

**Speech by the
Federal Minister of Justice
Brigitte Zypries, Member of the Bundestag
at the ceremony marking the deposit
of the German ratification instrument
of the Hague Convention on the
International Protection of Adults
on 3 April 2007 in The Hague**

Check against delivery

Honoured Ladies and Gentlemen,

If you should get the impression that I am the same speaker who talked to you a few minutes ago, I must say that you are wrong.

The Chair of the European Union Council of Ministers and the German Minister of Justice – legally speaking, these are two completely different people ...even though we might look quite a bit alike...

On behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany, I am now very pleased to deposit the ratification instrument of the Hague Convention on the International Protection of Adults.

This Convention addresses a very sensitive topic: The cross-border protection of persons

of full age who are unable to manage their own affairs.

This topic will increase in relevance in the future, because human life expectancy is rising and the older generation is becoming more and more mobile. Of course, this is a very positive development. But we cannot overlook the fact that there will be adults who do not live in their home country and who need protection. Our legal systems must keep up with these developments; and acting in the interests of those affected, we must ensure more legal certainty and clarity.

The Hague Convention on the International Protection of Adults provides for effective solutions in this regard. It contains binding provisions regarding international competence

and applicable law. It regulates cooperation among the authorities and the recognition and enforcement of decisions.

Germany has now become the second State party to this Convention, and this raises the question of why only so few States have ratified this Convention so far. Certainly, the quality of the treaty cannot be the reason. It might be that vulnerable adults do not yet have a strong Lobby. But looking at the demographic developments, I'm sure that will change soon.

As you know, three State parties are necessary before this Convention can enter into force. The more State parties there are, the more efficiently the Convention will work. Therefore, I call upon all States: Please sign

and ratify the Convention on the International Protection of Adults! Do your part to have it take effect as soon as possible, and help provide comprehensive protection to affected adults in as many States as possible.