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Foreign Affairs and Justice sign agreement with Cambodia offering transfer to detainees

Many Belgians end up in prison abroad every year. They are often deprived of the support of family and friends, and of the necessary framework for a successful reintegration into society once their sentence has been served.

It is with this objective in mind that the FPS Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation is making extensive diplomatic efforts to bring the authorities of several countries to the negotiating table, in order to sign bilateral agreements on the transfer of prisoners. To this end, the FPS Foreign Affairs works closely with the FPS Justice.

We are therefore pleased to announce that these efforts have been successful with Cambodia. On January 23rd, 2026, the Belgian Ambassador to Thailand, responsible for Cambodia, visited Phnom Penh and signed, on behalf of Belgium, with the Cambodian Minister of Justice, the Treaty between the Kingdom of Belgium and the Kingdom of Cambodia on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons.

This Treaty will finally allow Belgian prisoners in Cambodia and Cambodian prisoners in Belgium to be able, with the agreement of the two States concerned, to serve their sentences in their State of origin. This opportunity for the detainees not only allows them to be closer to their loved ones in order to benefit from their support throughout their detention – which is practically impossible in the case of detention in a country as far away as Cambodia –, but also to better prepare them for their reintegration into the society from which they come.

"At the Ministry of Justice, we monitor the situation of compatriots who are serving a prison sentence abroad or who have to deal with Justice. It is often very difficult and cumbersome for family members and acquaintances to obtain information and maintain contacts. The agreement that is now being concluded with Cambodia will help to remove obstacles and also contribute to better cooperation between the two countries," said Minister of Justice Annelies Verlinden.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation Maxime Prévot adds: "I am pleased that the intensive diplomatic negotiations are bearing fruit. Thanks to this treaty, we are taking another step forward in our relations with Cambodia. At the same time, the finalisation of this Treaty once again demonstrates the fundamental role that Foreign Affairs plays in the defence of our compatriots abroad."

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