

Legalisation

Legalisation is often necessary to be able to submit international documents at Austrian authorities and institutions. Legalisation verifies the authenticity of a signature or a seal or stamp and thus attests the issuer of the document.

Austria has concluded bilateral agreements with some countries, which allow submitting documents without any formalities (legalisation waiver). 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 fulfilled (full diplomatic legalisation).

Thus **3 scenarios** are possible (also depending on the type of the document to be legalised):

- No legalisation is required (legalisation waiver)
- 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

Legalisation waiver: The countries for which the legalisation requirement is waived are in general 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 stickers which have to be affixed in a standardised form on public documents by the 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 with which no legalisation waiver agreement has been concluded and which have not joined the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents require full diplomatic legalisation. This means that first the domestic legalisation procedures of the country of origin must be completed; then final legalisation of the document will be carried out by the foreign ministry of that country. After that the document must be legalised by the competent Austrian representative authority in the country of origin for final confirmation of its authenticity.

You have to distinguish between legalisation and translation of documents. The Austrian authorities often only accept documents in languages other than German if a certified interpreter (translator) has translated them.

It is recommended to enquire at the relevant Austrian representative authority in your country of origin whether or not and in which form documents must be legalised and translated in each case. Moreover, you can find further information on the website of the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and External Affairs: www.bmeia.gv.at/reise-aufenthalt/urkunden-und-beglaubigung/beglaubigung/.