

**NOTE VERBALE**

British Embassy  
Madrid

[Received at the Spanish FM  
on 23 March 2016]

**No.: 36**

Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and has the honour to convey to it the contents of our Note Verbale on the recognition by the United Kingdom authorities of marriages concluded in Community or non-Community countries between a person of British nationality and a person of non-Community nationality issued for the purposes of entry visa applications in Spain.

**NOTE: MARRIAGE**

Marriage in the UK is governed by different legislation in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. None of the Register Offices in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland issue certificates of marital status. Marriage to British nationals abroad is governed by "the Consular Marriages and Marriages under Foreign Law (No.2) Order 2014".

Only a UK court of law can determine whether a particular marriage is valid under UK law. It is not possible to register in the UK a marriage celebrated in a foreign country. Generally speaking, however, if a ceremony is considered valid in the country where the ceremony was performed; both parties to the marriage had the capacity to marry under the law of the country of domicile; and both parties of the marriage consented to marry the other, then the marriage is likely to be recognised in the UK. UK marriage certificates are not amended or updated after the couple are divorced.

As there is no procedure for entering marriages concluded outside the United Kingdom in a British Consulate marriage register or with a public authority in the United Kingdom, British Consulates have so far issued individual copies of the Note to help with completion of the visa application requirements by the non-Community national spouse of a British national. As was agreed at the meeting on 8 February 2016 in this Ministry, from the date of this Note Verbale, British diplomatic and consular missions will no longer issue the said Note on recognition of marriage. It is also understood that the said visa applications will be examined on the basis of the specific and individual circumstances and factors pertaining to each application without the consular Note on marriage.

The Spanish Foreign Ministry is kindly requested to acknowledge receipt of this Note Verbale.

Her Britannic Majesty avails itself of this opportunity to assure the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of its highest consideration.

[official stamp and signature]

**BRITISH EMBASSY  
MADRID**

**22 March 2016**