

**Treaty concerning the Archipelago of Spitsbergen, and Protocol
(Paris, 9 February 1920)**

TREATY CONCERNING THE ARCHIPELAGO OF SPITSBERGEN

The President of the United States of America; His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India; His Majesty the King of Denmark; the President of the French Republic; His Majesty the King of Italy; His Majesty the Emperor of Japan; His Majesty the King of Norway; Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands; His Majesty the King of Sweden,

DESIROUS, while recognising the sovereignty of Norway over the Archipelago of Spitsbergen, including Bear Island, of seeing these territories provided with an equitable regime, in order to assure their development and peaceful utilisation,

HAVE APPOINTED as their respective Plenipotentiaries with a view to concluding a Treaty to this effect:

[Names of plenipotentiaries not reproduced here.]

Who, having communicated their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows:

Article 1

The High Contracting Parties undertake to recognise, subject to the stipulations of the present Treaty, the full and absolute sovereignty of Norway over the Archipelago of Spitsbergen, comprising, with Bear Island or Beeren-Eiland, all the islands situated between 10deg. and 35deg. longitude East of Greenwich and between 74deg. and 81deg. latitude North, especially West Spitsbergen, North-East Land, Barents Island, Edge Island, Wiche Islands, Hope Island or Hopen-Eiland, and Prince Charles Foreland, together with all islands great or small and rocks appertaining thereto. (See annexed map.)

Article 2

Ships and nationals of all the High Contracting Parties shall enjoy equally the rights of fishing and hunting in the territories specified in Article 1 and in their territorial waters.

Norway shall be free to maintain, take or decree suitable measures to ensure the preservation and, if necessary, the re-constitution of the fauna and flora of the said regions, and their territorial waters; it being clearly understood that these measures shall always be applicable equally to the nationals of all the High Contracting Parties without any exemption, privilege or favour whatsoever, direct or indirect to the advantage of any one of them.

Occupiers of land whose rights have been recognised in accordance with the terms of Articles 6 and 7 will enjoy the exclusive right of hunting on their own land: (1) in the neighbourhood of their habitations, houses, stores, factories and installations, constructed for the purpose of developing their property, under conditions laid down by the local police regulations; (2) within a radius of 10 kilometres round the headquarters of their place of business or works; and in both cases, subject always to the observance of regulations made by the Norwegian Government in accordance with the conditions laid down in the present Article.

Article 3

The nationals of all the High Contracting Parties shall have equal liberty of access and entry for any reason or object whatever to the waters, fjords and ports of the territories specified in Article 1; subject to the observance of local laws and regulations, they may carry on there without impediment all maritime, industrial, mining and commercial operations on a footing of absolute equality.

They shall be admitted under the same conditions of equality to the exercise and practice of all maritime, industrial, mining or commercial enterprises both on land and in the territorial waters, and no monopoly shall be established on any account or for any enterprise whatever.

Notwithstanding any rules relating to coasting trade which may be in force in Norway, ships of the High Contracting Parties going to or coming from the territories specified in Article 1 shall have the right to put into Norwegian ports on their outward or homeward voyage for the purpose of taking on board or disembarking passengers or cargo going to or coming from the said territories, or for any other purpose.

It is agreed that in every respect and especially with regard to exports, imports and transit traffic, the nationals of all the High Contracting Parties, their ships and goods shall not be subject to any charges or restrictions whatever which are not borne by the nationals, ships or goods which enjoy in Norway the treatment of the most favoured nation; Norwegian nationals, ships or goods being for this purpose assimilated to those of the other High Contracting Parties, and not treated more favourably in any respect.

No charge or restriction shall be imposed on the exportation of any goods to the territories of any of the Contracting Powers other or more onerous than on the exportation of similar goods to the territory of any other Contracting Power (including Norway) or to any other destination.

Article 4

All public wireless telegraphy stations established or to be established by or with the authorisation of, the Norwegian Government within the territories referred to in Article 1 shall always be open on a footing of absolute equality to communications from ships of all flags and from nationals of the High Contracting Parties, under the conditions laid

down in the Wireless Telegraphy Convention of 5 July 1912, or in the subsequent International Convention which may be concluded to replace it.

Subject to international obligations arising out of a state of war, owners of landed property shall always be at liberty to establish and use for their own purposes wireless telegraphy installations, which shall be free to communicate on private business with fixed or moving wireless stations, including those on board ships and aircraft.

Article 5

The High Contracting Parties recognise the utility of establishing an international meteorological station in the territories specified in Article 1, the organisation of which shall form the subject of a subsequent Convention.

Conventions shall also be concluded laying down the conditions under which scientific investigations may be conducted in the said territories.

Article 6

Subject to the provisions of the present Article, acquired rights of nationals of the High Contracting Parties shall be recognised.

Claims arising from taking possession or from occupation of land before the signature of the present Treaty shall be dealt with in accordance with the Annex hereto, which will have the same force and effect as the present Treaty.

Article 7

With regard to methods of acquisition, enjoyment and exercise of the right of ownership of property, including mineral rights, in the territories specified in Article 1, Norway undertakes to grant to all nationals of the High Contracting Parties treatment based on complete equality and in conformity with the stipulations of the present Treaty.

Expropriation may be resorted to only on grounds of public utility and on payment of proper compensation.

Article 8

Norway undertakes to provide for the territories specified in Article 1 mining regulations which, especially from the point of view of imposts, taxes or charges of any kind, and of general or particular labour conditions, shall exclude all privileges, monopolies or favours for the benefit of the State or of the nationals of any one of the High Contracting Parties, including Norway, and shall guarantee to the paid staff of all categories the remuneration and protection necessary for their physical, moral and intellectual welfare.

Taxes, dues and duties levied shall be devoted exclusively to the said territories and shall not exceed what is required for the object in view.

So far, particularly, as the exportation of minerals is concerned, the Norwegian Government shall have the right to levy an export duty which shall not exceed 1% of the maximum value of the minerals exported up to 100,000 tons, and beyond that quantity the duty will be proportionately diminished. The value shall be fixed at the end of the navigation season by calculating the average free on board price obtained.

Three months before the date fixed for their coming into force, the draft mining regulations shall be communicated by the Norwegian Government to the other Contracting Powers. If during this period one or more of the said Powers propose to modify these regulations before they are applied, such proposals shall be communicated by the Norwegian Government to the other contracting Powers in order that they may be submitted to examination and the decision of a Commission composed of one representative of each of the said Powers. This Commission shall meet at the invitation of the Norwegian Government and shall come to a decision within a period of three months from the date of its first meeting. Its decisions shall be taken by a majority.

Article 9

Subject to the rights and duties resulting from the admission of Norway to the League of Nations, Norway undertakes not to create nor to allow the establishment of any naval base in the territories specified in Article 1 and not to construct any fortification in the said territories, which may never be used for warlike purposes.

Article 10

Until the recognition by the High Contracting Parties of a Russian Government shall permit Russia to adhere to the present Treaty, Russian nationals and companies shall enjoy the same rights as nationals of the High Contracting Parties.

Claims in the territories specified in Article 1 which they may have to put forward shall be presented under the conditions laid down in the present Treaty (Article 6 and Annex) through the intermediary of the Danish Government, who declare their willingness to lend their good offices for this purpose.

The present Treaty, of which the French and English texts are both authentic, shall be ratified.

Ratifications shall be deposited at Paris as soon as possible.[\[1\]](#)

Powers of which the seat of the Government is outside Europe may confine their action to informing the Government of the French Republic, through their diplomatic

representative at Paris, that their ratification has been given, and in this case they shall transmit the instrument as soon as possible.

The present Treaty will come into force, in so far as the stipulations of Article 8 are concerned, from the date of its ratifications by all the signatory Powers; and in all other respects on the same date as the mining regulations provided for in that Article.[\[2\]](#)

Third Powers will be invited by the Government of the French Republic to adhere to the present Treaty duly ratified. This adhesion shall be effected by a communication addressed to the French Government, which will undertake to notify the other Contracting Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the abovenamed Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty.

DONE at Paris, the ninth day of February, 1920, in duplicate, one copy to be transmitted to the Government of His Majesty the King of Norway, and one deposited in the archives of the French Republic; authenticated copies will be transmitted to the other Signatory Powers.

[Signatures not reproduced here.]

ANNEX

1.

(1) Within three months from the coming into force of the present Treaty, notification of all claims to land which had been made to any Government before the signature of the present Treaty must be sent by the Government of the claimant to a Commissioner charged to examine such claims. The Commissioner will be a judge or jurisconsult of Danish nationality possessing the necessary qualifications for the task, and shall be nominated by the Danish Government.

(2) The notification must include a precise delimitation of the land claimed and be accompanied by a map on a scale of not less than 1:1,000,000 on which the land claimed is clearly marked.

(3) The notification must be accompanied by the deposit of a sum of one penny for each acre (40 ares) of land claimed, to defray the expenses of the examination of the claims.

(4) The Commissioner will be entitled to require from the claimants any further documents or information which he may consider necessary.

(5) The Commissioner will examine the claims so notified. For this purpose he will be entitled to avail himself of such expert assistance as he may consider necessary, and in case of need to cause investigations to be carried out on the spot.

(6) The remuneration of the Commissioner will be fixed by agreement between the Danish Government and the other Governments concerned. The Commissioner will fix the remuneration of such assistants as he considers it necessary to employ.

(7) The Commissioner, after examining the claims, will prepare a report showing precisely the claims which he is of opinion should be recognised at once and those which, either because they are disputed or for any other reason, he is of opinion should be submitted to arbitration as hereinafter provided. Copies of this report will be forwarded by the Commissioner to the Governments concerned.

(8) If the amount of the sums deposited in accordance with clause (3) is insufficient to cover the expenses of the examination of the claims, the Commissioner will, in every case where he is of opinion that a claim should be recognised, at once state what further sum the claimant should be required to pay. This sum will be based on the amount of the land to which the claimant's title is recognised.

If the sums deposited in accordance with clause (3) exceed the expenses of the examination the balance will be devoted to the cost of arbitration hereinafter provided for.

(9) Within three months from the date of the report referred to in clause (7) of this paragraph, the Norwegian Government shall take the necessary steps to confer upon claimants whose claims have been recognised by the Commissioner a valid title securing to them the exclusive property in the land in question, in accordance with the laws and regulations in force or to be enforced in the territories specified in Article 1 of the present Treaty, and subject to the mining regulations referred to in Article 8 of the present Treaty.

In the event, however, of a further payment being required in accordance with clause (8) of this paragraph, a provisional title only will be delivered, which title will become definitive on payment by the claimant, within such reasonable period as the Norwegian Government may fix, of the further sum required of him.

2.

Claims which for any reason the Commissioner referred to in clause (1) of the preceding paragraph has not recognised as valid will be settled in accordance with the following provisions:

(1) Within three months from the date of the report referred to in clause (7) of the preceding paragraph, each of the Governments whose nationals have been found to possess claims which have not been recognised will appoint an arbitrator.

The Commissioner will be the President of the Tribunal so constituted. In cases of equal division of opinion, he shall have the deciding vote. He will nominate a Secretary to receive the documents referred to in clause (2) of this paragraph and to make the necessary arrangements for the meeting of the Tribunal.

(2) Within one month from the appointment of the Secretary referred to in clause (1) the claimants concerned will send to him through the intermediary of their respective Governments statements indicating precisely their claims and accompanied by such documents and arguments as they may wish to submit in support thereof.

(3) Within two months from the appointment of the Secretary referred to in clause (1) the Tribunal shall meet at Copenhagen for the purpose of dealing with the claims which have been submitted to it.

(4) The language of the Tribunal shall be English. Documents or arguments may be submitted to it by the interested parties in their own language, but in that case must be accompanied by an English translation.

(5) The claimants shall be entitled, if they so desire, to be heard by the Tribunal either in person or by counsel, and the Tribunal shall be entitled to call upon the claimants to present such additional explanations, documents or arguments as it may think necessary.

(6) Before the hearing of any case the Tribunal shall require from the parties a deposit or security for such sum as it may think necessary to cover the share of each party in the expenses of the Tribunal. In fixing the amount of such sum the Tribunal shall base itself principally on the extent of the land claimed. The Tribunal shall also have power to demand a further deposit from the parties in cases where special expense is involved.

(7) The honorarium of the arbitrators shall be calculated per month, and fixed by the Governments concerned. The salary of the Secretary and any other persons employed by the Tribunal shall be fixed by the President.

(8) Subject to the provisions of this Annex the Tribunal shall have full power to regulate its own procedure.

(9) In dealing with the claims the Tribunal shall take into consideration:

(a) any applicable rules of international law;

(b) the general principles of justice and equity;

(c) the following circumstances:

(i) the date on which the land claimed was first occupied by the claimant or his predecessors in title;

(ii) the date on which the claim was notified to the Government of the claimant;

(iii) the extent to which the claimant or his predecessors in title have developed and exploited the land claimed. In this connection the Tribunal shall take into account the

extent to which the claimants may have been prevented from developing their undertakings by conditions or restrictions resulting from the war of 1914-1919.

(10) All the expenses of the Tribunal shall be divided among the claimants in such proportion as the Tribunal shall decide. If the amount of the sums paid in accordance with clause (6) is larger than the expenses of the Tribunal, the balance shall be returned to the parties whose claims have been recognised in such proportion as the Tribunal shall think fit.

(11) The decisions of the Tribunal shall be communicated by it to the Governments concerned, including in every case the Norwegian Government.

The Norwegian Government shall within three months from the receipt of each decision take the necessary steps to confer upon the claimants whose claims have been recognised by the Tribunal a valid title to the land in question, in accordance with the laws and regulations in force or to be enforced in the territories specified in Article 1, and subject to the mining regulations referred to in Article 8 of the present Treaty. Nevertheless, the titles so conferred will only become definitive on the payment by the claimant concerned, within such reasonable period as the Norwegian Government may fix, of his share of the expenses of the Tribunal.

3.

Any claims which are not notified to the Commissioner in accordance with clause (1) of paragraph 1, or which not having been recognised by him are not submitted to the Tribunal in accordance with paragraph 2, will be finally extinguished.

MAP OF SPITSBERG
[Not reproduced here - see UKTS 1924 No. 18 (Cmd. 2092).]
PROTOCOL EXTENDING THE PERIOD OF SIGNATURE OF THE TREATY
RELATIVE TO SPITSBERGEN

(Translation)

The plenipotentiaries who, in consequence of their absence from Paris for the time being, have been unable to affix their signature to the Treaty concerning Spitsbergen, signed this day, will be permitted to do so until 8 April 1920.

DONE at Paris, 9 February 1920.