

Apostille/Legalisation

The Leipzig Resident Services Offices (Bürgerbüros) as well as the Leipzig Foreigners' Authority only recognise 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**. An "apostille" is a form of authentication issued for documents for use in **countries that participate in the Hague Convention of 1961**. For both procedures, your apostilled/legalised documents then need to be translated into German by a certified translator. That translator must be a publicly appointed and sworn translator in the **Federal Republic of Germany** or in another European country. It is usually possible to order these translations in advance online so that they are ready to be sent or picked up when you arrive in Leipzig. Alternatively, you can have your apostille/legalisation translated by a **sworn translator** in Leipzig after you have arrived. Exceptions are permitted in the case of translations by sworn translators listed on the websites of the German embassies and consulates. The original document (or a copy made by the translator) should be firmly attached to the translation by a seal. The page of the document which only contains the apostille does not need to be translated. Apostille documents are recognised in all languages, as their content is identical worldwide.

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, e.g. 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/issuing 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, can be long.

If you register as a non-EU citizen at the Resident Service Office, **your marriage certificates and birth certificates of your accompanying children** will first be scanned and forwarded to the Leipzig Registry Office (Standesamt) for verification. Your marital status will be registered as "unknown" for the time being. If all required documents are complete and recognized in Leipzig, you will subsequently receive an extended registration certificate with a change in marital status to "married". If, however, documents are still needed to complete the verification process, the Registry Office will contact you directly. It may then be necessary to go to the Registry Office in person to provide additional proofs. **Please note that this verification process in the City of Leipzig may take several weeks.**

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

<https://www.hcch.net/en/instruments/conventions/authoritiesI/?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=E-AlaIQobChMI-OjV64jo3gIV7TLTChoZoQpMEAAYASAAEgIIE_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:

The country list shows whether an apostille or legalisation is possible: [↗here](#) the required documents are listed by country of origin (see section b).

[↗For some countries](#), neither apostille nor legalisation is possible. In this case, the authorities have to check the authenticity of the documents by means of an administrative assistance procedure, which can take a long time and may incur high fees. The German Embassy (for visa applications), Leipzig Foreigners' Authority or the Resident Services Office can tell you which documents are required for this process, which is referred to in German using the term *Amtshilfeersuchen*.

Legal notice and disclaimer

This flyer has been compiled as part of the joint project [↗“Willkommen in Leipzig/Welcome to Leipzig”](#). Dr Annemone Fabricius, Linda Kaule ([↗Welcome Centre, Leipzig University International Centre](#))

All content is of a general nature and cannot cover each individual case authoritatively. It is not necessarily complete, comprehensive or fully up to date. It does not constitute legally binding information and nor is it able to replace information from experts on the respective topic. Despite careful checks, we cannot assume any liability for the content of external links. The respective operators bear sole responsibility for the content of the linked websites. This applies in particular to the websites of third-party advisory centres to which we link. Insofar as there is no evidence of intentional or grossly negligent misconduct on the part of the partner institutions or their employees, it is not in principle possible to assert liability claims against the project partner institutions and their employees which are based on material or non-material damage arising from the use of this information or from incorrect and incomplete information or services.

September 2024