

Proposals for:

AN INTERNATIONAL FLAG DESCRIPTION SYSTEM

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A description of a flag must be so precise that anyone can at once recognize the flag from the description and furthermore make a sketch, if not a dimensioned drawing, from that description.

Abbreviations must be kept to a minimum.

A sketch of a flag alone guarantees that there is no doubt for either the sender or receiver of information.

1. Heraldic terminology is to be avoided except where the heraldic word is well known and expresses a concept in the best possible way. When describing a purely heraldic flag (or a coat-of-arms on a flag), heraldic terminology should not be used unless the intended reader will understand it.
2. In describing a flag it is always assumed that the flag is flying from a vertical staff held by a bearer in his right hand with the flag extended to his left. a)
3. When the two sides of a flag differ (differing colours or design) then the description of the OBVERSE (Fr.: endroit; Germ.: Vorderseite; Du.: voorkant) is given first and after that of the REVERSE (Fr.: envers; Germ.: Vorderseite; Du.: tegenkant); the right always being the side to the staff, and the other being the left. b)
4. Unless otherwise specified, it is assumed that a flag is rectangular.
5. If necessary (as done in heraldry) to describe a flag, without an illustration, then, if possible this should be done in one sentence, with subordinate clauses, parentheses, etc.
6. If desired BREADTH (Fr.: hauteur; Germ.: Höhe; Du.: hoogte) and LENGTH (Fr.: longueur; Germ.: Länge; Du.: lengte) can be indicated at the end of a flag's description by "H" and "L" (= hoist and length).
7. The one third of a flag that is adjacent to the hoist

is called the HOIST (Fr.: guindant; Germ.: Liek; Du.: broeking). The remainder of the flag is called the FLY (Fr.: battant; Germ.: Fliegendes Ende; Du.: vlucht).

8. When describing a flag first give the details of the hoist (devices, colours, etc.) and then the remainder; after that the proportions, the staff, the fringe, etc.

9. A device or emblem is of old and usually placed in the hoist, and so if in this position needs no special mention; if positioned otherwise description should be as follows:

I. at the point where two diagonals, drawn from the corners, meet - IN THE CENTRE (Fr.: au milieu; Germ.: in der Mitte; Du.: op het midden)

II. in the top to the right - IN THE UPPER HOIST (Fr.: au coin supérieur; Germ.: in der inneren Ecke; Du.: in het Hollands hoekje)

III. at the right side - ALONG THE HOIST (Fr.: le long de la hampe; Germ.: entlang dem Liek; Du.: langs de broek)

IV. at the bottom to the right - IN THE LOWER HOIST (Fr.: au coin du guindant; Germ.: in der inneren Unterecke; Du.: in de broekhoek)

V. at the top to the left - IN THE UPPER FLY (Fr.: au coin du battant; Germ.: in der äusseren Ecke; Du.: in de vluchthoek)

VI. along the left side - ALONG THE FLY (Fr.: le long du battant; Germ.: entlang dem Fliegenden Ende; Du.: langs de vlucht)

VII. at the bottom to the left - IN THE LOWER FLY (Fr.: au coin en bas; Germ.: in der äusseren Unterecke; Du.: in de benedenhoek).

10. Devices and emblems are generally positioned facing the hoist, thus devices in this position need no special mention. If positioned otherwise then they should be described as follows:

I. with the back to the hoist - TO THE FLY (Fr.: vers le guindant; Germ.: zur Flugseite; Du.: naar de vlucht)

II. placed on its back - FACING UPWARDS (Fr.: vers le bord supérieur; Germ.: nach oben; Du.: naar de bovenkant)

III. facing to the bottom of the flag - FACING DOWNWARDS (Fr.: vers le bord inférieur; Germ.: nach unten; Du.: naar de onderkant)

11. Horizontal stripes need no definition and are described as STRIPES (Fr.: bandes; Germ.: Streifen; Du.: banen). If of different dimensions these should be indicated thus: STRIPES OF BREADTHS x:y:z...  
Vertical stripes should be described as: STRIPES OF EQUAL LENGTH, or as STRIPES OF LENGTHS x:y:z...
12. If a set of coloured stripes repeats, mention colours only once adding "et seq." (Fr.: etc.; Germ.: usw.; Du.: onz.).
13. A rectangle or square, within a border in the upper hoist or of a different colour of the rest of the flag, whose area does not exceed  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the total area of the flag is a CANTON (Fr.: canton; Germ.: Oberecke; Du.: kanton); it's sizes, relative to the rest of the flag, must be specified.
14. A rectangle or square of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the flag is a QUARTER (Fr.: quartier; Germ.: Freiviertel; Du.: kwartier).
15. CROSSES -
  - a. Sweden has "a cross"  
Greece (internal) has "a cross in the centre"  
Switzerland has "an abbreviated cross in the centre"  
Jamaica has "a diagonal cross"
  - B. Crosses also may be indicated by reference to a well-known type, e.g. The Scandinavian-type cross; a cross of the St. George type; etc.
16. It is sufficient to describe a five-pointed star which has one point to the top as a STAR; other stars should be described in detail.
17. Colours should be given as exactly as possible by qualification ("light green"), reference to a well-known flag ("United Nations blue"), or, when possible, by scientific definition ("British Colour Council No. 811"). Whenever a special colour term is used in an official description of a flag, employ the term in parentheses, e.g. "the flag of India is orange (saffron), white and green".
  - a) There is also the possibility to indicate the right and the left with DEXTER and SINISTER, which can be understood by all those engaged in flag studies.
  - b) With the Islamic flags it is to be understood,

of course, that one has to "read" from the non-heraldic right to the left, so always the reverse of an Islamic flag is the frontside !!

A FEW EXAMPLES:

- ABU DHABI: A white canton on red; 1:2.
- CAMEROON: Two yellow stars in the upper hoist on three stripes of equal length, green, red and yellow; 2:3.
- JAMAICA: A yellow diagonal cross separating four triangles, black, green et seq.; 1:2.
- LIBERIA: A blue canton with a white star on eleven stripes, red, white et seq.; 10:19.
- SENEGAL: Three stripes of equal length, green, yellow and red, and a green star in the centre on yellow; 2:3.
- UGANDA: Six stripes, black, yellow, red et seq., and a white disc with a (bird) in the centre on two stripes; 2:3.
- USSR: A red star outlined in gold and a golden hammer-and-sickle beneath in the upper hoist on red; 1:2.
- DOMINICAN REP.: A white cross in the centre superimposed on four quarters, blue, red et seq., with the national coat-of-arms in the centre on white; 15:23.