POSTAL CONVENTION

Signed at Washington December 21, 1859
Ratified by Belgium February 17, 1860
Ratified by the President of the United States August 14, 1860
Ratifications exchanged at Washington October 19, 1860
Proclaimed by the President of the United States October 20, 1860
Entered into force November 19, 1860
Replaced by convention of August 21, 1867 [1]

12 Stat. 1117; Treaty Series 21

POSTAL CONVENTION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND BELGIUM

Articles agreed upon between the General Post Office of the United States of America, by Joseph Holt, Postmaster General, in virtue of his constitutional powers, and the General Post Office of Belgium, by his Excellency M. Blondeel Van Cuelebroeck, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of his Majesty the King of the Belgians, and invested with special powers to that effect, for the reciprocal receipt and delivery of letters and packets in closed mails to be conveyed through England, under the fifteenth article of the postal treaty between Belgium and Great Britain of the 14–28th August, 1857, as well as by any direct line of steamships which may be established between the United States and Belgium. In pursuance of this object, the following details are hereby agreed upon, viz:

ARTICLE I. There shall be a periodical and regular exchange of correspondence between Belgium and the United States of America at the times and by the means of communication and transport which shall be hereafter indicated, as well for letters, samples of merchandise, newspapers and printed matter, originating in the two countries, as for articles of the same nature originating in or intended for countries which shall be enabled to make use of the postal service organized by the present convention.

When the senders shall not have indicated any other route in the superscription, correspondence of every kind, either addressed from Belgium to the United States and their Territories, or from the United States and their Territories to Belgium, shall be invariably comprised in the closed mails which

[1] 16 Stat. 923. The convention of Aug. 21, 1867, was terminated Feb. 23, 1938, pursuant to notice given by Belgium Feb. 23, 1937.

the Belgian and United States Post Offices shall exchange in conformity to the second article of the present convention.

The two above-mentioned offices reserve to themselves, nevertheless, the right to send and receive by such other route as they may think fit, correspondence originating in or destined for countries to which they respectively serve as intermediate points.

ARTICLE II. Until other arrangements shall be made, the correspondence to be exchanged between the Post Offices of the United States and Belgium shall be delivered by each party in closed mails at the proper Post Offices in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, to be transported through Great Britain, in conformity with the convention of August 14–28th, 1857, concluded between the Post Offices of Belgium and of Great Britain.

The Post Office of Belgium shall pay the expenses resulting from the transportation in transit of the said closed mails over the British territory, and across the British channel. The United States Post Office, on its side, shall pay the expenses resulting from the transportation of the said mails across the Atlantic ocean by the United States packets or by those of Great Britain.

The Belgian Post Office engages itself, nevertheless, notwithstanding this last clause, and until a contrary decision is taken by common agreement between that office and that of the United States, to pay the expenses resulting from the transportation across the Atlantic ocean of articles of printed matter, other than newspaper and periodical works, for such of said articles of printed matter as shall be contained in the mails transported by the British packets.

ARTICLE III. The exchange of mails despatched from the United States for Belgium, and, *vice versa,* by way of England, shall take place through the following post offices, to wit:

1. On the part of the United States through the post offices of New York and Boston.
2. On the part of Belgium through the local office Ostend, travelling office Ostend, and Antwerp.

The exchange offices above designated shall reciprocally make a despatch at least once a week, in coincidence as far as possible with the regular sailing of the Anglo-American steamers, until arrangements shall be made to establish a more frequent communication, or a direct communication, between Belgium and the United States, in conformity with the provisions of Articles XXIII., XXIV., XXV., and XXVI. of this convention.

Correspondence sent from one of the two countries to the other via England shall be directed conformably to the table, letter G, attached to the present articles.[2]

[2] Forms and tables not printed.

ARTICLE IV. Independently of the exchange offices mentioned in the preceding article, others may, by mutual agreement, be established upon other points of the coasts of the two countries for which direct communication may hereafter be deemed necessary.

ARTICLE V. Persons who may be desirous of sending ordinary letters, either from Belgium to the United States, or from the United States to Belgium, shall have the option of leaving the entire postage to be paid by the person to whom they are addressed, or of prepaying the same to their destination. But no account shall be taken of any sum less than the whole combined rate, nor of any fractions of the whole rate.

ARTICLE VI. Each letter or packet weighing not over fifteen grammes, or half an ounce, shall be considered single.

If above fifteen, and not over thirty grammes, (one half ounce to one ounce,) it shall pay double the charge of a single letter.

If above thirty and not over sixty grammes, (one to two ounces,) it shall pay quadruple the charge on a single letter; and so on, adding two rates for every thirty grammes, or one ounce, or fraction of an ounce.

ARTICLE VII. Letters prepaid, or not prepaid, originating in Belgium, and addressed to the United States, and reciprocally, letters prepaid, or not prepaid, originating in the United States, and destined for Belgium, shall be stamped in both countries with the uniform charge of one franc forty centimes, or twenty-seven cents, per single letter. This charge shall be divided in the following manner:

United States postage	5 cents
Sea postage	15 "
British transit postage	4 "
Belgian postage	3 "
	27 cents

It is understood that the whole combined rate thus established shall be reduced in proportion to the reduction which may hereafter be made in either of the rates forming the whole rate, and that, if either rate is entirely dispensed with, it shall not go toward making up any part of the total amount. Any modification of the actual established rate of one franc forty centimes in Belgium, or twenty-seven cents in the United States, must be made by mutual agreement of the two contracting parties.

ARTICLE VIII. Samples of merchandise shall pay letter postage.

ARTICLE IX. The postage for which the United States and Belgian Post Offices shall reciprocally account to each other upon letters which shall be exchanged between them in closed mails, shall be established, letter by letter, according to the scale of progression determined by the preceding Article VI.

The Belgian office shall pay to the United States office, for each unpaid letter weighing fifteen grammes, (half an ounce,) or less, originating in the United States and destined for Belgium, as well as for each letter of like weight prepaid in Belgium and destined for the United States, the sum of

twenty cents, including fifteen cents for the expenses of transportation across the Atlantic ocean.

On its side, the United States office shall pay to the Belgian office for each unpaid letter weighing half an ounce or less, originating in Belgium and destined for the United States, as well as for each letter of like weight prepaid in the United States and destined for Belgium, the sum of seven cents, including four cents for the expenses of transportation over the British territory and across the British channel.

It is understood that the postage for which the two offices, American and Belgian, shall account to each other, shall always be the exact representation of what shall be really paid.

1. The United States and Belgian inland.
2. The sea postage.
3. The British transit postage and postage across the British channel.

ARTICLE X. Letters originating in countries beyond the United States, destined for Belgium, as well as letters originating in countries availing themselves of the Belgian route, other than in closed mails, and destined for the United States, shall be respectively stamped with the uniform charge stipulated in Article VII. of the present convention, and to which the amount of the foreign charges must be added.

Three months after the exchange of the ratifications of the present convention, the two Post Offices shall furnish to each other, reciprocally, lists of the foreign countries for which the prepayment of letters shall be obligatory, or optional, either to their destination or to a determinate point. But until such lists shall be furnished, neither of the two Post Departments shall despatch to the other letters originating in or destined for countries situated beyond their respective territories.

ARTICLE XI. It is understood that the letters mentioned in the preceding Article X. can be delivered on either side, only by the piece, upon the reimbursement by credit or payment of the allotted part of the international and foreign postage belonging to each office with which such letters are charged.

ARTICLE XII. The United States offices of exchange, in charging the postage due to the Post Office of Belgium, shall uniformly make use of weights having the American ounce for unit, with its division into half-ounces; and the Belgian offices of exchange, in charging the postage due to the United States, shall uniformly make use of weights having the decimal gramme for unit, (thirty grammes being considered equal to one ounce American.)

ARTICLE XIII. Newspapers, gazettes, periodical works, books stitched or bound, pamphlets, papers of music, catalogues, prospectuses, advertisements and notices of various kinds printed, engraved, lithographed or autographed, which shall be sent either from Belgium to the United States and

their Territories, or from the United States and their Territories to Belgium, must on each side be prepaid to their destination. Newspapers and articles of printed matter, which are not prepaid, cannot be forwarded.

ARTICLE XIV. The price of prepayment of newspapers, gazettes, and periodical works, shall be levied at the rate of twenty-five centimes in Belgium, or of five cents in the United States, for each package the weight of which shall not exceed ninety grammes (three ounces). Packages weighing more than ninety grammes shall pay an additional rate for each ninety grammes or fraction of ninety grammes. The price of prepayment of stitched or bound books, of pamphlets, of papers of music, of catalogues, of prospectuses, of advertisements and of notices of various kinds, printed, engraved, lithographed, or autographed, shall be levied at the rate of twenty-five centimes in Belgium, or of five cents in the United States, per thirty grammes, (one ounce,) or fraction of thirty grammes.

The proceeds of the above-mentioned rates shall be divided between the offices of the two countries, in the proportion of three-fifths, or three cents, to the profit of the Post Office of Belgium, including two cents for expenses of transit through England and across the British channel, and of two-fifths, or two cents, to the profit of the United States Office, including one cent for expenses of transportation across the Atlantic ocean.

Notwithstanding this latter clause, and until a contrary decision is taken by common agreement between the Post Offices of Belgium and of the United States, the division of the product of the postage on articles of printed matter other than newspapers and periodical works, shall take place in the proportions hereinafter indicated, for such of those articles as shall be contained in the mails transported by the British packets, viz:

A. Four-fifths, or four cents, to the profit of the Belgian Post Office, including three cents for expenses of transportation over the British territory, in the British channel, and across the Atlantic ocean.

B. One-fifth, or one cent, to the profit of the United States Post Office for the expenses of transportation over the territory of the United States.

Newspapers and printed matter of every sort sent agreeably to the above mentioned conditions shall be subject to the respective laws and regulations of each country. Those which shall contain characters of any kind traced by the hand shall be subject to the postage of an ordinary letter of the same weight. They shall be sent under a wrapper open at the two sides, and in such a manner that each newspaper, or article of printed matter, may always be separated from its wrapper.

ARTICLE XV. Each of the mails despatched between the exchange offices of the respective Post Offices shall be accompanied by a letter bill in which these offices shall state, with the classification established by the present convention, the number, the weight, or the postage of the articles which the despatch may contain; and the receiving exchange office shall return

by next post an acknowledgment of the receipt thereof. The letter bills and acknowledgments shall be according to the forms annexed marked A and B.

ARTICLE XVI. If there should be no letters or other mail matter to send at the usual period of making up said closed mails from either of the offices of exchange, a blank letter bill showing that fact shall nevertheless be sent to the corresponding office.

ARTICLE XVII. The letter bills and acknowledgments shall serve for vouchers in the quarterly settlement of the accounts; and in case of difference between these documents, the amount stated in the acknowledgment shall be received in preference to that stated in the letter bill.

ARTICLE XVIII. The accounts between the two departments shall be closed at the expiration of each quarter of the calendar year by quarterly statements and accounts prepared by the General Post Office in Washington, according to forms annexed, marked C and D; and having been examined, compared, and settled by the General Post Office in Belgium, the balance shall be paid without delay by that Department which shall be found indebted to the other. If the balance is in favor of Belgium, it shall be paid in Belgium; and if in favor of the United States, it shall be paid over by Belgium at Washington, or to the General Post Office at London to the credit of the United States, as the Postmaster General of the United States shall elect.

ARTICLE XIX. Letters which, from any cause whatever, cannot be delivered, shall be reciprocally returned at the close of each quarter, after the expiration of a proper period to effect their delivery to the person addressed, and for the same amount of postage originally charged by the sending office, which shall be allowed in discharge of the account of the office to which they were sent. These returns of postage are to be claimed in a bill made up agreeably to forms annexed, marked E and F, which is to accompany such dead letters.

Newspapers which are refused, or which become dead in the Post Offices of either country, are not to be returned.

ARTICLE XX. Letters misdirected or missent, or which may require the prepayment of postage, shall be reciprocally returned without delay through the respective offices of exchange, and credit taken in the letter bill for the same, at the weight and postage originally charged upon them. In respect to letters addressed to persons who have changed their residence, whatever may be their origin, they shall be respectively returned charged with the postage which was to have been paid by the person addressed, less the inland postage of the country from which sent.

ARTICLE XXI. The evidence of the prepayment of letters shall be in red ink, on the right hand upper corner of the face of the letter, and all letters, without distinction, shall bear the stamp of the mailing office on their face, and that of the receiving office on their back.

The evidence of prepayment shall be represented thus: Letters originating in the United States and paid to their destination in Belgium shall be stamped with the word "PAID."

Letters originating in Belgium and paid to their destination in the United States shall be stamped "P.D.," (paid to destination.)

Letters of every other origin, despatched from either country by virtue of the stipulations of Article X., and the prepayment of which is rendered obligatory to a certain point within either country, shall be stamped "P. F." (paid to the frontier.)

The manner in which letters, paid or unpaid, are to be sent or received shall be designated by the exchange offices, on each letter, by means of a stamp bearing the words "Am. Packet" or "Br. Packet," accordingly as they are transported by one or the other, in such manner as that the amount of credit to be allowed to the British Post Office for dead letters returned can be shown.

ARTICLE XXII. The exchange offices of the Post Office of Belgium shall state upon their post bills for the London office the number of single rates for letters, as well as of the weight of newspapers and articles of printed matter contained in each of the mails intended for the United States office; and they shall, in like manner, state, in the receipt bills addressed to the said London office, the number of single rates for letters, as well as the weight of newspapers and articles of printed matter, found in the mails from the United States office intended for Belgium.

ARTICLE XXIII. In the event of a direct line or lines of steamships between the United States and Belgium being established, there shall be a direct exchange of mails by such line of steamers between the respective exchange offices of Antwerp on the one side, and New York and Boston on the other side, of the international correspondence between the United States and Belgium, which shall be subject to the following postage charges, viz:

Postage on each letter or packet not exceeding half an ounce in weight, fifteen cents; above half an ounce and not over one ounce, thirty cents; over one ounce and not exceeding two ounces, sixty cents; and so on, thirty cents being added for each additional ounce or fraction of an ounce. Payment in advance shall be optional in either country. It shall not, however, be permitted to pay less than the whole rate, and no account shall be taken of the prepayment of any fraction of that rate.

The newspapers, as well as the articles of printed matter enumerated in Article XIII. of the present convention, may be in like manner sent by the said direct lines, on condition of prepayment to destination.

The price of prepayment of newspapers, gazettes, and periodical works shall be levied at the rate of fifteen centimes in Belgium, and of three cents in the United States, for each package the weight of which shall not exceed ninety grammes (three ounces). Packages weighing more than ninety

grammes shall pay an additional rate for each ninety grammes or fraction of ninety grammes.

The price of prepayment of stitched books, of bound books, pamphlets, papers of music, catalogues, prospectuses, advertisements, and notices of various kinds, printed, engraved, lithographed, or autographed, shall be levied at a rate of fifteen centimes in Belgium, and of three cents in the United States, per thirty grammes, (one ounce,) or fraction of thirty grammes.

The proceeds of the above-mentioned postages shall be divided in the proportion of two-thirds, or two cents, to the profit of the country which shall furnish the packets, and one-third, or one cent, to the profit of the other country.

ARTICLE XXIV. The postage for which the United States and Belgian Post Offices shall reciprocally account to each other upon letters which shall be exchanged by the said direct lines of steamers shall be established, letter by letter, according to the scale of progression established by the preceding article, as follows, viz:

The Belgian Office shall pay to the United States for each unpaid letter weighing half an ounce or less, originating in the United States and destined for Belgium, as well as for each letter of like weight prepaid in Belgium and destined for the United States, the sum of five cents (being the United States inland postage) when the Atlantic sea conveyance is performed by a Belgian mail steamer; and twelve cents (representing the maritime postage and the territorial postage of the United States) when said sea conveyance is performed by a United States mail steamer. On the other hand, the United States shall pay to the Belgian Office for each unpaid letter weighing half an ounce or less, originating in Belgium, and destined for the United States, as well as for each letter of like weight prepaid in the United States and destined for Belgium, the sum of three cents (being the Belgian inland postage) when the Atlantic sea conveyance is performed by a United States mail steamer; and the sum of ten cents (representing the maritime postage and the Belgium territorial postage) when the said sea conveyance is performed by a Belgian mail steamer.

Letter bills and acknowledgments of receipt for mails exchanged by means of direct steamers, shall be according to the forms annexed, marked A and B.

ARTICLE XXV. On all letters originating and posted in other countries beyond the United States and mailed to and deliverable in Belgium, or originating and posted in countries beyond Belgium and mailed to and deliverable in the United States or its Territories, the foreign postage (other than that of Belgium and other than that of the United States) is to be added to the postage stated in Article XXIII. And the two Post Office Departments are mutually to furnish each other with lists stating the foreign countries to which the foreign postage, and the amount thereof must be

absolutely prepaid, or must be left unpaid, either to their destination or to a determined point. And until such lists are duly furnished, neither country is to mail to the other any letter from foreign countries beyond it, or for foreign countries beyond the country to which the mail is sent.

ARTICLE XXVI. The provisions established by Articles XII., XV., XVI., XVII., XVIII., XIX., XX., and XXI., as well as the last paragraph of Article XIV., so far as they are applicable, shall be made to apply to the correspondence which may be exchanged by any direct line of steamers running between the United States and Belgium.

ARTICLE XXVII. The Post Office Departments of Belgium and of the United States shall have full authority to introduce and put in force by common agreement all modifications in the arrangements of the present convention, both in regard to the proportion of postages to be levied on each side, and relative to all other measures of detail and execution, whenever, by mutual consent, the two governments shall have recognized the utility of such modifications.

ARTICLE XXVIII. The present convention shall be put in execution in the two countries one month after the exchange of ratifications, provided that the expenses of transportation over the British territory and across the British channel shall not exceed four cents per single letter, and that this postage shall be the only transit postage to be paid by the contracting parties, under the head of correspondence exchanged in closed mails, by way of England, between Belgium and the United States of America, by the terms of the said convention. This convention shall remain in force until annulled by mutual consent, or by one of the contracting parties after one year's notice given by such party to the other of the intention to annul the same.

Made in duplicate original, and signed at Washington, the twenty-first day of December, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine.

J. HOLT [SEAL]
BLONDEEL VAN CUELEBROECK [SEAL]

219-919—70——31