

# Recognition of Foreign Documents

(e.g. Marriage Certificate, Birth Certificate, Divorce Degree, Death Certificate, Custody Judgement, Educational Degrees)

Foreign documents or certificates are often only recognized by State Authorities if their authenticity and evidentiary value have been determined by a special procedure. A range of internationally accepted procedures has been developed for this purpose. In most cases, the authenticity of documents which are to be used in legal procedures in Germany, have to be proven through means such as an **apostille**, a **legalization** or a **verification** of documents.

Documents issued in Germany or the European Union are accepted without any special procedure.

## **Apostille**

(e.g. for documents from

Indonesia,

Australia,  
China  
Cyprus,  
Korea,  
Russia,  
Singapore,  
U.K.,  
U.S.A)

An “apostille” is a certificate of authenticity issued by a designated authority in a contracting state to The Hague Convention on Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents of 5 October 1961. You are requested to contact the responsible authority in the country of the documents origin, before handing in your visa application, and provide a proof of an apostille.

The apostille must be affixed to the original document. It is not sufficient to affix the apostille to a (certified) copy of the document.

o If the seal of the apostille is damaged or broken, a new apostille on the document is required

o The apostille must bear the name of the official who issued the original document; for example:

An apostille on an Indonesian birth certificate issued by the registry office must contain the name of the official (not a notary) who issued the original certificate.

Check out also our [FAQ](#) on the Apostille process for Indonesian documents.

**Please note that you are required to complete these procedures prior to submitting your visa application.**

If your document has previously been legalized by the German Mission then no Apostille for that document is required.

<p><b>Legalization</b></p> <p>(e.g. for documents from East Timor Malaysia, Taiwan, U.A.E., Vietnam)</p>	<p>The term legalization refers to the confirmation of authenticity of a foreign public document or certificate by a competent consular official of the State in which the document is to be used.</p> <p>You are requested to contact the concerned Foreign Authority in the country of the documents origin, and after pre-attestation from the home authority, you have to contact the German Foreign Mission in the country of the documents origin in order to obtain a legalization remark for the original document, before handing in your visa application.</p> <p><b><u>Please note that you are required to complete these procedures prior to submitting your visa application.</u></b></p>
<p><b>Verification of Documents</b></p>	<p>In countries, where the German Foreign Missions have noticed that the prerequisites for a legalization of official certificates are no longer given, a verification of documents is required. By means of legal and administrative cooperation, a Foreign Mission can assist German authorities and courts by having certificates checked for the veracity of the facts certified and thus supports German authorities in their decision making.</p> <p><b>Private individuals <u>cannot</u> request verification of certificates. This process will only start after submitting your visa application.</b></p> <p>During the verification process, original documents have to be submitted to the Visa Section, which will forward the same to the responsible German Mission in the country, where the documents originate. Depending on the country, the processing time varies (4-12 months) and involves additional charges.</p>

For further information on the process outlined above, you will find relevant information on the website of the German Foreign Mission located in the country where your document was issued. Please follow the guidelines provided by their Consular Section as they will provide valuable information on the local process involved. There is no need to check the information provided by the Visa Section in these countries.