

Legalization of Documents

Before you have your foreign documents translated, they **must** be legalized. This is a formal act which confirms the genuineness of a signature and the capacity in which the person signing the document has acted, and, as required, the genuineness of a seal or stamp as well. This act eventually also confirms the identity of the issuer of the official document. Please note that the original document must bear this legalization. Austrian authorities do not accept legalized copies of documents.

We advise you to enquire with the relevant authorities of the country (including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) where your documents were issued, whether and in what form documents must be legalized and translated.

There are three types of document legalization:

- **Exemption from legalization**, if Austria has concluded a bilateral agreement with the issuing country (*note that documents still need to be translated*);
 - Countries with a bilateral agreement: Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Sweden.
- **Legalization by Apostille**, if the issuing country is a member of the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents;
 - You can check if the country issuing your document is a signatory state [here](#).
 - Always check your country's details in case there is an objection from Austria preventing the convention from entering into force.
 - Apostilles are stamps or labels that must be affixed to the document in a uniform way by local authorities. Apostilles are usually done at the office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- **Full Diplomatic Legalization**, in all other cases.
 - Please enquire with your Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the legalization process.
 - The national legalization procedure of the issuing country must be followed, whereby the final legalization is carried out by the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The procedure varies from country to country, but the last authority always must be the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the country.
 - The document must then be ('overlegalized') legalized by the Austrian Representation in the country that has issued the document.

- In some countries (e.g. Pakistan), an additional document review procedure will be carried out by trusted lawyers of the Austrian representative authority, which can take up to several months, depending on the individual case.
- *Please note: The original document must bear the legalization by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the respective country and by the Austrian diplomatic representation (embassy, consulate, honorary consulate) in the respective country.*

Suspension of Legalization Requirements: The Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has suspended the legalization of documents [issued by these countries](#).

- This means that **original documents** should first be passed through the internal legalization procedure within these countries and the last authority should be the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**. The Vienna State Government will then determine if the documents are genuine, substantially accurate and correct.