

URUGUAY

Like its neighbors Argentina and Brazil, Uruguay was an immigrant nation up until the 1960s, when political and socioeconomic instabilities reversed the migration flows. The most important outflows occurred after the coup d'état in 1973, but also after the crises of 1982 and 2002. Historically speaking, most Uruguayans left for Argentina, Spain, and the United States. In 1996, around 15% of Uruguayan nationals lived abroad. This percentage may have reached 18% between 1996 and 2004. However, given the recent crises in Argentina and Spain, and considering the recent economic growth and low unemployment rates in Uruguay, many emigrants are gradually returning.¹

Beginning in 2005, the Uruguayan state began developing policies towards its emigrants, administered within the *Departamento 20 - La patria peregrina* program. This entailed reorganizing its links to the diaspora through consultative councils, which are spaces designed for participation and the representation of emigrants. These councils are chaired by emigrants themselves and meet biennially at events attended by the president of Uruguay. Moreover, Uruguay also reformed its consular and ministerial network to establish an enduring relationship between the state and its emigrants. This late reorganization in the home and external administration was imperative to restore confidence in the state among emigrants because, during the dictatorship, those very structures were used to transmit information on exiles to track them down.² When it comes to emigrant policies, Uruguay scores high in terms of administration (having created three different offices to cover different aspects of linkages with emigrants), and brain circulation (having established in 1986 one of the pioneer programs for the repatriation of scientists, in collaboration with the IOM). In general terms, Uruguay properly stands out for its return policies, which started as early as 1985, when the National Commission for Repatriation was created to coordinate efforts of several public administration agencies and NGOs towards a quick reinsertion of Uruguayans returning after the dictatorship.³ It prides itself on being the Latin American country with the highest number of international retirement agreements⁴ and invests massively, or certainly more than other countries in relative terms, in the dimension of return policies. The Office of Return and Welcome (*Oficina de*

1 International Organization for Migration, *Perfil migratorio de Uruguay*, 5.

2 Crosa, "Transnacionalismo migrante: políticas de vinculación del Estado uruguayo y movimiento asociativo de uruguayos en Argentina." Crosa, "Transnacionalismo migrante."

3 Vaccotti, "Transnacionalismo, emigración internacional y políticas de vinculación en Uruguay."

4 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, "Servicios al ciudadano: Jubilarse en el exterior."

Retorno y Bienvenida), created in 2008 within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, publishes regular statistics on returnees and offers services such as job placement or skill acquisition.⁵ In general terms, Uruguayan emigrant policies are very transparent, coordinated, and accessible.

However, non-resident Uruguayans still lack the right to vote abroad. The governing left-wing Broad Front (*Frente Amplio*) party tried to implement external voting twice, in 2005 and 2009, but the bill was shot down on both occasions. The difficulty in putting this issue on the legislative agenda, as well as in front of voters, seems to be a political matter: Emigrants are historically associated with the left, as a high number of left-wing Uruguayans emigrated during the civic-military dictatorship (1973-1985) and remain mobilized abroad for left-wing parties, notably the Broad Front.

CITIZENSHIP/NATIONALITY

DUAL OR MULTIPLE NATIONALITY REGULATION

The legislation of Uruguay distinguishes between nationality and citizenship.

The Nationality Law dictates that one only has Uruguayan nationality when born in Uruguay, or born elsewhere to a Uruguayan parent.⁶ Uruguayan nationality is transferrable to three generations; since January 2016 a new law⁷ grants grandchildren of Uruguayan-born individuals, “natural” nationality when born outside the country.⁸

Uruguayan nationals are allowed to hold or acquire another nationality. The Constitution indicates that Uruguayan nationality cannot ever be lost, whereas Uruguayan citizenship is a “dormant citizenship”: one needs to live in Uruguayan territory and register at the civil registry in order to have active citizenship rights.⁹

There is no naturalization in Uruguay.¹⁰ One cannot acquire Uruguayan nationality, but it is possible to acquire Uruguayan citizenship.

Regarding citizenship, the Constitution of Uruguay differentiates between natural citizens and legal citizens.¹¹

5 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, “Volver a Uruguay - Guía facilitadora para las y los uruguayos que retornan al país.”

6 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 16.021 - Nacionalidad Uruguaya*.

7 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 19.362 - Reforma a la Ley de Nacionalidad*.

8 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 16.021 - Nacionalidad Uruguaya*, Art. 3. Note that the article refers to “ciudadanos naturales,” not to “nacionales.” Though both concepts have different meanings, their requirements overlap.

9 Poder Legislativo, *Constitución de la República*. Sección V, Capítulo V, Art. 81.

10 León, “Nacionalidad y extranjería en el Uruguay, un estudio normo-político,” 443.

11 Poder Legislativo, *Constitución de la República*. Sección III, Capítulo I.

Natural citizens are all Uruguayan nationals, provided they live in Uruguayan territory and register at the civil registry. Their citizenship can be suspended under special conditions (such as treason, disability, or imprisonment¹²).¹³ Uruguayan nationals born abroad can be considered naturals if they become “neighbors” (*vecinos*) and register in the civil register. Since December 2011, a law has facilitated fulfillment of the residence condition to enter the civil register by enumerating several possibilities of its interpretation: residence for over three months, rental or purchase of a house in Uruguay, starting a company in Uruguay, undertaking employment in Uruguay, attending any type of education center for over two months, or any other similar act which demonstrates the unequivocal will to be a neighbor.¹⁴

Legal citizens, on the other hand, are foreigners who accept Uruguayan citizenship under conditions outlined by the Constitution (the main condition is living in Uruguay or performing important duties).¹⁵ Given that they are not awarded Uruguayan nationality, one assumes the former nationality is retained. Legal citizenship can be lost by any form of naturalization and is lost upon residence abroad.¹⁶

LOSS OF CITIZENSHIP/NATIONALITY

Natural Uruguayan citizens cannot ever lose their nationality.¹⁷

In case of residence abroad (permanent or not), citizenship rights are suspended, but can be recovered once the individual moves back to Uruguay and registers at the civil registry.¹⁸

SUFFRAGE

VOTING RIGHTS OF NON-RESIDENT CITIZENS

Voting is compulsory in Uruguay,¹⁹ and every citizen registered on the civil register is entitled to vote.²⁰ However, non-residents cannot register abroad.²¹ Given that citizenship rights are suspended in case of residence abroad (per-

12 Ibid. Art. 80.

13 Ibid. Art. 74.

14 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 18.858*.

15 Poder Legislativo, *Constitución de la República*, Art. 75.

16 Ibid. Art. 81.

17 Dirección General para Asuntos Consulares y Vinculación, “Procedimiento para la inscripción de hijos de uruguayos nacidos en el exterior.”

18 Poder Legislativo, *Constitución de la República*, Art. 81.

19 Ibid. Capítulo II, Art. 77.

20 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 7.812, del 16 de Enero de 1925, Modificada por la Ley N° 17.113, del 9 de Junio de 1990 y por la Ley 17.239, del 2 de Mayo de 2000. Ley de Elecciones*, Art. 1.

21 Stuhldreher, “El sufragio transnacional: una aproximación al caso de Uruguay,” 12.

manent or not), non-residents have no official voting rights. Nevertheless, these rights are regained upon return to Uruguay and inscription in the civil register.²²

Non-residents who miss one election must justify their absence to the Electoral Court within 30 days of return. Non-residents who have missed more elections are excluded from the electoral register and must apply for reincorporation upon return.²³

Interestingly, foreigners can be granted the right to vote in Uruguay, provided they fulfill certain conditions: living within the law, having family in Uruguay, owning capital or property in the country, and having been resident for at least 15 years.²⁴

CANDIDACY RIGHTS OF NON-RESIDENT CITIZENS

The candidacy rights of non-resident citizens are not explicitly regulated. Given that residence in Uruguay is not listed as one of the requisites for candidacy, one can assume that non-residents are also entitled to run for president, provided the other requirements (being a natural citizen, being 35 or older) are met.²⁵

The same applies to the House of Representatives and the Senate, though different requirements must be met. In order to become a Member of the House of Representatives, one must be a natural citizen with active rights or have been a legal citizen for five years and, in either case, be at least 25 years old.²⁶ In order to become a senator, one must be a natural citizen with active rights or have been a legal citizen for seven years and, in either case, be at least 35 years old.²⁷

Uruguay is divided 19 departments, each administered by a Departmental Board and a mayor.²⁸ In order to run for mayor, the same criteria as for senators must be met. Additionally, the candidate must be a native of the department or have lived there for three years prior to assuming office.²⁹ As for the Departmental Board, one must be at least 18 years old and be a native of the department or have lived there for three years.³⁰ Accordingly, someone who is a native of one particular department and lives abroad could, in theory, run for mayor or for the regional legislative, though this possibility seems highly unlikely.

22 Poder Legislativo, *Constitución de la República*, Art. 81.

23 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, “Volver a Uruguay - Guía facilitadora para las y los uruguayos que retornan al país,” 15f.

24 Poder Legislativo, *Constitución de la República*, Art. 78.

25 *Ibid.* Art. 151.

26 *Ibid.* Art. 90.

27 *Ibid.* Art. 98.

28 *Ibid.* Art. 262.

29 *Ibid.* Art. 267.

30 *Ibid.* Art. 264.

VOTING METHODS AVAILABLE TO NON-RESIDENT CITIZENS

Uruguayans must register at the civil registry in order to vote. Non-residents can neither register abroad nor vote, as they lose their citizenship rights when living abroad.³¹ E-voting, proxy, and postal vote are not accepted under any circumstance.³²

REGISTRATION FOR FRANCHISE

Resident Uruguayans need to actively register in order to vote. It is mandatory for Uruguayan citizens to apply for a “civic credential” to be included in the electoral register.³³ While the civic credential can be obtained free of charge, the application needs to be done in person and at electoral courts located in Uruguayan territory.³⁴

MODE OF REPRESENTATION

No seats are reserved for external voters. As non-residents lose their citizenship rights; they can neither register nor vote from abroad.³⁵

EXTERNAL VOTING IMPLEMENTATION

In spite of multiple attempts, legal provisions for external voting do not exist in Uruguay. In 2005, the governing Broad Front party presented a bill that would implement external voting, but the opposition National Party, Colorado Party, and Independent Party (*Partido Nacional*, *Partido Colorado*, and *Partido Independiente*) voted it.³⁶ In 2009, Broad Front proposed a plebiscite to decide whether external voting should be implemented or not. Again, the proposal was rejected: only 36.93% of the citizens voted yes.³⁷

REGULATION OF POLITICAL COMPETITION

PARTY OFFICES IN HOST COUNTRIES

External voting is not envisioned by the Uruguayan government, and Uruguayan parties are not allowed to receive donations or contributions from for-

31 Stuhldreher, “El sufragio transnacional: una aproximación al caso de Uruguay,” 12; Poder Legislativo, *Constitución de la República*, Art. 81.

32 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 7.812 del 16 de Enero de 1925, Modificada por la Ley N° 17.113 del 9 de Junio de 1990, y por la Ley 17.239 del 2 de Mayo de 2000. Ley de Elecciones*, Art. 5.

33 Poder Legislativo, *Constitución de la República*, Art. 77.

34 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, “Servicios al ciudadano: credencial cívica.”

35 Poder Legislativo, *Constitución de la República*, Art. 81.

36 Poder Ejecutivo, *Proyecto de Ley - Voto Uruguayos Residentes Exterior. Ejercicio. Derecho*.

37 Stuhldreher, “El sufragio transnacional: una aproximación al caso de Uruguay,” 14.

ign governments or entities.³⁸ These two aspects may explain why the law on political parties mentions no external party offices. In any event, Broad Front has an external office in Buenos Aires. For the last national elections (2014), Broad Front subsidized the tickets of 20,000 Uruguayans living in Argentina and wanting to cross the River Plate to vote.³⁹

Broad Front also has committees and coordinating offices in three regions: Latin America (Region 1); Canada, Mexico, and the USA (Region 2); and Europe and Australia (Region 3). All three are subordinated to the national party board, as established by the party statute.⁴⁰ The party's national plenary is composed of 170 representatives, three of which represent these external committees.⁴¹

The statutes of the Colorado Party,⁴² the National Party,⁴³ and the Independent Party⁴⁴ mention no external committees or offices.

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

External political campaigns are not formally envisioned, given that external voting is not possible and external offices are not regulated. Also, Uruguayan parties are not allowed to receive donations or contributions from foreign governments or entities.⁴⁵

According to a 2010 census, 116,592 Uruguayan-born individuals live in Argentina.⁴⁶ This statistic includes many individuals who are not of voting age and excludes Uruguayan voters who were born abroad. Yet it shows how significant external voting could be for a country with an electorate of just 2,620,791.⁴⁷ Many of these individuals remain registered in Uruguay and travel back from Argentina with the sole purpose of casting their vote. As a consequence, Uruguayan politicians are starting to recognize the potential of emigrant voting and increasingly view Buenos Aires as a campaign natural stop. For the 2014 presidential elections, for instance, all three main candidates – Tabaré Vázquez (Broad Front), Luis Lacalle Pou (National Party), and Pedro Bordaberry (Colorado Party) - campaigned in Argentina.⁴⁸

38 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 18.485. Partidos Políticos*, Art. 45E.

39 Gil, “Candidatos buscan votos en Argentina.”

40 Frente Amplio, *Frente Amplio - Estatuto 2011*, Art. 46.

41 Ibid. Art. 75.

42 Partido Colorado, *Carta Orgánica del Partido Colorado*.

43 Partido Nacional, *Carta Orgánica del Partido Nacional*.

44 Partido Independiente, *Estatutos del Partido Independiente*.

45 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 18.485 - Partidos Políticos*, Art. 45 E.

46 Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, “Migraciones.”

47 Corte Electoral, “Sumatoria Provisoria de los resultados de los escrutinios primarios de las comisiones receptoras de votos.”

48 Infobae, “Tabaré Vázquez cierra mañana su campaña en Buenos Aires”; Gil,

Public funding for external political parties is not regulated, as the legislation makes no reference to external party offices.⁴⁹

MEMBERSHIP

None of the four biggest parties (Broad Front, Colorado Party, National Party, Independent Party) make any reference to emigrant membership in their respective statutes.

According to the statutes of Broad Front and the Colorado Party, any individual over 14 can become a party member, and all members have candidacy rights within the respective parties. According to the statute of the National Party, only members over 18 are allowed to be candidates; and the statute of the Independent Party establishes that any individual over 16 can become a party member and candidate.⁵⁰

INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION

CONSULTATIVE BODIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

There are several local consultative bodies for emigrant representation, as established by the Migration Law. These bodies include Consultative Councils, designed to strengthen links between the country and its emigrants.⁵¹

There are Councils in multiple cities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, France, Mexico, Spain, the United States, and many other countries.⁵² The consultation of such a body is structural: the General Directorate for Outreach and Consular Affairs, subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is obliged to consult council representatives every 12 to 24 months. So far, these meetings have taken place in 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011,⁵³ and 2013.⁵⁴ The 2013 meeting was even attended by President José Mujica and Minister of Foreign Affairs Luís Almagro.⁵⁵ Local or regional ad hoc meetings can also take place whenever the Ministry deems fit.⁵⁶

These consultative bodies are exclusively composed of emigrants, who are appointed by other emigrants without state intervention. A new council can be creat-

“Candidatos Buscan Votos En Argentina.”

49 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 18.485 - Partidos Políticos*, Art. 20 and 39.

50 Frente Amplio, *Frente Amplio - Estatuto 2011*. Chapter 2; Partido Colorado, *Carta Orgánica del Partido Colorado* Art. 5; Partido Nacional, *Carta Orgánica del Partido Nacional* Art. 7; Partido Independiente, *Estatutos del Partido Independiente*, Art. 5 and 7.

51 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 18.250 - Migración*, Art. 74.

52 For the full list, see <http://www.d20.org.uy/Lista-de-Consejos>.

53 Departamento 20, “Encuentros Mundiales.”

54 Embajada de Uruguay en Colombia, “V encuentro mundial de Uruguayos residentes en el exterior.”

55 Ibid.

56 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, *CE N° 172.975*, Art. 15.

ed in any district where at least 20 Uruguayan citizens have established permanent residence. Each council must meet at least once a month and comprise a minimum of five elected emigrant representatives.⁵⁷ The relationship between the councils and the Foreign Service is strictly limited to consultation with the purpose of developing links with the expatriate community.⁵⁸ While the councils are chaired by emigrants, the *Encuentros Mundiales de Consejos Consultivos* are chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, particularly the General Directorate for Outreach and Consular Affairs, which determines when this meeting will take place.⁵⁹

The councils are local, and the participation of every citizen is restricted to his/her jurisdiction of residence.⁶⁰ Additionally, the councils should strive towards a complete renovation of members to achieve maximum participation.⁶¹ Other than that, there are no selection criteria. However, not all consular jurisdictions have corresponding councils, meaning the mere creation of a council is already a criterion of self-selection.

The right to make their own reports or recommendations, even when not consulted, is neither envisioned by the Migration Law⁶² nor by the decree regulating the existence of the Councils.⁶³ These consultative bodies have no right to a response from national authorities, either. They are presented as support for the diplomatic missions; despite being entitled to self-regulation, they have no power to set an agenda.⁶⁴

ADMINISTRATION

CONSULATES

As of January 2015, Uruguay's consular network comprises 30 general consulates, and 42 consular sections attached to embassies.⁶⁵

The Office for Citizens Assistance offers judicial consultancy to Uruguayans arrested abroad and helps in other specific matters. The office also pays for medications, prostheses and additional medical supplies, but the focus lies on resident Uruguayans who need supplies from abroad, rather than on Uruguayan emigrants.⁶⁶

⁵⁷ Ibid. Art. 3 and 5.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Art. 13.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Art. 14.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Art. 2 g.

⁶¹ Ibid. Art. 4.

⁶² Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 18.250 - Migración*.

⁶³ Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, *CE N° 172.975*.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Art. 10.

⁶⁵ E-Mail communication with Directorate of Consular Affairs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Montevideo), February 24, 2016.

⁶⁶ Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, "Oficina de Asistencia al Compatriota y Ser-

HOME COUNTRY ADMINISTRATION

Uruguay has two bodies in its administrative structure that deal with emigration: one that handles both immigration and emigration policy (the *Junta Nacional de Migración*), and another that deals exclusively with emigration with a mandate to design and implement policy (the General Directorate for Outreach and Consular Affairs). The latter is located at the third rank of public administration and within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶⁷ It is nicknamed *Departamento 20*, a reference to the 19 territorial divisions of Uruguay and a name used generally to refer to the diaspora.⁶⁸

The General Directorate for Outreach and Consular Affairs: is, in turn, divided into eight departments.⁶⁹

ECONOMIC POLICIES

REMITTANCES

When compared to other Latin American nations, remittances from Uruguayan emigrants total very little. This is for two possible reasons: According to the IOM Migration Profile of Uruguay, Uruguayan emigrants do not usually come from poorer classes, meaning the relatives left behind do not necessarily depend on remittances and Uruguayan emigration generally involves entire families.⁷⁰

In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the state-owned *Banco de la República Oriental del Uruguay* (BROU) offers the *Cuenta a Distancia*, a bank account for Uruguayans living in Spain or the US. The emigrant can open an account from abroad, appoint a co-holder in Uruguay and send remittances through this account.⁷¹

INVESTMENT

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning, and the Environment⁷² offer multiple incentives for Uruguayans inter-

vicios a la Comunidad”.

67 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, “Estructura”.

68 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, “Dirección General para Asuntos Consulares y Vinculación.”

69 Ibid.

70 International Organization for Migration, *Perfil migratorio de Uruguay*, 82.

71 Banco de la República Oriental del Uruguay, “Cuenta a Distancia”; Banco de la República Oriental del Uruguay, “Cuenta a distancia. Descripción del producto y operativa”.

72 Ministerio de Vivienda, Ordenamiento Territorial y Medio Ambiente, “Garantía para uruguayos que retornan del exterior”; María Eugenia Martínez, “Oferta: Casa en

ested in buying or renting real estate in their home country, in the form of the *Garantía para uruguayos que retornan del exterior* program. As the name implies, though, those incentives are specifically associated with emigrant return.

BRAIN-CIRCULATION NETWORKS AND BRAIN-GAIN PROGRAMS

Two relevant brain-circulation networks exist in Uruguay. The platform *RedEncuentro*, established by *Fundación Polo Mercosur* with support from *Gabinete Productivo del Uruguay*, organizes conferences and other meetings to foster knowledge transfer for the benefit of Uruguay.⁷³ *RedEncuentro* is also supported by *CIDESAL*, a project coordinated by the *IRD*, France's public development research institute.

The *Programa de circulación de uruguayos altamente calificados (CUAC)* program, coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, connects highly qualified Uruguayans living abroad with institutions in their home country. The program targets academics, entrepreneurs, artists, athletes, and community leaders in particular.⁷⁴

In addition to *RedEncuentro* and *CUAC*, the Uruguayan Academic Network, focuses on improving Internet access and strengthening information exchange amongst researchers and was established by the *Universidad de la República* (henceforth *UdelaR*), Uruguay's only public university. Though not a brain-gain policy per se, the main goal of this project is to connect *UdelaR* researchers with their international peers, strengthening the presence and relevance of Uruguayan academia.⁷⁵

RETURN POLICIES

Uruguay's small size, both in terms of population and area,⁷⁶ enables the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to publish regular statistics on Uruguayan returnees. The most recent report appeared in November 2014, and while it does not speak for the entirety of returnees (only for those who contact the Office of Return and Welcome upon their return), it offers an interesting profile of emigrants, most of which are male, married and aged between 31 and 40, and 44% of which are returning from Spain.⁷⁷

In terms of recognition of academic or professional qualifications obtained abroad, the process differs according to the level of education. The

Uruguay, bienvenida y facilidades”.

73 *RedEncuentro*, “Quienes Somos”.

74 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, “CUAC - Programa de Circulación de Uruguayos Altamente Calificados”.

75 Universidad de la República, “Red Académica Uruguay”.

76 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), “The World Factbook: Uruguay”.

77 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, “Informe cuatrimestral sobre retornos y repatriaciones. Mayo-Agosto de 2014,” 9ff.

agency in charge of recognition of secondary education is the Council for Secondary Education, Section for Revalidation and Technical Inspection. Besides presenting the relevant documents to this institution, the returnee who has earned his/her secondary qualifications abroad must complete an online course on Uruguayan integration, including classes on national history, national geography, and civic education.⁷⁸ Once all conditions are fulfilled, the Council for Secondary Education needs up to 10 business days to emit a document that can be presented to schools or universities.⁷⁹

Along with Bolivia, Chile, and fellow MERCOSUR countries, Uruguay signed the *Protocolo de integración educativa y revalida de diplomas, certificados, títulos y reconocimiento de estudios de nivel medio técnico* to facilitate the recognition of primary and secondary education attained in the respective signatory countries.⁸⁰

As for tertiary education, since October 2012, Uruguay adheres to the Apostille Convention. This means that any academic or professional qualification obtained in one of the signatory parties is automatically recognized in Uruguay.⁸¹ Additionally, for research and teaching purposes, Uruguayan universities automatically recognize undergraduate and graduate degrees obtained in universities from other Mercosur members.⁸²

In case of countries that have neither signed the Apostille Convention nor are part of Mercosur, the agency in charge of degree certification is the UdelaR.⁸³ First, the returnee must submit a translated copy of his/her degree to the Uruguayan consulate in the country where the degree was earned.⁸⁴ Once the veracity of such degree is attested by the consul, it must be presented to the appropriate department at the UdelaR, which in turn will evaluate whether the qualifications are recognized or not.⁸⁵ There is no maximum period of time in which the applications must be processed.

Uruguay runs two campaigns related to emigrant return. As part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of Return and Welcome was created

78 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, “Volver a Uruguay - Guía facilitadora para las y los uruguayos que retornan al país,” 16.

79 Ibid. 17.

80 Mercosur, *Protocolo de integración educativa y revalida de diplomas, certificados, títulos y reconocimiento de estudios de nivel medio técnico*.

81 The full list of signatory parties is available at http://www.hcch.net/index_es.php?act=conventions.authorities&cid=41.

82 Mercosur, *Protocolo de integración educativo para proseguimiento de estudios de post grado en las universidades de los Estados partes del MERCOSUR*; Mercosur, *Acuerdo de admisión de títulos y grados universitarios para el ejercicio de Actividades académicas en los Estados partes del MERCOSUR*.

83 Universidad de la República, “Apostilla o Legalización de Estudios y/o Títulos.”

84 Universidad de la República, *Ordenanza sobre revalidación y reconocimiento de títulos, grados académicos y certificados de estudio extranjeros*, Art. 11.

85 Ibid. Art. 16 and 17.

in 2008 with the goals of creating improved conditions and incentives for the return of Uruguayans abroad and facilitating their reintegration.⁸⁶ Besides aiding Uruguayans emigrants interested in returning, the office also publishes statistics and analyses.

Also run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the *Repatriación de Uruguayos que se encuentran en el exterior* campaign does not aim to actively convince emigrants to return; rather, it covers the returning costs for emigrants already interested in going back. According to law, repatriation is a benefit offered by the state, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to any Uruguayan national or legal citizen who, for justifiable reasons of illness; vulnerable social situation; gender-based violence, including victims of human trafficking and domestic violence; or other serious motives that prevent the individual from returning on their own from any state or foreign territory where he/she resides temporarily or permanently.⁸⁷ One could draw parallels to the National Commission for Repatriation, created by the Amnesty Law⁸⁸ and active between 1985 and 1989. This commission was responsible for the return of numerous Uruguayans who left for exile during the dictatorship.

Additionally, there are two official programs designed to facilitate the reintegration of returnees in Uruguay. As part of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the Unidad de Coordinación para Retornados implements measures to facilitate the reinsertion of Uruguayan emigrants into the country's labor market, including skill-acquisition programs and work placement.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, the brochure *Volver a Uruguay - Guía facilitadora para las y los uruguayos que retornan al país*, published by the Office of Return and Welcome, collects information on health, education, taxation, labor market reinsertion and other topics of relevance for returning emigrants.⁹⁰ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also signed a partnership with the psychology department of the UdelaR to offer psychological support for returnees who have experienced traumatic situations as a consequence of being arrested or deported. Another partnership with the State Healthcare Administration provides one year of free healthcare for returnees. Finally, the Banco de Seguros del Estado offers a special tariff that grants returning emigrants 15% discount when buying a car or 20% discount when buying a house.⁹¹

86 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, *Decreto N° 357/008. Créase la Oficina de Retorno y Bienvenida*, Art. 2.

87 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 18.996 - Rendición de Cuentas y Balance de Ejecución Presupuestal*, Art. 120.

88 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 15.737. Se aprueba la Ley de Amnistía*.

89 Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, "Descripción de unidades organizativas."

90 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, "Volver a Uruguay - Guía facilitadora para las y los uruguayos que retornan al país."

91 Dirección General para Asuntos Consulares y Vinculación, *Librillo de Gestión Insti-*

OBLIGATIONS

MILITARY SERVICE, SOCIAL SERVICE, TAXES

Military service in Uruguay is voluntary, meaning neither residents nor emigrants is obliged to serve.⁹² No mention of an alternative social service was found in Uruguayan legislation, nor do laws make any reference to taxes paid by emigrants. In any case, the country has signed multiple international conventions to avoid double taxation,⁹³ and nationals living abroad for over two years are allowed to return with their possessions (furniture, machines, vehicles, etc.) without paying extra taxes.⁹⁴

CULTURAL POLICIES

The multiple *Casas Uruguayas* or *Clubs Uruguayos* are sponsored by civil society: No cultural center abroad is managed by the Uruguayan government.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, since 2013, the General Directorate for Outreach and Consular Affairs is entitled to resources from the Cultural Fund. According to a government brochure,⁹⁶ these resources are used to support multiple cultural activities abroad, though no activity in particular is mentioned.

Though Uruguay implements multiple cultural and communication programs, none of them targets emigrants directly, but rather the population in Uruguay. The television channel Uruguay Natural TV, administered by the Ministry of Tourism and Sport, promotes Uruguayan culture (including museums, beaches, sport, hotels, tourism and food).⁹⁷ The radio program *Departamento 20* presents the multiple facets of Uruguayan emigration.⁹⁸ Its broadcaster, Radio Uruguay, is run by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Additionally, the public cable channel TV Ciudad – Montevideo (run by the government of Montevideo) broadcasts the program *Ir y volver*, which portrays Uruguayan migrants and addresses migration on a global level.⁹⁹

tucional 2010-2014, 42.

92 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 18.650 - Ley Marco de Defensa Nacional*, Art. 29.

93 For the full list, see <http://www.dgi.gub.uy/wdgi/page?2,principal,ConveniosInternacionales,O,es,0>.

94 Poder Legislativo, *Ley N° 18.250 - Migración*, Art. 76.

95 For the full list, see <http://www.mrree.gub.uy/frontend/page?1,dgacv,DGACVA-sociacionesdeUruguayos,O,es,0>.

96 Dirección General para Asuntos Consulares y Vinculación, *Librillo de Gestión Institucional 2010-2014*, 15.

97 Ministerio de Turismo y Deporte, “Uruguay Natural TV.”

98 Radio Uruguay, “Departamento 20: Quiénes Somos.”

99 International Organization for Migration, *Perfil Migratorio de Uruguay*, 123; *tevéCiu-*

EXIT AND TRANSIT POLICIES

Uruguay does not actively discourage emigration. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs focuses on the promotion of return policies, at least judging by the amount of information made available by the Office of Return and Welcome. It is, therefore, a matter of creating adequate conditions and waiting for emigrants to return willingly. The strategy seems to be working, as the number of returnees has been growing steadily since the mid-2000s.¹⁰⁰

The Office of Citizens' Aid offers little information to emigrants, who are informed of their rights and duties by NGOs and civil societies, rather than by official sources. Indeed, the Uruguayan case displays an intense civil society participation – in the form of the *Red de Apoyo al Migrante*, for example, which was created in 2010 and comprises organizations such as *Observatorio de políticas públicas de derechos humanos en el mercosur* and *Asociación de padres con hijos en el exterior or asociación de paraguayos en uruguay*.¹⁰¹

SOCIAL POLICIES

Though there is no specific program for emigrants, employment benefits can be entirely maintained in countries with which Uruguay has signed agreements. The following multilateral agreements have been signed thus far:

- *Convenio Multilateral Iberoamericano de Seguridad Social* (as of 2014, also signed by Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Spain): if Uruguayans emigrate for over 12 months, they are subjected to the laws valid in the country of residence, where they have access to the same health and retirement benefits as nationals. Payments in different member countries add up.
- *Acuerdo Multilateral de Seguridad Social del Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR)* (also signed by Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay): benefits paid in different member countries add up, though payments made in one country for under 12 months may not be considered.

Additionally, Uruguay signed bilateral social security agreements with Austria, Canada (including Quebec), France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Peru, Portugal, and Venezuela. All agreements allow for the accumulation of benefits earned in different countries. The government of

dad, “Ir y volver.”

100 International Organization for Migration, *Perfil Migratorio de Uruguay*, 74.

101 Ibid. 121.

Uruguay is also in talks with Colombia, Costa Rica, Germany, and Switzerland to sign further agreements.¹⁰²

In regard to retirement benefits, Uruguay claims to be the Latin American country with the highest number of retirement agreements, having signed partnerships with Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Greece, Israel, Italy, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, USA, and Venezuela. In these countries, retirement benefits are paid in their entirety, without deductions.¹⁰³

There is no specific healthcare program for Uruguayan emigrants.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains children's libraries in ten selected consulates around the world, as part of the *Maletas culturales* program. These consulates also offer informal education programs for Uruguayan children born abroad. Additionally, consulates have partnered with the Board of Secondary Education to conduct final exams in their vicinities and grant Uruguayan degrees to emigrants interested in finishing their secondary education.¹⁰⁴

SYMBOLIC POLICIES

The *Departamento 20* (a reference to the 19 territorial divisions of Uruguay), subordinated to the General Directorate for Outreach and Consular Affairs, is neither a politico-electoral circumscription nor an official province abroad, yet it plays a central role in coordinating emigrant policies. In addition to the creation of a website for Uruguayans living abroad,¹⁰⁵ *Departamento 20* supports expatriates in need and administers advisory councils in multiple cities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, France, Mexico, Spain, the United States, and many other countries.

Uruguay's government-owned telecommunications company, Antel, also offers a service named *Departamento 20* for nationals living in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Italy, Mexico, Spain, the United States, or Venezuela. In order to facilitate communication between emigrants and their family, emigrants can pay a fee to keep their Uruguayan phone number and receive calls as if they were in Uruguay.¹⁰⁶

102 Instituto de Seguridad Social, "Convenios Internacionales."

103 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, "Servicios al ciudadano: jubilarse en el exterior."

104 Dirección General para Asuntos Consulares y Vinculación, *Librillo de Gestión Institucional 2010-2014*, 37, 38.

105 For more information, see <http://uruguayosenelexterior.gub.uy>.

106 Antel, "Antel Departamento 20".

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