

SAR

Official reference	International Convention on maritime search and rescue	
Official website	www.imo.org	
Relevant dates	Document	27/04/1979
	Entry into force	22/06/1985
	Ratification by Belgium	20/12/1984
Policy level	International	
Type of instrument	Convention	
Geographical reach	World seas	
(Legal) coverage in the BNS	Internal waters, territorial sea, exclusive economic zone	
International contact point	International Maritime Organization (IMO)	
Competent authorities in Belgium	Governor of West Flanders (responsible for the coordination of assistance by Coast-guard)	
Federal ratification	Wet van 20 december 1984 houdende goedkeuring van het Internationaal Verdrag inzake opsporing en redding op zee en van de Bijlage, opgemaakt te Hamburg op 27 april 1979	

// abstract:

The SAR Convention's initial aim was to develop an international system regarding the search and rescue operations (SAR) for persons in need at sea, so that these operations could be directed by SAR organisations all over the world. In line with the ratification of the convention, the Maritime Safety Committee of the IMO divided the world seas into 13 SAR areas for which search and rescue plans were created. However, the original convention of 1979 imposed too many obligations to the Contracting Parties, resulting in only a few states ratifying the convention. This led to a revision of the convention (1998) that focused more on the regional approach and on the coordination between the SAR operations at sea and in the air. The revised annex with the technical requirements of the convention stipulates, inter alia:

- The responsibility of the Contracting Parties (they have to provide, individually or in cooperation, the basic elements of a SAR service);
- The cooperation between the Contracting Parties in the context of SAR operations;
- Operational procedures: rescue coordination centres need to have up-to-date information, communication and rescue facilities, and need to draw up detailed plans for SAR operations;
- Recommendations for SAR with regard to ship reporting systems.