of Credence. They shake hands while being photographed. The non-resident head of mission then walks back to where he stood earlier.

Upon receiving the Letters of Credence from all non-resident heads of mission, the President delivers a brief speech. Then the President invites each non-resident head of mission to a drawing room where a five-minute informal conversation follows.

In the meantime, the Chief of Protocol of the President of the Republic invites other non-resident heads of mission and members of their suite to a cocktail.

When the audience with the President is over, the non-resident head of mission bids farewell to the President and leaves Serbia Palace escorted by the Chief of Protocol of the President and the Chief of the Diplomatic Protocol.

When the non-resident Head of Mission leaves the Serbia Palace, the military band will play the national anthem of his/her country.

Upon the ending of the national anthem, the non-resident head of mission reviews the Guard of Honour, which is lined up on the other side of the red carpet.

The non-resident head of mission, then honours the flag by a light bow and proceeds to the end of the line-up where he turns around and faces the Commander of the Guard of Honour, receives his salute and, in turn, acknowledges it by a light bow. The ceremony is over.

### **Courtesy Calls**

Following the call of non-resident head of mission-designate on the Chief of the Diplomatic Protocol, or his Deputy, and the presentation of true copies of the credentials, the Diplomatic Protocol shall organize a programme of courtesy calls on other officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during his stay in the Republic of Serbia.

At the request of the non-resident head of mission, Diplomatic Protocol will also make every effort to organize, time permitting, courtesy calls on other dignitaries and officials of the Republic of Serbia.

### **Working Visits**

When non-resident head of mission, during his term of office, comes to the Republic of Serbia on a working visit, programme of visit shall be prepared by the respective Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

### **Final Departure**

Appointments for the farewell calls of the non-resident head of diplomatic mission are arranged in the same way as those organized for the initial visit for the presentation of the credentials.

## **VISITS OF FOREIGN STATE DIGNITARIES**

### **State and Official Visits to the Republic of Serbia**

Protocol of the President of the Republic, Protocol of the National Assembly, Protocol of the Government, the Diplomatic Protocol, Protocol of the Ministry of the Interior and Protocol of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Serbia are responsible for the organization and realization of the visits by heads of state or government, speakers and members of parliaments, ministers of foreign affairs, of the interior, of defense, and other ministers who are coming as guests of the respective authorities of the Republic of Serbia.

The mentioned protocol departments coordinate their activities and prepare the program of visits in cooperation with the diplomatic mission of the sending state, with the official host of the Republic of Serbia and other relevant ministries.

### **Private Visits and Transit**

When a high-ranking foreign dignitary of any of the above listed institutions visits the Republic of Serbia, either privately or in transit, the relevant protocol department in charge will offer appropriate courtesy assistance with respect to the VIP Lounge, security measures, etc, on the basis of the previous notification thereof by the diplomatic mission of the respective country.

### **Carrying of Firearms by Foreign Security Officers**

The Government of the Republic of Serbia pays special attention to fulfilling its international obligations and responsibilities in respect of the protection and safety of internationally protected persons. For that reason, the competent authorities of the Republic of Serbia apply appropriate security measures according to international standards (close physical protection, appropriate transport, accommodation, etc) for all internationally protected persons against whom a possible security threat might arise while staying in the Republic of Serbia.

All requests to bring firearms into the Republic of Serbia by foreign security officers and to obtain the permission to carry firearms on their assignment while accompanying internationally protected persons, should be made by a verbal note submitted to the MFA of the Republic of Serbia not later than ten working days before the visit.

The verbal note should provide the following information:

- reasons for which the permission is requested;
- period for which the permission is requested;
- name of the person who will carry weapons;
- type, number and validity of passport of the person who will carry weapons;
- model, type, serial number of the weapon and the number of bullets.

Usually permission is requested for one piece of firearms (pistol or revolver) per security officer or bodyguard and for one additional magazine with bullets.

The Law on Firearms and Ammunition envisages no reciprocity with respect to the permission to be granted. However, the practice of reciprocity shall be taken into account during the request consideration.

Permission for bringing firearms into the Republic of Serbia shall be granted only for the firearms listed in the Law on Firearms and Ammunition. The Law provides for the ban on sale, acquisition, possession, carrying, repair and alternation of firearms with devices such as

silencers, telescopic sights with light beam or with devices for electronic light enhancement or infra red device, as well as of fragmentation and gas weaponry, cold weapons and devices not manufactured and adapted as firearms. Furthermore, under the Law there is also a ban on acquisition, possession and carrying of semi-automatic and combination of long barreled firearms except hunting ones, as well as acquisition, possession and carrying of semi-automatic and combination of short-barreled firearms and special firearms unless otherwise prescribed by the Law.

### **Carrying of Communication Equipment by Foreign Security Officers**

Permission to bring into the Republic of Serbia portable radio equipment for foreign security officers and bodyguards should be requested in advance for the proposed frequencies. A request providing full details of the equipment must be submitted to the competent authorities of the Republic of Serbia through the MFA ten days before the visit.

### **Greeting and Seeing off Visiting High-Ranking Foreign Dignitaries**

Head of diplomatic mission accredited to the Republic of Serbia may greet and bid farewell to high-ranking officials of his/her country at the "Nikola Tesla" airport, whether they are coming to an official or private visit, or being in transit.

All necessary arrangements for the official visits of high-ranking foreign officials are made by a representative of the respective diplomatic mission in cooperation with the relevant protocol service.

If the head or designated accredited representative of the respective diplomatic mission wishes to have an access to an aircraft to greet high-ranking dignitaries, a request thereof should be submitted to the Diplomatic Protocol at least 24 hours before the scheduled landing of the aircraft, so that all necessary permissions could be obtained on time.

Such request should specify the name and title of the arriving foreign dignitary, the names and designations of all accompanying persons, flight details, including the flight number and the estimated time of arrival.

Only two members of the diplomatic mission may be allowed entry into the restricted area of the airport. Other members of the mission may be present at the VIP Lounge.

Upon landing, the foreign dignitaries and members of their party will be taken to the VIP Lounge where they will complete necessary border entry formalities.

The procedure for seeing off foreign dignitaries to the aircraft on their departure is similar to the one on arrival.

In the case of a private visit of foreign high-ranking officials, the diplomatic mission of the country concerned shall arrange well in advance appropriate courtesies with the Diplomatic Protocol.

## **DEFENCE ATTACHE**

Under Article 7 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, appointment of a Defence Attaché is subject to the prior approval (*consentment*) of the appropriate authorities of the Republic of Serbia. In some cases, approval is to be granted, conditional on reciprocity, to Assistant Defence Attaché, as well.

Notification of the first and last name, rank and class, including a brief Curriculum Vitae of the appointed Defence Attaché should be included in the request.

Defence Attachés and other members of military offices of the missions may establish and maintain contacts, in respect of the area of their activities, with the Foreign Liaison Section of the Department for International Military Cooperation of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia.

## **MEMBERS OF MISSION**

### **Member of the Diplomatic Staff**

Member of the diplomatic staff is considered a person performing diplomatic function and having diplomatic rank of: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Apostolic Nuncio, Ambassador, Minister Plenipotentiary, Minister, Minister-Counsellor, First Counsellor, Second Counsellor, Counsellor, First Secretary, Second Secretary, Third Secretary and Attaché. Members of the mission not having one of the above mentioned diplomatic ranks shall be considered as members of the administrative and technical staff, irrespective of the fact that they possess diplomatic passport issued by the sending State.

Persons who are nationals of, or permanently resident in the Republic of Serbia cannot enjoy the status of a member of the diplomatic staff.

### **Member of the Administrative and Technical Staff**

Member of the administrative and technical staff is employed in the administrative and technical service of the mission, and may be holder either of diplomatic or service passport.

Persons who are nationals of, or permanently resident in, the Republic of Serbia cannot enjoy the status of a member of the administrative and technical staff.

### **Family Members**

Family members are a spouse and unmarried children (up to 26 years of age), as well as the parents of a holder of a diplomatic or an official ID or of his spouse, forming part of the same household.

The family members shall be notified to the Republic of Serbia in the same way as the newly appointed member of the staff. If initial visa is required for the members of the staff of the mission of the sending State, it has to be obtained for their family members, as well.

Persons who are nationals of, or permanently resident in, the Republic of Serbia cannot enjoy the status of a family member.

### **Member of the Service Staff**

Member of the service staff is the mission member appointed by the sending State and in domestic service of the mission. Member of the service staff must have a service passport of the sending State.

### **Private servant of the diplomatic agent**

Private servant is a persons in domestic service of diplomatic agent.

Private servants in the employ of the member of the diplomatic mission may also be nationals of a third state under condition that they have been properly notified and that they have been issued appropriate initial visa by the diplomatic mission or consular post of the Republic of Serbia.

Head of the diplomatic mission may employ two private servants, while diplomatic agent may employ one.

Diplomatic Protocol may ask the employment contract of the private servants to be submitted for verification.

Upon the ending of the engagement of private servants in the employ of a diplomatic agent, or upon termination of functions of a diplomatic agent with the mission in the Republic of Serbia, private servants are obliged to leave the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

Private servants who have ended their engagement with the household of one diplomatic agent and left the Republic of Serbia, are eligible to be hired by a new diplomatic agent for domestic employment in the Republic of Serbia. However, this new employment must be notified in the same way as the previous one following the above described procedure.

### **Members of the Office of International Governmental Organization**

Member of the staff of the office of international governmental organization is a foreign national appointed by the headquarters of IGO according to the provisions of a ratified bilateral agreement concerning the opening of the office of the respective IGO in the Republic of Serbia. Notification of the arrival of a new member of the office of IGO and family members forming part of a household should be made by a Verbal Note of the headquarters of the IGO concerned.

The status of the family members of the household of the appointed member of the IGO is regulated in the same way as the status of the family members of the household of the member of the diplomatic mission or consular post.

Nationals of the Republic of Serbia and foreign nationals with permanent residence in the Republic of Serbia cannot be notified as members of the staff of the office of IGO.

### **Locally Engaged Staff**

Members of the locally engaged staff are the staff members of the mission who have been employed by the diplomatic mission, consular post or office of international governmental organization on the basis of employment contract.

Members of the locally engaged staff of the diplomatic mission or the office of the IGO may be either the nationals of the Republic of Serbia or foreign nationals whose stay in the Republic of Serbia has been approved under the Law on Foreigners.

Members the locally engaged staff enjoy no privileges or immunities in the Republic of Serbia.

## **Notification of Appointment**

Notification of the appointment of a new member of the diplomatic mission and family members forming part of his household, is necessary in the case when the initial visa requirement is not provided for by a bilateral agreement ratified between the Republic of Serbia and the sending state, but the requirement of preliminary notification.

The MFA of the sending state shall send the notification of the appointment of a new member of the diplomatic mission and of his family members, 30 days before their arrival to the Republic of Serbia, by a verbal note thereof to the diplomatic mission of the Republic of Serbia in the sending state or to the diplomatic mission of the Republic of Serbia accredited to the sending state on non-residential basis.

The verbal note for the appointment of a new member of the diplomatic mission should provide the following information:

- first and last name of the new member of the mission;
- position and title to be occupied in the diplomatic mission according to the categories recognized by international conventions and practice, or signed bilateral agreements;
- first and last name of the member of the mission to be replaced;
- date, place and state of birth;
- citizenship;
- type of passport (diplomatic, service, special, laissez-passer), its number and date of validity which must exceed for 6 months the last date of the appointment of the member of the diplomatic mission in the Republic of Serbia;
- first and last name of the family members forming part of the household of the member of the mission, their relationship to the principal applicant, their date and place of birth, type and number of their passports;
- expected duration of the term of office of the new member of the diplomatic mission in the Republic of Serbia;
- expected date of arrival and assumption of duties of a new member of the mission.

Notification of the appointment of a new member of the office of IGO and of his family members is made by the headquarters of IGO to the embassy of the Republic of Serbia in the country where the respective IGO has its seat. Notification should follow identical procedure and provide the same information as those applicable to the member of the diplomatic mission, unless it has been provided for otherwise by an agreement on the status of the office of IGO to be opened in the Republic of Serbia.

As of 15 October 2020, notification of appointment is required for the nationals of the following countries: Albania, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt (for holders of diplomatic passports), Finland, Guinea, Hungary, India, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.

## **Initial Visa**

Initial visa request for a new member of the diplomatic mission and for his family members is to be submitted by the MFA of the sending state to the diplomatic mission of the Republic of Serbia in the sending state, or to the diplomatic mission of the Republic of Serbia accredited to the sending state on non-residential basis.

Initial visa request in the form of a verbal note should provide the following information:

- first and last name of the new member of the diplomatic mission;
- date and place of birth;
- position and title to be occupied in the diplomatic mission;
- first and last name of the member of the mission to be replaced;
- passport information (type, number, issue and validity date) of the applicant;
- expected duration of the applicant's term of office;
- expected date of arrival and assumption of duties;
- first and last name of the family members forming part of the household of the new member of the mission, their relationship to the principal applicant and their passport details.

As of 15 October 2020, initial visas are to be obtained for the nationals of the following countries: Algiers, Angola, Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt (for the holders of service and special passports), France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holly See, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Myanmar, Norway, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Great Britain and the United States of America.

Initial visa is also required for the holders of passport issued by the Organization of United Nations.

### **Non-resident head of diplomatic mission**

When the seat of a diplomatic mission of the sending state is in a third state, accreditation of the non-resident head of the mission – Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Defence Attaché, is made under the same procedure as the one applied for the resident member of the mission.

Non-resident heads of the mission are not entitled to fiscal privileges in the Republic of Serbia.

### **Registration of new members of diplomatic missions to the Diplomatic Protocol**

Diplomatic and consular missions and offices of international governmental organizations (IGO) are required to submit registration applications to the Diplomatic Protocol for newly-assigned members of the mission immediately or at least within 7 days following their arrival.

A verbal note notifying the appointment of a new member of the mission and his family household members and requesting the issuance of special identity cards for them should contain the following information:

- Given name(s) and family name of the principal applicant;
- Position and title held in the mission under international conventions or a bilateral agreement on the status;
- Date of taking up appointment;
- Full name of predecessor;
- Expected length of the applicant's term of office at the mission;
- Names and family names of household members and their relationship with the principal applicant.

The following documents should be provided together with the note:

- Two filled out application forms signed by the applicant, certified with the mission stamp;
- Passport on which the mission member entered Serbia;
- Passports of members of the family household on which they entered Serbia;
- Two photographs, taken within 6 months, size 35mm x 45 mm.

### **Issuance of special ID cards**

Special identity cards (diplomatic, official, consular and service) are issued pursuant to the Law on Aliens and the Regulations on the application form for the issuance of special identity cards, the form for special identity cards and procedure for the issuance of special identity cards, in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, other international conventions and bilateral agreements on the status of IGO offices in the Republic of Serbia. An identity card is proof of the status of a member of diplomatic and consular missions or IGOs in the Republic of Serbia and of the privileges and immunities accorded to its holder.

The ID card shall be valid for up to 4 years. The expiry date of the identity card cannot exceed the expiry date of the passport.

Diplomatic identity cards are issued to members of diplomatic personnel of diplomatic and consular missions, specifying their diplomatic title as well as to their family household members. Official identity cards are provided to members of the administrative/technical staff at diplomatic missions and IGO offices if so stipulated in bilateral agreements on the status as well as to members of their families.

Consular identity cards are provided to members of consular missions.

Service identity cards are provided to foreigners who do not enjoy immunity from civil jurisdiction under international agreements, but who are entitled to certain privileges.

Honorary consular officers are entitled to IDs. Members of the consular post headed by an honorary consular officer are not entitled to any privileges and immunities accorded in the Republic of Serbia, including the privilege of being registered with the Diplomatic Protocol.

Members of IGO offices and members of their family households are entitled to special identity cards issued under bilateral agreements on the status of the IGO office in the Republic of Serbia. The following titles can be entered in these ID cards: Head of Office, member of the Office and member of the administrative/technical staff of the Office.

The information on the nature and character of the functions exercised by diplomatic/consular members or those of the IGO office in the territory of the Republic of Serbia may be provided in the Diplomatic List (in addition to their title) but not in their identity cards.

The following titles may be entered in the service identity cards issued to the members of staff of executive partners of IGO offices: Head of the Executive Partner, Member of Administrative/Technical Staff including the name of the organization concerned (executive partner) and the international organization associated with the partner.

## Special ID Cards Replacement

Upon a request of a foreign mission, a special identity card may be replaced with a new one provided:

- it expired,
- it was lost or stolen,
- it was damaged,
- a change of personal data,
- a change into the holder's appearance,
- a change into the status of the holder of function.

Application for special identity cards replacement should be submitted to the Diplomatic Protocol with a verbal note accompanied by the following documents:

- two filled out and certified registration applications,
- two photographs taken within 6 months, size 35 mm x 45 mm,
- the card that needs to be replaced.

In cases when a request to replace an identity card is being submitted due to its expiry date, in addition to a verbal note, **it is not** required to enclose two photos and the duly filled-out form for the issuance of a special identity card, except as concerns:

- a change in the status of the holder of function (which includes also a change of status of all related persons, i.e. family members and members of service staff),
- children of the holder of the function and
- a change into the holder's appearance.

The application for the issuance of a new special identity card should be submitted not later than 10 days before the expiry date of the original card. In case of expiration of an identity card a new special identity card shall be issued with one-year validity period or up to the date of the applicant's passport expiry date, if shorter than that period. In all other cases, the replacement cards shall be issued with the same validity period as the original card. New identity cards shall bear the same registration number as the original card.

## Mission's obligations in case of loss of special ID cards

A foreign mission is obliged to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs without delay of the loss or theft of a special identity card and provide evidence that its loss has been reported in the "Official Gazette" (Public Enterprise Official Gazette address: Jovana Ristica 1, Belgrade), and rendered null and void. In case of theft, this information should be accompanied by the relevant police report.

## Termination of duty

Diplomatic mission, consular post or office of IGO is obliged to inform the Diplomatic Protocol immediately by a verbal note when the functions of a member of the mission have come to an end and to specify the last date of tour of duty.

Submitted obligatorily with the verbal note to that effect should be all documents issued to the member of the mission and to family members, as well as to private servants (ID Cards, airport passes, firearms license, permit to carry firearms, etc).

New member of the staff of the mission will be issued ID Card only if the Diplomatic Protocol has been duly notified of the termination of the functions of the predecessor.

### **Private gainful occupation**

A member of diplomatic mission, consular post or office of IGO, including the members of family forming part of household, may not carry on for personal profit any professional or commercial activity in the Republic of Serbia.

However, a member of the family forming part of the household of the member of the staff of diplomatic mission or consular post may carry on a private gainful occupation only if such option has been provided for by a bilateral agreement concluded between the Republic of Serbia and the sending state. Agreements are in force with: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the United States of America.

Diplomatic mission or consular post is obliged to inform the Diplomatic Protocol by a verbal note of the intention of a member of the family forming part of the household of the member of the mission or post to gain employment in the Republic of Serbia, and to request a permission of the competent authorities of the Republic of Serbia for each specific professional occupation thereof.

Diplomatic Protocol shall communicate to the relevant diplomatic mission or consular post the information of the concerned authority which has granted approval to the family member forming part of the household of the member of the diplomatic mission or consular post, to be employed in the Republic of Serbia.

Legal status of the family member pertaining employment in the Republic of Serbia shall be in accordance with relevant domestic employment laws and regulations of the receiving state.

### **Health Care**

Member of the staff of the diplomatic mission or consular post and their family members who are not nationals of, or permanently resident in, the Republic of Serbia are entitled to medical service free of charge, on the conditions envisaged by the provisions of relevant international conventions, or a health-care bilateral agreement concluded between the Republic of Serbia and the respective sending State.

Members of the office of IGO and their family members are entitled to health care on the basis of a bilateral agreement concluded between the Republic of Serbia and the organization they represent.

Health care service includes the following: medical exams and treatment in health institutions or at home, medical assistance or any other care including those during pregnancy and after child-birth, drugs and medical supplies, as well as dental service.

Health care provided on the basis of bilateral agreements does not include the following: treatment in rehabilitation centers, psychiatric hospitals, oncology and radiological institutes, tuberculosis hospitals and natural spas.

Members of the diplomatic mission or consular post accredited in Belgrade and members of their family may use the health care service at the “Savski Venac” Medical Center at Pasterova Street, No.1. Dental service is provided by the “Vračar” Institute at Kneginje Zorke Street, No. 15.

## **PRIVILEGES**

Diplomatic missions and consular posts of the sending state and members of their international staff, who have been duly registered with the Diplomatic Protocol, shall be entitled, on the basis of reciprocity, to privileges in the Republic of Serbia to be exercised through the Diplomatic Protocol.

Under the provisions of a ratified bilateral agreement regulating the status of the office of IGO in the Republic of Serbia, such office and members of its international staff, who have been duly registered with the Diplomatic Protocol, shall be entitled to privileges in the Republic of Serbia to be exercised through the Diplomatic Protocol.

In view of the fact that the purpose of the privileges is not to benefit individuals, but to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of diplomatic mission, consular post or the office of IGO and of their international staff, certain conditions, prescribed by Serbian laws and regulations, have to be met concerning the import of goods into, and their purchase in the Republic of Serbia exempt from duty, tax or excise. Quantities of these goods should be reasonable, i.e. to serve the purpose of meeting the official needs of the mission and the private needs of the members of its staff.

Members of the staff of the diplomatic mission, consular post or office of IGO who are nationals of, or permanent resident in, the Republic of Serbia are not entitled to the above mentioned privileges.

### **Persons authorized to sign application forms (franchise)**

All application forms (franchise) submitted to the MFA for duty-free import or purchase of goods must be signed by the head of the diplomatic mission or consular post and certified by its stamp. All application forms of the office of IGO submitted for duty-free import or purchase of goods in accordance with the provisions of a bilateral agreement concluded between the Republic of Serbia and the IGO concerned, must be signed by the head of the office and certified by its stamp.

In the absence of the head of mission, application forms must be signed by a person notified to the Diplomatic Protocol as Chargé d’Affaires a.i. whose signature and initials specimen have been duly deposited with the Diplomatic Protocol.

Missions are obliged to regularly inform the Diplomatic Protocol by a verbal note of any change in respect to the person authorized to sign diplomatic correspondence, and to submit, attached to the verbal note, a specimen of the signature and initials of the head of mission, as well as the signature and initials of Chargé d’Affaires a.i, including a specimen of the mission’s seal.

## **CUSTOMS-FREE IMPORT/EXPORT OF DUTIABLE GOODS**

MFA of the Republic of Serbia shall ensure that diplomatic missions, consular posts and offices of IGO, and their international staff who are duly registered with the Diplomatic Protocol, may enjoy their privileges in respect to customs-free import or export of dutiable goods.

Diplomatic Protocol shall monitor the quantity of goods imported exempt from tax, duty or excise. When it is deemed that such import is in excess of reasonable requirements for an official or personal use of the missions, or of their international staff, Diplomatic Protocol shall seek an explanation from the missions concerned before deciding whether approval will be granted or not.

### **Import Tax Exemption**

Republic of Serbia, as the receiving state, shall, in accordance with its laws and regulations, approve import of, and grant exemption from, all customs duties, taxes and related charges other than charges for storage, cartage and similar services.

Customs Law provides for customs duties exemption for:

- diplomatic missions or consular posts accredited to the Republic of Serbia, for goods intended for their official use;
- heads of diplomatic missions or consular posts and the members of their families forming part of their household, for goods intended for their personal use;
- international governmental organizations, for goods intended for their official use;
- diplomatic agents of the diplomatic missions and members of their families forming part of their household, for goods intended for their personal use;
- members of the staff of diplomatic missions or consular posts, for their household effects.

This privilege may be conditional on reciprocity in the case that the sending state fails to provide the same privilege to the diplomatic mission or consular post of the Republic of Serbia on its territory.

Office of IGO and members of its international staff registered with the Diplomatic Protocol may enjoy the privilege of custom-free import if such option has been provided for by a bilateral agreement ratified between the Republic of Serbia and the respective IGO.

Persons who are nationals of, or permanently resident in, the Republic of Serbia cannot enjoy the privilege of custom-free import of goods.

### **Restrictions on customs-free import of dutiable goods**

Customs Law of the Republic of Serbia envisage that goods imported duty-free may not be transferred to another person or given for use to another person or otherwise used, other than for the purposes for which they were relieved from import duties, prior to the payment of such import duties, before the expiry of a three-year period from the day when they were released for free circulation. Such goods may not be pledged, lent or used as a security for satisfaction of another obligation.

In the case when customs authorities authorize that the goods may be intended for different use, the level of import duties is determined in accordance with the condition of goods and with

regulations in force at the time when the request for the payment of import duties has been submitted.

When the goods are disposed of contrary to the provision of the mentioned Law, import duty shall be calculated in accordance with the condition of goods and in accordance with the regulations in force at the time when the decision on collection of import duties has been made.

### **Application for customs-free import of dutiable goods**

In order to qualify for the import goods for its official purposes, the mission is requested to submit the following documents:

- A verbal note specifying the type of goods and the purpose they will be used for (for example - furniture for the residence, computers for the mission, office supplies, etc.);
- Duly filled-out Application Form (franchise), either in electronic format or typed (application forms filled-out by hand will not be processed), in accordance with the instructions featured on the back of the Form. The Application Form must be signed by the head of the diplomatic mission with the mission stamp affixed thereto;
- In case that different goods are imported, it is necessary to enclose a list of goods in Serbian language, in quadruple, signed by the head of the diplomatic mission with the mission stamp affixed thereto.

In order to qualify for the import or export of goods intended for personal use by the accredited staff, the diplomatic mission is requested to submit the following documents:

- Duly filled-out Application Form (franchise), specifying the name and position of the applicant;
- Photocopy of the supporting documents in quadruple (invoice, pro-forma invoice, certificate by the shipping company clearly specifying the kind of goods concerned). In case it is not possible to establish from the supporting documents the kind of goods, it is necessary to send an explanatory verbal note;
- In case personal effects are imported or exported, it is necessary to enclose a printed list in Serbian language, in quadruple, signed by the head of the diplomatic mission with the mission stamp affixed thereto;
- In case that are being exported goods that might be assumed to be under special protection (antiques, artistic paintings, books, carpets or other artistic values), of local or foreign origin, the diplomatic mission is obliged to submit along with the Application Form (franchise) of the Diplomatic Protocol also a certificate for the relevant custom authority issued by the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia - Belgrade, or the National Library of Serbia (for the export of books).

### **Export Procedure**

Customs-free export procedure is pretty much the same as the one for the customs-free import of goods. The only difference is that the word “import” is crossed out on the Application Form, while the word “export” is underlined.

If the personal or household effects of a member of the staff of the diplomatic mission are exported, four (4) copies of the printed list of the effects into Serbian language, signed by the head of the mission or authorized person and stamped by the seal of the mission, are to be attached to the Application Form.

## **Donations and Humanitarian Aid**

Diplomatic missions, consular posts or offices of IGOs are not entitled to apply for customs-free import of goods for donations or humanitarian aid through Application Form (franchise).

Procedure for the import of goods for that purpose has been regulated by the Law on Donations and Humanitarian Relief.

## **DUTY-FREE IMPORT AND EXPORT OF MOTOR VEHICLES**

The privilege to import duty-free a vehicle, motorcycle or scooter to the Republic of Serbia is extended to:

- Diplomatic mission and consular post for official purposes;
- Office of international governmental organizations for official purposes, in accordance with the provisions of a bilateral agreement on the office status;

The privilege to import one duty-free vehicle, motorcycle or scooter to the Republic of Serbia is extended to:

- Member of the diplomatic staff of the mission, duly registered with the Diplomatic Protocol;
- Family member of the diplomatic agent, duly registered with the Diplomatic Protocol;
- Member of the administrative and technical staff of the mission within one year of registration with the Diplomatic Protocol.

The privilege to import one motorcycle or scooter in addition to a motor vehicle is extended to members of diplomatic staff and family member of a diplomatic agent of a diplomatic mission, consular post or IGO (in accordance with the provisions of a bilateral agreement on the office status).

The privilege to import a second motor vehicle, motorcycle or scooter during their term in office is extended to members of diplomatic staff and family member of a diplomatic agent of a diplomatic mission, consular post or IGO (in accordance with the provisions of a bilateral agreement on the office status) under condition that the previously duty-free imported motor vehicle, motorcycle or scooter has been exported, sold to another person enjoying the same status in the Republic of Serbia or sold in the Republic of Serbia after the period of 3 (three) years upon the original import.

The privilege to import one motorcycle or scooter in addition to a motor vehicle is extended to members of administrative and technical staff of the mission within one year of registration with the Diplomatic Protocol.

### **Application procedure for duty-free import of motor vehicles**

Foreign missions may apply for a duty-free import of motor vehicles, motorcycles or scooters on the Application Form of the Diplomatic Protocol (franchise) used for duty-free import of other goods. In addition to the data concerning the mission and the applicant of this privilege, the Application should contain the data concerning the imported vehicle: make and type of the vehicle, year of manufacture, model, engine and chassis numbers, engine power and color.

## **“Temporary import”**

Member of the administrative and technical staff, who has not used the privilege to import duty-free a vehicle within one year of registration with the Diplomatic Protocol, may import a motor vehicle on a "temporary import" basis, provided a written statement by the Embassy (by a Verbal Note) that the duty-free imported vehicle shall be exported from the Republic of Serbia, or that it shall be customs cleared in the Republic of Serbia upon termination of appointment of the person who imported the vehicle duty-free. This privilege may be used only once.

In order to qualify for a temporary duty-free vehicle import, diplomatic missions are obliged to submit to the Diplomatic Protocol the following documents:

1. Verbal Note specifying:

- First and last name, rank and title of the member of the mission applying for temporary duty-free import of a vehicle
- Data on the vehicle (make, type, new or used vehicle) and the manner it has been purchased (sale and name of previous owner)
- A guarantee that the imported vehicle shall be exported or customs cleared upon termination of appointment of the applicant
- A guarantee that the applicant has not already used the privilege of duty-free import of motor vehicle
- A statement of the diplomatic mission that it shall pay all dues in case the applicant fails to act in keeping with his application commitments, and

2. Duly filled-out Application Form (franchise) signed by the head of the diplomatic mission with the official mission or post stamp affixed.

## **Export and sale of a motor vehicles**

Diplomatic missions and registered members of their staff may export a duty-free imported/purchased motor vehicle, motorcycle or scooter. Application is to be submitted on the Application Form (franchise).

Before its export, the Central Customs Office, that has granted the temporary import of the vehicle, should be notified first that the imported vehicle has been unregistered, by submitting an appropriate Application Form (franchise) of the Diplomatic Protocol, in which the word "import" is crossed and the word "export" underlined.

Vehicles, motorcycles or scooters imported duty-free by diplomatic missions and their staff may be sold without payment of customs duty or other import dues and taxes three years after the date of the import, regardless of the byer.

Vehicles ownership may be transferred between eligible persons without payment of customs duty and VAT only on the condition that:

- Diplomatic mission, consular post or office of international governmental organization transfers the vehicle to another mission enjoying the same status;
- Member of the diplomatic or administrative and technical staff transfers the vehicle to another person, registered with the Diplomatic Protocol, who is entitled to a duty-free import of a motor vehicle.

Before the transfer of a motor vehicle, motorcycle or scooter imported free of customs duty and other dues to another person enjoying the same privilege, it must be unregistered with the relevant Customs Office who has originally registered such vehicle.

Vehicle may be sold in the Republic of Serbia before the expiry of the three-year period to a private person or corporate entity without the privilege to import one duty-free vehicle, provided that all charges and duties has been paid.

## **PURCHASE OF HEATING OIL AND FUEL EXEMPT FROM TAXES**

Foreign missions are allowed to purchase for their needs petroleum products (motor fuel and heating oil) exclusively on local market from relevant companies possessing a license to trade with petroleum products.

### **Heating oil**

Diplomatic missions, consular posts and members of their international staff, duly registered with the Diplomatic Protocol, are entitled to purchase on local market, exempt from taxes, heating oil in reasonable quantities, on condition of reciprocity.

Offices of IGOs and members of their international staff, duly registered with the Diplomatic Protocol, are entitled to this privilege in accordance with the provisions of a bilateral status agreement.

In order to qualify for the purchase on the local market of heating oil exempt from taxes, the mission is requested to submit the following documents:

- A verbal note specifying the total quantity of heating oil to be purchased on the local market, that may not exceed 10.000 liters per request;
- A list of housing facilities on the Diplomatic Protocol Form indicating addresses, as well as the required quantities intended for each facility, in duplicate, signed by the head of mission with the official mission stamp affixed thereto;
- Supporting documents (pro-forma invoice, order form, etc.).

### **Petrol and diesel fuel**

Foreign missions in the Republic of Serbia and members of their international staff are entitled VAT-free and excise-free purchase of limited quantities of fuel on the local market, in accordance to the below listed quotas:

#### **FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS**

Official vehicle of the head of diplomatic mission (A-001)	1.500 litres
Official vehicle of the mission	900 litres
Private vehicle of the member of the diplomatic staff	900 litres
Private vehicle of the spouse of the member of the diplomatic staff	300 litres
Private vehicle of the member of the administrative and technical staff	600 litres

#### **FOREIGN CONSULAR POSTS**

Official vehicle of the head of the consular post (A-001)	900 litres
Official vehicle of the consular post	900 litres

Private vehicle of the consular officer	900 litres
Private vehicle of the spouse of the consular officer	300 litres
Private vehicle of the member of the administrative and technical staff	600 litres

### **Tax-free purchase of fuel on a local market**

The privilege to purchase tax-free fuel for motor vehicles on local market is extended to the foreign mission by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month the trimester is beginning with, exclusively for the vehicles duly registered with the Ministry of Interior, and in accordance to the listed quotas. Requests for an ongoing trimester submitted after that delay will not be accepted, special cases excepted (for example - subsequent purchase of motor vehicle), supported by explanatory verbal note.

In order to qualify for the purchase on the local market of fuel exempt from tax, duty or excise, either for official purposes of diplomatic missions or personal purposes of the accredited staff, diplomatic missions are requested to submit to the Diplomatic Protocol with the following documents :

- A verbal note specifying the full name of the company, trimester and the total quantity of fuel to be purchased, according to the type of fuel;
- A list of vehicles on the Diplomatic Protocol Form indicating the name of the vehicle's owner, his rank and title, type of vehicle, registration plates of the vehicle, type and quantity of fuel for each vehicle, in duplicate, signed by the head of the diplomatic mission with the official mission stamp affixed thereto.

### **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND CIGARETTES**

Heads of diplomatic missions, military attachés, members of the diplomatic and career consular staff, duly registered with the Diplomatic Protocol, are entitled to import into and purchase in the Republic of Serbia, spirits, cigarettes and cigars on the following annual quotas:

- 300 bottles of hard liquors,
- 40.000 cigarettes,
- 1000 cigars,
- 24 perfumes/fragrances.

Foreign missions accredited to the Republic of Serbia are entitled to a customs-free import of spirits on the following annual quota:

- 500 bottles of hard liquors

In order to qualify for the import of alcoholic beverages with more than 20% of alcohol, cigarettes, cigars and perfumes exempt from taxes, in quotas as listed afore, the diplomatic mission is requested to submit the following documents:

- Duly filled-out Application Form (franchise), clearly specifying the applicant (cigarettes may not be imported by the mission). In the section describing the content of the shipping (explanation no. 6), it is necessary to indicate the total quantity of cigarettes, cigars, bottles of alcoholic beverages and perfumes as well as the number of the pro-forma invoice on the basis of which the mentioned and other goods are imported;
- A printed list of goods in Serbian language, in quadruple, signed by the head of the diplomatic mission or person in charge, with the mission stamp affixed thereto;
- A photocopy of the pro-forma invoice on the basis of which the goods are imported.

In order to qualify for the purchase in the Republic of Serbia of alcoholic beverages, as well as cigarettes and cigars, tax exempted, in quotas listed, the diplomatic mission is requested to submit a form to be additionally approved that will include the title and seat of the provider of goods, i.e. shop, a list of goods in Serbian language in two copies, signed by the head of mission or person in charge, with the mission stamp affixed thereto.

Import into or purchase in the Republic of Serbia of wine, beer and other alcoholic beverages (up to 20% of alcohol), exempted from tax, duty or excise, is not limited by quotas, but it is understood that they will be imported in reasonable quantities.

A foreign mission may enjoy the privilege to import into or purchase in the Republic of Serbia, duty-free alcoholic beverages for increased official purposes (in the case of visits of official delegations, receptions on national day celebrations, etc.), upon a separately explained request (in a verbal note) by the head of the diplomatic mission and supporting documents for this kind of import.

## **TAXES**

In accordance with the provisions of international conventions, the sending state and the head of its mission in the Republic of Serbia shall be exempt from all national, regional or municipal dues and taxes in respect of the premises of the mission, whether owned or leased. Members of a diplomatic mission shall be exempt from all dues and taxes personal or real, national, regional or municipal, other than such as represent dues and taxes for private income coming from the Republic of Serbia and payment for specific services rendered.

According to the Law on the Principles of the Tax System, all staff of missions and private servants shall be exempt from all taxes on private income earned working for diplomatic missions and consular posts or for offices of IGOs, on condition that they are not citizens of, or residents in, the Republic of Serbia.

### **Value added tax-free (VAT free) purchases**

Diplomatic mission, consular post or office of international governmental organization is entitled to value added tax-free (VAT free) purchases provided a certificate from the Diplomatic protocol confirming reciprocity, or a certificate from the Diplomatic protocol that, under an international treaty or bilateral agreement, tax exemption is provided for the purchase of goods and services rendered and the import of goods.

Value added tax-free (VAT free) purchases in the Republic of Serbia are conferred to:

1. For official use:
  - Diplomatic mission and consular post, with the exception of consular post headed by honorary consular officer,
  - Office of international governmental organization or office of its executive partner, if so provided under a bilateral agreement.
2. For personal use:
  - Diplomatic agent and family members forming part of a household, who is neither citizen of, nor resident in, the Republic of Serbia;

- Consular officer and family members forming part of a household, who is neither citizen of, nor resident in, the Republic of Serbia, with the exception of honorary consular officer;
- Member of the administrative and technical staff of diplomatic mission and consular post, with the exception of the member of the staff of consular post headed by consular honorary officer;
- Member of the staff of the office of international governmental organization and members of family forming part of a household, if so provided under a bilateral agreement;
- Member of the administrative and technical staff of the office of international governmental organization offices, if so provided under a bilateral agreement.

### **Certificate on reciprocity**

At the beginning of each calendar year, the Diplomatic protocol shall provide a principal certificate to each diplomatic mission, consular post or office of IGO and to the members of their international staff for a value added tax-free (VAT free) purchase.

These certificates are provided for the purchase and import of goods and services rendered, in particular for:

- the official use of the mission and
- the personal use of the staff of mission (document for the personal use of the staff is issued jointly for all persons entitled to purchase of goods and services and for import of goods exempt from VAT).

Each principal certificate is provided with a separate number and contain quantitative restrictions, if any such exist under reciprocity or provisions of an international treaty. The missions shall keep the originals of the certificates.

Foreign mission shall submit directly to the Tax Administration Head Office (3-5, Save Maškovića Street, Belgrade) an up-to-date list of persons entitled to VAT exemption and refund. The list should contain the signature of the head of mission and the official mission stamp affixed.

### **Procedure to claim direct tax exemption for the purchase of goods and services rendered**

Holders of this right may be directly entitled to tax exemption for the purchase of goods and services rendered for official use or for personal use of its staff, if they submit to the VAT payer (supplier of goods or provider of services), or to the relevant customs authority the following documents:

- photocopy of the principal certificate;
- original copy of the official order for the purchase of goods and services rendered or the import of goods free of VAT, which is issued by the authorized person of the VAT holder on the VAT Official Use Form.

Prior to issuing the first official order, the authorized representative of the VAT holder provides to the Tax Administration Head Office the data on the persons authorized to issue orders along with their signatures deposited with the document, as well as information on any changes concerning persons having this authority within 15 days from the date these changes have been made.

The authorized person of the VAT holder shall issue an official order on VAT Official Use Form in three copies, not filling the information in the table and those from sections marked as footnotes 1 and 2.

The VAT payer (supplier of goods or provider of services) or the relevant customs authority will fill out the marked sections of the official order (VAT Official Use Form), namely:

- VAT payer (supplier of goods or provider of services) fills out the data from the table and those from the sections marked as footnotes 1 and 2;
- relevant customs authority fills out the data from the table and those from sections marked as footnote 1.

The VAT payer (supplier of goods or provider of services), or the relevant customs authority shall keep two copies of the official order (VAT Official Use Form) and shall return the third copy to the VAT holder.

### **VAT refund**

In the case the VAT holders, irrespective of whether they purchased goods or obtained services for official or personal use, choose to purchase goods or obtain services by not using entitlement to direct tax exemption, they shall be eligible for the refund of the VAT paid upon receipt of the invoice from the supplier of goods or provider of services, i.e. upon payment of the VAT from the import of these items.

**Diplomatic missions, consular posts or offices of international governmental organization entitled to value added tax-free (VAT free) purchases shall submit their requests for reimbursement in electronic form only**, via the web site of the Tax Administration Office: [www.purs.gov.rs/e-porezi/portal.html](http://www.purs.gov.rs/e-porezi/portal.html)

User's guide for submission of requests and usage of the application software can be downloaded from the web site of the Tax Administration Office:

[www.purs.gov.rs/pravna-lica/pregled-propisa/korisnicka-uputstva/5343/korisnicko-uputstvo-za-refakciju-i-oslobadjanje-od-placanja-pdv-a.html](http://www.purs.gov.rs/pravna-lica/pregled-propisa/korisnicka-uputstva/5343/korisnicko-uputstvo-za-refakciju-i-oslobadjanje-od-placanja-pdv-a.html)

In case of any problems or arising difficulties to carry out the steps required while using the application software, the foreign missions are kindly requested to contact directly the Tax Administration Office by phone at 011/3950-652 and 011/3953-313, or by electronic mail at: [refakcijaPDV@purs.gov.rs](mailto:refakcijaPDV@purs.gov.rs)

### **EXCISE DUTIES**

Manufacturers or importers are entitled to excise duty exemption on excisable goods purchased by foreign missions, as follows:

1. for official use:
  - diplomatic mission or consular post in the Republic of Serbia, with the exception of consular post headed by honorary consular officer,
  - office of international governmental organization.
2. for personal use:

- diplomatic agent and family members forming part of household;
- consular officer and family members forming part of household, with the exception of honorary consular officer;
- members of the administrative and technical staff of diplomatic mission or consular post;
- members of the staff of the office of IGO and their family members forming part of their household, who are neither citizens of, nor resident in, the Republic of Serbia;
- members of the administrative and technical staff of the office of IGO and their family members forming part of their household, who are neither citizens of, nor resident in, the Republic of Serbia.

As for the sale of excisable goods for the official use of diplomatic mission, consular post or office of international governmental organization, the manufacturers or importers of such goods may be eligible for exemption of excise duties if they submit the following documents:

- photocopy of certificate on reciprocity or certificate on excise duty exemption provided for by an international treaty, issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter: principal certificate).
- original copy of the official order for the purchase or the import of goods free of excise duties, which is issued by the authorized person of the final user.

The order is issued on the Official Order for the purchase or import of duty-exempt excisable goods in three copies. The taxpayer shall keep two copies of the Official Order and shall return the third copy to the final user of goods.

Prior to issuing the first official order, the authorized representative of the final user (head of mission) shall provide to the Tax Administration Head Office (3-5, Save Maškovic Street, Belgrade), the data on the persons authorized to issue orders along with their signatures deposited with the document, as well as information on any changes concerning persons having this authority within 15 days from the date these changes have been made.

Manufacturers or importers may claim duty-exemption on purchase of excisable goods for the private use of members of diplomatic mission, consular post or office and international governmental organization and their family members provided they submit the following documents:

- photocopy of the principal certificate,
- original copy of the official order for the purchase or the import of duty-exempt excisable goods, for the personal use of the final user, which is issued by the authorized person of the final user, whose signature is deposited with the Tax Administration Head Office.

The official order is issued in three copies. The taxpayer shall keep two copies of the official order and shall return the third copy to the final user. The authorized person of the final user (head of mission) shall provide to the Tax Administration Head Office a list with the names of persons entitled to purchase excise-duty exempt goods, within 15 days from the date these changes have been made.

As for the purchase of goods without the levied excise by the importer of excisable goods, when importing such goods the final user (diplomatic mission, consular post or office of international governmental organization) shall submit to the Customs authority a photocopy of the principal certificate and two copies of the Official Order for the purchase or import of goods without

payment of excise duty (SNA) or the Personal Order for the purchase or import of goods without payment of excise duty for the personal use by the final user (LNA), a copy of which is returned to the final user. Forms may be downloaded from the web site of the Tax Administration of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia.

## **PRIVILEGES OF CONSULAR POSTS HEADED BY HONORARY CONSULAR OFFICERS**

Consular posts headed by honorary consular officers enjoy in the Republic of Serbia privileges and immunities in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

In accordance with Article 62 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, consular posts headed by honorary consular officers shall be permitted entry of, and granted exemption from customs duties, taxes, and related charges other than charges for storage on the following articles, provided that they are for the official use of a consular post: coats-of-arms, flags, signboards, seals and stamps, books, official printed matter, office furniture, office stationary and similar articles supplied by or at the instance of the sending state to the consular post.

Consular posts headed by honorary consular officers are not exempted from VAT and excise duties.

## **MOTOR VEHICLES**

Registration of motor vehicles, motorcycles and scooters owned by foreign diplomatic mission, consular post or office of IGO or by their international staff, as well issuance of registration plates are governed by the provisions of the Rules on the registration of motor vehicles and trailers, adopted in accordance with the Law on Safety of Road Transport.

Applications for registration of motor vehicles, motorcycles and scooters and the replacement of a foreign driving license are submitted directly to the police authority in accordance with the seat of the diplomatic mission. In Belgrade, diplomatic missions shall apply directly to the Belgrade City Police Administration, Vehicle Registration and Licensing Section, 12a Ljermontova Street. Applications must be duly signed by the head of diplomatic mission.

Nationals of the Republic of Serbia and foreign nationals with permanent residence in the Republic of Serbia are not entitled to privileges and immunities, including the privilege to be issued registration plates intended to diplomatic missions, consular posts or offices of international governmental organizations and to their international staff.

### **Registration of motor vehicles**

The number of official motor vehicles owned by diplomatic mission, consular post or office of international governmental organisation is not established in advance. It is assumed that diplomatic missions shall have a reasonable number of motor vehicles according to the official needs of the mission.

Members of the diplomatic staff and their spouses are entitled to one motor vehicle, motorcycle or scooter, each registered on their name.

Members of the administrative and technical staff are entitled to register one motor vehicle, motorcycle or scooter, on their name, while their spouses are not entitled to this privilege.

The relater rules sets that, when applying for registration, diplomatic missions should submit the following documents:

- Certificate on the vehicle's roadworthiness with technical data of the vehicle issued by the manufacturer or by licensed vehicles catalogues issued and verified by companies authorized to check the vehicle's roadworthiness, as well as a certificate that the vehicle passed the roadworthiness test, in the case it was individually manufactured or modified, valid for the Republic of Serbia. This certificate must not be older than 30 days;
- Compulsory third-party insurance policy for the vehicle;
- Receipts that all dues and taxes for the vehicle have been paid;
- Receipts that all registration fees have been paid, specifying the registration plates or the chassis number in the case it's a first-time registration;
- Evidence of ownership, i.e. of the vehicle's origin, in the case it's a first-time registration. In the case of transfer of ownership, an evidence of ownership as well as a document specifying the origin of the vehicle's motor provided it has been subsequently installed in the vehicle. And an evidence of the legal grounds to use the vehicle;
- Evidence of the identity of the vehicle's owner (a valid diplomatic, consular or service identification card issued by the Diplomatic Protocol).

The Rules stipulates that official vehicles belonging to diplomatic mission and consular post and official vehicles belonging to office of IGO entitled to diplomatic status in the Republic of Serbia and to the members of their international staff, are issued special registration plates with the "A" prefix. In addition to "A" plates, missions are also issued oval plates designating the diplomatic status of the person the vehicle is registered to or the person using the vehicle, as follows:

"CMD" – vehicle of the head of diplomatic mission,  
 "CD" – vehicle of the member of diplomatic staff, and  
 "CC" – vehicle of the consular officer.

Consular post headed by honorary consul officer is entitled in the Republic of Serbia to register one official motor vehicle belonging to the sending State. This vehicle shall be issued registration plates with an "A" prefix along with a special oval plate with "CC" designation.

Vehicles belonging to the members of the administrative and technical staff of a diplomatic mission or consular post shall be issued registration plates with an "A" prefix but no special oval plate.

When applying for registration of vehicle into the Register of motor vehicles, the diplomatic missions are required to specify the status of the person the vehicle belongs to or the vehicle's operator (head of diplomatic mission, diplomatic agent or consular officer).

When applying for registration of their own motor vehicles, diplomatic agents and members of the administrative and technical staff shall pay only the actual costs for registration plates, traffic license, vehicle registration sticker and the additional oval plate.

### **Replacement of a foreign driving license**

Replacement of a foreign driving license for a driving license of the Republic of Serbia is

governed by the Law on Safety of Road Transport. The Law stipulates that a foreign driving license entitles the members of the foreign missions in the Republic of Serbia to operate a vehicle for six months from the date of their entry in the Republic of Serbia to assume their assignments. In order to operate their motor vehicles after the six-month period, the staff of missions is obliged to apply to replace the driving license for a driving license of the Republic of Serbia.

The application shall contain the following documents:

- Valid foreign driving license;
- Serbian translation of the foreign driving license, certified by an authorized legal interpreter or by the stamp of the diplomatic mission;
- Passport;
- Diplomatic or service identity card;
- For administrative and technical staff, a medical report that is not older than six months, certifying that applicants are eligible to operate motor vehicles. For the diplomatic staff only a statement saying that the diplomatic agent does not have a condition that might impair his driving faculties, translated in Serbian and affixed with the mission stamp;
- Valid document stating what vehicles the applicant may operate (in the case that the foreign driving license does not state the category or type of vehicles or if it expired);
- Receipts for:
  - a) Fees for the making of the driving license
  - b) Fees for the issuance of the driving license and
  - c) National administrative taxes (members of diplomatic staff are exempted from national administrative taxes).

Enclosed with the application may be one printed photograph, size 50mmx50mm that shows the true likeness of the applicant's face, which has not been retouched nor made in photo booths. The photograph should not be older than six months.

A foreign driving license shall not be replaced if it is provisional, probationary or other or if the license to be replaced is invalid, annulled, withdrawn or cancelled by the issuing authority.

Foreign driving licenses of the staff of diplomatic missions and consular posts, other foreign missions and offices of international governmental organizations in the Republic of Serbia, except for honorary consuls, on the basis of which the relevant authority has issued the driving license shall be submitted to the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia – Belgrade City Police Administration, Vehicle Registration and Licensing Section, 12a, Ljermontova Street.

### **Return of traffic license and registration plates**

For every disposed vehicle (exported, sold in the Republic of Serbia or other), foreign missions shall return the traffic license and registration plates to the relevant Police Authority – Vehicle Registration and Licensing Section.

### **Compulsory insurance**

Acquisition of third-party insurance is compulsory and forms a part of the motor vehicle registration process. It is strongly recommended that all motor vehicles purchased under privilege carry comprehensive insurance cover (theft, damage, etc.) to the market value of the vehicle in the Republic of Serbia.

## **Traffic violations**

Pursuant to Article 41 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations or other international treaties and bilateral agreements, it is the duty of the members of the staff of diplomatic missions, consular posts or offices of international governmental organizations to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving State, the rules on safety of all participants in traffic included.

## **Traffic accidents**

In the case of an involvement in a traffic accident resulting in bodily injuries, death or heavy damage, persons driving vehicles with registration plates marked with "A" prefix, must stop the vehicle, call the police and wait at the scene of the accident for the arrival of police officers to conduct a traffic accident investigation.

## **Allocation of parking space for the mission official vehicles**

Under the provisions of the Law on General Administrative Procedure, Law on Safety of Road Transport and Decision on Public Parking Space in Belgrade, the Belgrade City Secretariat for Traffic, at the request of diplomatic mission, consular post or office of international governmental organisation, may allocate, where feasible, parking spaces, marked by horizontal and vertical signalization, for a certain number of official vehicles necessary for the functioning of the mission.

Foreign mission shall make applications to the Diplomatic Protocol by a Verbal Note signed by the head of mission. Applications by diplomatic missions and consular posts shall be considered on condition of reciprocity, while applications by offices of IGO on condition of provisions of a bilateral agreement on the office status.

The parking space shall be allocated outside the building housing the diplomatic mission, or, if not feasible, in another appropriate place.

On its decision, Belgrade City Secretariat for Traffic shall issue a certificate which shall be submitted to the relevant mission through the Diplomatic Protocol.

Allocated parking spaces may be used only for the parking of the vehicles of the mission. Vehicles parked on the allocated parking space must have an appropriate sticker placed on a visible spot. Stickers are available at the premises of "Parking servis Beograd" Company, at 22, Starine Novaka Street, Belgrade.

Following the initial decision on the allocation of parking spaces, foreign mission shall apply, at the end of each calendar year, for the renewal of the reservation of parking spaces under the same procedure.

The Decision on public parking lots in Belgrade prohibits that fences or similar obstacles be placed on allocated parking spaces.

According to the Law on Safety of Road Transport, the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia is authorized to conduct traffic control and act accordingly issuing official orders that vehicles parked on unauthorized places (public areas, sidewalks, green areas and other traffic areas) be towed away (including vehicles that don't have the appropriate parking stickers), which implies traffic violation. Such orders may also be issued by an officer of municipal public

services inspection.

### **Towing of illegally parked vehicles**

With a view to maintaining municipal public order, Public Utility Company "Parking servis Beograd" is charged with implementing decisions by the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia or municipal inspection officer and tow out vehicles illegally parked on public surfaces, in particular on sidewalks, public green surfaces or other traffic communications.

The "Parking servis Beograd" shall tow away illegally parked vehicles to an appropriate towing impound yard and the impound fee shall be paid by the owner of the illegally parked vehicle.

## **ACQUISITION, POSSESSION AND CARRYING OF FIREARMS**

Acquisition, possession and carrying of firearms, including hunting firearms and firearms for personal protection, is regulated by the provisions of the Law on Firearms and Ammunition and other by-laws: Regulation specifying conditions and modalities to store and keep firearms and ammunition, Regulation specifying the conditions to carry out and the modalities to conduct the program for handling firearms, as well as Regulation on application forms, approval forms, firearms licenses and other documents and registers envisaged by the Law on Firearms and Ammunition.

Acquisition, possession and carrying of firearms shall be approved on the condition of reciprocity. The reciprocity must be clearly confirmed in each verbal note requesting acquisition, possession or carrying of firearms and ammunition.

### **Acquisition of firearms**

Acquisition of firearms may be done either by importing or buying them on the local market with a licensed firearms dealer.

One may import to the Republic of Serbia only firearms that can be purchased, possessed and carried in the Republic of Serbia according to the Law on Firearms and Ammunition.

Foreign missions shall submit their firearms-related applications (import or acquisition locally with a licensed firearms dealer) in the form of a verbal note to the Diplomatic Protocol. The Note should contain:

1. Data on the owner:
  - First and last name
  - Diplomatic title or function in the diplomatic mission or consular post
  - Date, place and country of birth
  - Number of diplomatic passport and its expiration date
  - Number of diplomatic identity card and its expiration date
2. Data on the firearm: make, brand, caliber and serial number.
3. Certificate on reciprocity with the sending State as regards the import, or purchase, possession and carrying of firearms.

Enclosed with the note should be a duly completed *Application Form for the acquisition, possession and carrying of firearms*, signed by the head of the mission and with the official mission or post stamp affixed.

In addition to the completed application form for acquisition of firearms, the applicant is required also to submit a permit for firearms handling. Should the law of the applicant's country lay down that the owner of the firearm is to hold such permit, the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia shall accept its original with an enclosed translation into Serbian language, certified by the mission. In the case that the applicant does not hold such a permit, the member of the mission shall contact one of the licensed centers in the Republic of Serbia that will provide appropriate training for firearms handling, upon the completion of which the permit will be issued.

Foreign defense attaches and security officers in diplomatic missions and consular posts are exempted from firearms training.

The application for the acquisition of ammunition shall be submitted to the Diplomatic Protocol on the same application form by marking the appropriate section. The purchase of ammunition shall be granted only to the members of the diplomatic staff that possess a registered firearm and the quantity shall not exceed 60 (sixty) rounds per year for a firearm with rifled barrels.

### **Possession of firearms**

Diplomatic missions shall submit to the Diplomatic Protocol a verbal note requesting the issuance of a firearms license. Enclosed with the note should be a duly completed *Application Form for the acquisition, possession and carrying of firearms*, signed by the head of the diplomatic mission and affixed with the mission stamp.

### **Carrying of firearms**

To carry a firearm outside the premises of a diplomatic mission or consular post, a license to carry firearms for personal safety is required.

A license to carry firearms is issued in exceptional cases provided there exist justified reasons for the protection of the applicant's personal safety.

The application for the issuance of a license to carry firearms shall be submitted to the Diplomatic Protocol with a verbal note. Enclosed with the note shall be the duly completed application form for the possession of firearms, a photocopy of the diplomatic passport, a photocopy of the diplomatic identity card and a photocopy of the firearms license.

### **Loss of the firearms license or license to carry firearms**

In the case the firearms license or the license to carry firearms is lost, diplomatic missions shall be obliged to inform thereof the nearest police authority and the Diplomatic Protocol with a verbal note. Enclosed with the note shall be a certificate stating that the firearms license or license to carry firearms has been declared null and void in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia.

### **Return of the firearms license or license to carry firearms**

It is the duty of missions to have the firearms licenses or licenses to carry firearms returned to the Diplomatic Protocol immediately upon the termination of appointment of the member of the mission.

## **Prohibitions and limitations**

Law on Firearms and Ammunition prohibits sale, acquisition, possession, carrying, repair and alteration of firearms with devices such as silencers, telescopic sights with light beam or with devices for electronic light enhancement or infrared device, fragmentation and gas weaponry, cold weapons and devices not manufactured or adapted to be firearms.

In addition to firearms listed, private persons are also prohibited to acquire, possess and carry semi-automatic and combination long barreled firearms with the exception of hunting firearms, as well as to acquire, possess and carry automatic long-barreled firearms, automatic and combination short-barreled firearms and special firearms, unless otherwise prescribed by the Law.

Carrying of firearms for personal safety without a license is prohibited.

Carrying of hunting, sports and special firearms outside hunting grounds, firing ranges or other specific facilities is prohibited.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Law on electronic communications stipulates that diplomatic missions or consular posts may use radio-frequencies, on condition of reciprocity, provided an individual permit issued upon the request of the mission by the Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communication and Postal Services (RATEL) of the Republic of Serbia.

Foreign missions shall send their applications for the issuance of a license to use radio-frequencies to the Diplomatic Protocol with a verbal note. Enclosed with the note shall be the Application Form for the issuance of individual licenses for the use of radio-frequencies by diplomatic missions or consular posts. The Application Form may be downloaded at the website of the Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communication and Postal Services at [www.ratel.rs](http://www.ratel.rs). The Application Form must be signed by the head of the mission and affixed with the official mission stamp.

The request for the issuance of a radio station license shall specify the data on the radio station, such as location and purpose, type of the radio station, technical data on radio stations, antenna specifications, etc.

The fees and terms of radio-frequency use from this Article shall be determined on the principle of reciprocity, following the opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in accordance with international agreements.

The right to use radio-frequencies granted to a diplomatic mission or consular post cannot be ceded, leased or in any other way transferred to a third person.

The diplomatic mission or consular post shall get the license to use radio-frequencies prior to importing into or acquiring radio stations in the Republic of Serbia and to show the license to the appropriate border authorities when crossing the state border, i.e. to the provider of acquired items. The same regime applies to satellite telephone stations.

## SECURITY CONTROL OF AIR TRAVELLERS

In keeping with international treaties and general practice, the relevant authorities of the Republic of Serbia shall conduct a control of all passengers including diplomatic agents and their personal luggage. *The only exception is the diplomatic bag bearing a visible external labeling and seal.*

Passengers and luggage are subject to control by electronic devices or by simple search before boarding the aircraft.

Flight companies are obliged to carry out the luggage check including the luggage of diplomatic agents. These security checks do not breach provisions of international treaties.

Like every other person, the diplomatic agent may refuse to have his luggage checked by security personnel. In that case, the flight company has the right to refuse to transport this person.

### **Diplomatic couriers and diplomatic bags**

According to the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the diplomatic bag, as a consignment of goods of special significance, is accorded in the Republic of Serbia special treatment in handling and storing it. According to the relevant laws and instructions, all consignments, including the diplomatic bag, are to be recorded and declared to the Customs on a special form prescribed for these purposes.

The accompanied or unaccompanied diplomatic bag shall bear visible external labeling (seal or leaden seal, the sender's name and the consignee's address), and the diplomatic courier is to be provided with an official document, courier's letter, indicating his status and the number of packages constituting the diplomatic bag.

On arrival, a diplomatic courier is being awaited in the customs control area, and on departure he is escorted until the customs control desk.

If the diplomatic bag is taken possession of from the safe boxes of a commercial aircraft or if it is dispatched in them, or taken possession of from the diplomatic courier or the captain of a commercial aircraft unable to leave the aircraft, or if the diplomatic bag is delivered to the captain, authorized representatives of the diplomatic mission, escorted by a relevant airport service officer, may be allowed access to the aircraft.

In the cases when the accompanied or unaccompanied diplomatic bag is bulky or of excessive weight, the diplomatic mission is to contact directly the officer of the "Nikola Tesla" Airport Services Department, in order to see what kind of assistance will be required as well as the number of airport workers necessary to handle the bag. The diplomatic missions are expected to pay for these services and to sign appropriate invoices.

If the diplomatic bag is suspected of containing items that cannot be described as "items necessary to conduct all official business by the Mission", as required by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Customs may ask that it be sent back or opened for inspection.

The non-diplomatic items shall be subject to customs formalities right there on the spot or in the customs warehouse, as appropriate. A faster procedure will be applied to exempt them from duties and charges on the basis of the list of pertaining items and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Application Form (franchise for the import or export of these items).

### **Access to airport restricted areas and border control areas**

In accordance with international conventions on international civil aviation and laws of the Republic of Serbia, access to airport restricted areas and border control areas may be approved only by the Ministry of Interior. The access regime at the border crossing "Surčin-Beograd" at "Nikola Tesla" Airport is regulated by full or temporary passes in accordance with the provisions of the Law on the Protection of the State Border.

Passes are granted on the condition of reciprocity in keeping with the size of the mission and the official needs of the mission. A diplomatic mission is entitled to a limited number of passes granted to the mission international staff to access the restricted airport areas in order to conduct official duties (meeting and seeing off state delegations, diplomatic couriers, and diplomatic bags).

Ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary accredited to the Republic of Serbia and their spouses may enter the restricted airport area simply by showing their ID cards.

Other staff members of a diplomatic mission, holders of diplomatic or service ID cards issued by the Diplomatic Protocol, may enter the restricted areas only with a full or temporary (daily) pass.

Members of the mission's local staff who are citizens of the Republic of Serbia or foreigners with permanent residence in the Republic of Serbia, are not entitled to be granted a pass to restricted airport areas.

Diplomatic missions or consular posts shall apply to the Diplomatic Protocol for the issuance of full and temporary pass with a verbal note. Enclosed with the note should be submitted the following documents:

- two application forms, dully filled-out, signed by the applicant, and
- photocopy of diplomatic/service ID card.

### **Loss of the pass**

In the case the full pass is lost or stolen, the diplomatic mission must immediately report the loss to the competent border authorities at the airport and to the Diplomatic Protocol with a Verbal Note. Enclosed with the note shall be a certificate stating that the lost pass has been declared null and void in the "Official Gazette".

### **Return of the pass**

The diplomatic mission must return the full pass to the Diplomatic Protocol immediately upon the termination of its member tour of duty.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH STATE AUTHORITIES**

In accordance with relevant provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Law on Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and with respect for the usual diplomatic practice, foreign diplomatic missions are obliged to conduct their formal communication (verbal

notes, letters, etc.) relating to the president and ministers of the Government of the Republic of Serbia through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Should a diplomatic mission need to communicate with other ministries or bodies of the Government of the Republic of Serbia on a working or expert level (correspondence, meetings, visits by representatives of foreign institutions, etc.), it is expected of them to do it exclusively through the cabinet of the minister, who is by the Law on Government in charge of the related portfolio.

## **ORGANIZING ELECTIONS OR REFERENDUMS IN THE PREMISES OF THE MISSION**

In accordance with the usual diplomatic practice, in case a diplomatic mission intends to organize voting of its nationals at elections or referendums, mission is expected to submit, timely and not later than one month prior to the voting, a verbal note to the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requesting approval for the holding of elections and referendums in the territory of the Republic of Serbia. This verbal note should contain the following:

1. Date of the holding of election/referendum in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, including the date of a potential second tour of voting;
2. Address of polling station(s). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs underlines that voting may be held only in registered premises of diplomatic missions and consular posts, including consular posts headed by honorary consuls;
3. Opening and closing time of each polling station;
4. Estimated number of voters expected at each polling station;
5. Particulars on the contact person from a diplomatic mission or consular post (name and surname, title, mobile phone number) in charge of preparing and carrying out the voting;
6. Information on potential security challenges for unimpeded holding of elections;
7. Depending on the assessment by diplomatic mission, a request that relevant authorities of the Republic of Serbia provide additional measures necessary to maintain public order in front of the polling station.

The MFA will not take into consideration requests by diplomatic missions to engage national, regional and local authorities of the Republic of Serbia to register and notify the voters, organize transportation to the polling station and prepare voting material.

The MFA will reserve the right to grant its approval to diplomatic missions under certain conditions, foremost in case of untimely request for the holding of election/referendum, as well as in case relevant authorities of the Republic of Serbia assess that there are exist serious threats to public order on the day elections are to be held.

## **DIPLOMATIC AND PRECEDENCE LIST**

An up-to-date version of the Diplomatic and Precedence List is available at the official web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at [www.mfa.rs](http://www.mfa.rs).

## **RECEIPT AND DISPATCH OF MAIL**

Foreign missions may hand over their mail intended for the Diplomatic Protocol and other departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Mail Dispatch Desk of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and collect it in their respective boxes at the Ministry, at 24, Kneza Miloša Street, every working day from 8.00-15.00.

In the case missions need to deliver mail marked as "very urgent" out of working hours or during weekends or public holidays, they may do so through the Out-of-Hours Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 24, Kneza Miloša Street. Prior to coming to the Ministry, the mission is requested to inform of such deliveries by phone to 011/3616-333.

## **PUBLIC AND OTHER HOLIDAYS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA**

Public and other holidays in the Republic of Serbia are regulated by the provisions of the Law on Amendments of the Law on Public and Other Holidays in the Republic of Serbia.

### **Public holidays:**

Sretenje - Statehood Day, 15 & 16 February  
 New Year's Day, 1& 2 January  
 Labour Day, 1& 2 May  
 Armistice Day, 11 November

### **Religious holidays:**

Christmas Day, 7 January  
 Easter, Good Friday and Easter Monday

### **Public holidays – observance:**

Saint Sava Day, 27 January  
 Holocaust Remembrance Day, 22 April  
 Victory Day – 9 May  
 Vidovdan- Kosovo Battle Remembrance Day, 28 June  
 National World War II Victims Remembrance Day, 21 October

The Law stipulates that, if a public holiday falls on Sunday, the holiday is postponed for the next working day.

The Law stipulates that employed citizens of the Republic of Serbia are entitled not to work on the following religious holidays:

1. Christian Orthodox – first day of Slava - patron saint of the family;
2. Catholics and members of other Christian religious communities – first day of Christmas and Easter holidays-Good Friday and Easter Monday;
3. Members of Muslim community – first day of the Ramadan Bayram and first day of the Kurban Bayram;
4. Members of the Jewish community – first day of Yom Kippur.