

# Apply for an apostille

You need an apostille for presentation abroad.

## Competent Department

- [Der Senator für Inneres und Sport](#)

## Basic information

German documents are often only recognized by the authorities or courts of another country if their authenticity or probative value has been established in a special procedure. A number of procedural rules have been agreed between the states for this purpose.

For countries that have acceded to the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents of 5 October 1961, the otherwise required legalization is replaced by the "Hague Apostille". A document bearing such an apostille can be used directly abroad, so that the involvement of the consular officials of the country in which the document is to be used is no longer necessary.

The apostille or legalization confirms the authenticity of the signature, the capacity in which the signatory has acted and the authenticity of the seal affixed to the document.

Further information on international document traffic and the legalization of documents can be found under "Further information" - "Where can I find out more?" - "Federal Foreign Office".

## Responsibilities

- The Senator for the Interior and Sport is responsible for the following documents:
  - Civil status certificates (e.g. marriage or birth certificates)
  - Residence and registration certificates
  - Medical certificates that have been pre-certified by the health authority or the medical or dental association
  - School certificates issued by the Senator for Children and Education
  - Diploma certificates and university certificates, pre-certified by the Senator for the Environment, Climate and Science
  - Export certificates that have been pre-certified by the Chamber of Commerce, for example
  - Income tax returns and certificates of residence pre-certified by the Bremen tax office.

- The Regional Court of Bremen is responsible for
  - Court documents (e.g. certificate of inheritance, divorce decree, extract from the commercial register) from the Bremen courts
  - Notarial deeds from the district court of Bremen (e.g. contracts, powers of attorney, certified copies)
  - Translations by translators authorized by the District Court of Bremen.
  - The Federal Office for Foreign Affairs (BfAA) is responsible for documents from federal authorities, including certificates of good conduct, which must, however, be pre-certified by the Federal Public Prosecutor General at the Federal Court of Justice in Bonn.
  - Documents from authorities in other federal states must be notarized in the respective federal state.
  - The authenticity of the signature as well as the capacity in which the signatory has acted and the authenticity of the seal on the document are certified.

## Requirements

Only original documents (with the original signatures of the issuers) can be notarized.

The document must be up to date.

In particular in the case of civil status documents, registration certificates and residence certificates that are older than 3 months, there is a risk that these will not be recognized in the destination country despite properly issued apostilles/certifications.

We would like to point out that the older the document, the less probative value it may have.

The issue of an apostille does not indicate whether the apostilled document will be recognized in legal transactions abroad.

## Procedure

Personal appearance:

Acceptance of documents for apostilles/certifications:

Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

The processing time is 2 to 7 days.

In exceptional cases, the processing time can be up to 3 weeks.

Payment can be made in cash in advance when the documents are handed in.

Further information under:

Tel.: (0421) 361 9011

The e-mail address can be found under "Responsible offices".

Written application:

The notarization/apostille can also be applied for in writing.

Please use our application form and fill it out completely. You will find the application form under "Further information" - "Forms" - "Application for an apostille / legalization". Enclose a stamped envelope with your address with your application.

You can send your application with the document(s) to be notarized by post to the following address, stating the country of destination:

The Senator for the Interior and Sport

-Office

Contrescarpe 22/24

28203 Bremen

## **How long does it take to process**

Immediate processing is not possible!

The processing time is 2 to 7 days.

In exceptional cases, the processing time can be up to 3 weeks.

The processing time for written applications is one to three weeks plus the time it takes to send the application by post.

## **What are the costs?**

20,00 EUR Administrative fee for issuing an apostille or legalization per document.

Payment can be made in cash in advance when submitting the documents.

It is not possible to pay the fees by crossed check.

The invoice can only be paid by bank transfer, quoting the reference number

Shipping abroad is only possible if the invoice is paid in advance.