

## Legalisation

In order to be able to submit international documents to Austrian authorities and institutions it is often necessary to have them legalised. Legalisation verifies the authenticity of a signature, seal or stamp and thus confirms the issuer of the document.

Austria has concluded bilateral agreements with some countries so that documents may be submitted without further formalities (exemption from the legalisation requirement). Moreover, the [Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents](#) may apply, which provides for a simplified legalisation procedure (legalisation by means of an apostille). In all other cases specific legalisation requirements must be met (full diplomatic legalisation).

Thus, there are **3 possibilities** (depending on the type of document to be legalised):

- No legalisation is required (exemption from the legalisation requirement)
- Legalisation by means of an apostille is required (legalisation according to the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents)
- Full diplomatic legalisation is required

**Exemption from the legalisation requirement:** Countries that are exempted from the legalisation requirement are certain EU member countries and a few non-European countries.

**Legalisation according to the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents (by means of an apostille):** Apostilles are stamps or labels that have to be affixed to public documents in a uniform form by local authorities. Currently approximately 100 countries have joined the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents.

**Full diplomatic legalisation:** Documents from countries that are not exempted from the legalisation requirement and that have not joined the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents require full diplomatic legalisation. First of all, the national legalisation procedure of the issuing country must be followed, whereby the final legalisation of the document is carried out by the local Foreign Ministry. The document must then be legalised by the competent [Austrian representative authority](#) 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.

A distinction must be made between translation and legalisation of documents. Documents in languages other than German are often only accepted by the Austrian authorities if they have been translated by a [sworn and court-certified interpreter \(translator\)](#).

It is generally advisable to enquire at the relevant representative authority in the country where your documents were issued whether and in what form documents have to be

legalised and translated. Moreover, more information is available on the [Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and External Affairs](#)' website.