

Formatting an international address

The format that an international address takes is dictated by the postal guidelines and cultural norms of two countries: the country of origin and the country of destination.

The postal guidelines of the country of origin should be followed as regards to the placing and format of the country name and/or the postal country code.

The postal and cultural guidelines of the country of destination should be followed for all other address components.

In this example, being sent from The Netherlands to Great Britain, the items in red are written according to the Dutch norms, the items in blue according to the British norms:

Mr G.R. Rhind
17 St Helens Avenue
Brooke
NORWICH
GB-NR14 1EP
GROOT BRITTANNIË

Addresses on international items should always be written in Latin script with Arabic numerals, even when posted in countries which used different writing scripts, to ensure deliverability. The country name should be written in upper case, and in the language of the country of origin. As mail items often have to travel via other countries, it is desirable that the country name may also be written in an “international” language, such as English or French. The address above may therefore also be written in this way:

Mr G.R. Rhind
17 St Helens Avenue
Brooke
NORWICH
GB-NR14 1EP
GROOT BRITTANNIË – GREAT BRITAIN

If the destination is a country which uses a script other than the Latin script, the address should be written twice on the envelope (one on the left hand side, the other on the right hand side, with a line between them), one in Latin script, the other in the script of the country of origin.