Apostille/Legalisation

The Leipzig Resident Services Offices (Bürgerämter) as well as the Leipzig Foreigners’ Authority only recognize foreign documents such as marriage and birth certificates of researchers' spouses and children if their authenticity has been certified. The seal of the issuing authority alone is not sufficient for recognition. There are two internationally applied procedures: apostille and legalisation. For both procedures, you need your apostilled/legalised documents translated into German by a certified translator. The translation of your apostille/legalisation can also be done by a certified translator in Leipzig, if you are unsure whether the translators in your home country are certified.

An “apostille” is a form of authentication issued for documents for use in countries that participate in the Hague Convention of 1961.

For countries which are not part of the Hague Convention, apostilles will not be accepted/issued and a legalisation will be necessary. 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, i.e. the legalisation of a marriage certificate issued by the Province of Ontario, which is to be used in Germany will be legalised by the German Consulate General in Toronto.

We highly recommend having the documents apostilled/legalised in your home country before coming to Leipzig. Otherwise it can be very expensive due to postal fees and waiting times, e.g. for your spouse's/children's residence permit, will be very long.

Here is how to get an apostille according to your home country:

https://www.hcch.net/en/instruments/conventions/authorities1/?cid=41

There are also several private operators who offer to undertake the apostille/legalisation process. However, prices may be very high in this case.

- For the USA, see for example: https://www.onesourceprocess.com/legalization-apostille-services/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI-OjV64j03glV7TLTChoZoQpMEAYASAAEglIE_D_BwE
- and for other countries: https://apostille-service.de/en/apostille-home.html

In any case, for more information you can google the issuing state/county together with the term "apostille" or "legalisation", e.g. "Texas apostille".

What to do if neither apostille nor legalisation is possible:

For some countries, neither apostille nor legalisation is possible. In this case, the authenticity of the documents must be checked by mutual assistance procedures, which are quite long and expensive.

In the country list you can see whether an apostille or legalisation is possible: Here you can see an overview of the required documents according to the respective countries (see section c).

Legal notice

This flyer containing information about apostille and legalisation has been compiled as part of the joint project “Willkommen in Leipzig/Welcome to Leipzig”.

Dr Annemone Fabricius; Martha Fromme (Welcome Centre, Leipzig University International Centre)

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