

Changes to Legislation: as of 14 December 2025, this Act is up to date with all changes known to be in force.



Number 24 of 1986

DOMICILE AND RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN DIVORCES ACT 1986

REVISED

Updated to 1 August 2022

This Revised Act is an administrative consolidation of the *Domicile and Recognition of Foreign Divorces Act 1986*. It is prepared by the Law Reform Commission in accordance with its function under the *Law Reform Commission Act 1975* (3/1975) to keep the law under review and to undertake revision and consolidation of statute law.

All Acts up to and including the *Electoral Reform Act 2022* (30/2022), enacted 25 July 2022, and all statutory instruments up to and including the *European Union (Decisions in Matrimonial Matters and in Matters of Parental Responsibility and International Child Abduction) Regulations 2022* (S.I. No. 400 of 2022), made 31 July 2022, were considered in the preparation of this Revised Act.

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ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

1. Abolition of wife's dependent domicile.
2. Domicile before commencement of Act.
3. Domicile after commencement of Act.
4. Dependent domicile of minor.
5. Recognition of foreign divorces.
6. Short title and commencement.



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AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW RELATING TO DOMICILE AND THE RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN DIVORCES. [2nd July, 1986]

BE IT ENACTED BY THE OIREACHTAS AS FOLLOWS:

Abolition of wife's dependent domicile.

1.—(1) From the commencement of this Act the domicile of a married woman shall be an independent domicile and shall be determined by reference to the same factors as in the case of any other person capable of having an independent domicile and, accordingly, the rule of law whereby upon marriage a woman acquires the domicile of her husband and is during the subsistence of the marriage incapable of having any other domicile is hereby abolished.

(2) This section applies to the parties to every marriage, irrespective of where and under what law the marriage takes place and irrespective of the domicile of the parties at the time of the marriage.

Domicile before commencement of Act.

2.—The domicile that a person had at any time before the commencement of this Act shall be determined as if this Act had not been passed.

Domicile after commencement of Act.

3.—The domicile that a person has at any time after the commencement of this Act shall be determined as if this Act had always been in force.

Dependent domicile of minor.

4.—(1) The domicile of a minor at any time when his father and mother are living apart shall be that of his mother if—

(a) the minor then has his home with her and has no home with his father, or
(b) the minor has at any time had her domicile by virtue of paragraph (a) of this subsection and has not since had a home with his father.

(2) The domicile of a minor whose mother is dead shall be that which she last had before she died if at her death the minor had her domicile by virtue of subsection (1) of this section and has not since had a home with his father.

(3) This section shall not affect any existing rule of law as to the cases in which a minor's domicile is regarded as being, by dependence, that of his mother.

(4) In the application of this section to a minor who has been adopted, references to the father or mother of such minor shall be construed as references to the adoptive father or adoptive mother of such minor.

Recognition of
foreign divorces.

5.—(1) For the rule of law that a divorce is recognised if granted in a country where both spouses are domiciled, there is hereby substituted a rule that a divorce shall be recognised if granted in the country where either spouse is domiciled.

(2) In relation to a country which has in matters of divorce two or more systems applying in different territorial units, this section shall, without prejudice to *subsection (3)* of this section, have effect as if each territorial unit were a separate country.

(3) A divorce granted in any of the following jurisdictions—

- (a) England and Wales,
- (b) Scotland,
- (c) Northern Ireland,
- (d) the Isle of Man,
- (e) the Channel Islands,

shall be recognised if either spouse is domiciled in any of those jurisdictions.

(4) In a case where neither spouse is domiciled in the State, a divorce shall be recognised if, although not granted in the country where either spouse is domiciled, it is recognised in the country or countries where the spouses are domiciled.

(5) This section shall apply to a divorce granted after the commencement of this Act.

(6) Nothing in this section shall affect a ground on which a court may refuse to recognise a divorce, other than such a ground related to the question whether a spouse is domiciled in a particular country, or whether the divorce is recognised in a country where a spouse is domiciled.

(7) In this section—

“divorce” means divorce *a vinculo matrimonii*;

“domiciled” means domiciled at the date of the institution of the proceedings for divorce.

Short title and
commencement.

6.—(1) This Act may be cited as the Domicile and Recognition of Foreign Divorces Act, 1986.

(2) This Act shall come into operation on the day that is three months after the date of the passing of this Act.



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About this Revised Act

This Revised Act presents the text of the Act as it has been amended since enactment, and preserves the format in which it was passed.

Related legislation

This Act is not collectively cited with any other Act.

Annotations

This Revised Act is not annotated and only shows textual amendments. An annotated version of this revision is also available which shows textual and non-textual amendments and their sources. It also shows editorial notes including statutory instruments made pursuant to the Act and previous affecting provisions.

Material not updated in this revision

Where other legislation is amended by this Act, those amendments may have been superseded by other amendments in other legislation, or the amended legislation may have been repealed or revoked. This information is not represented in this revision but will be reflected in a revision of the amended legislation if one is available. A list of legislative changes to any Act, and to statutory instruments from 1972, may be found in the Legislation Directory at www.irishstatutebook.ie.