



Recognition of Foreign Documents

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

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 **legalisation** or a **verification** of documents.

Apostille	<u>Has to be provided before handing in a visa application</u> 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. For example: required for documents from U.S.A., Cyprus, United Kingdom etc.
Legalisation	<u>Requested to do before handing in a visa application</u> The term "legalisation" 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. 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 legalisation remark for the document, before handing in your visa application. For example: required for documents from the U.A.E., Syria (please contact the German Embassy in Beirut) , etc.
Verification of Documents	<u>Can only be initiated after the visa process has started</u> In countries, where the German Foreign Missions have noticed that the prerequisites for a legalisation 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. Private individuals cannot request verification of certificates. During the verification process, original documents have to be submitted to the German Consulate in Dubai, 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 (not less than 4 months) and involves additional charges.

Please check on the website of the German Mission of the country where the foreign document was issued in order to determine which of the above mentioned steps is applicable.