

Legalisation is the process of confirming the authenticity of the official foreign document by the consular staff of the state in which the certificate will be used. Due to agreements under international law many official foreign documents do not require reciprocal legalisation or are legalised by attaching the Hague Apostille. The Hague Apostille confirms the authenticity of an official document in the same manner as legalisation does. Unlike legalisation, however, the Hague Apostille is issued by an authorised government agency of the state which issued the official document. In that case legalisation by consular staff of the state in which the official document will be used is no longer necessary.

If you intend to use an official German document abroad, you must get the authenticity of the official document certified. The authenticity of an official German document is either confirmed through legalisation or - in certain cases - an apostille. Legalisation and apostilles are simply different ways of certifying a document.

Whether you need to get the document legalised or need to obtain an apostille depends on the country in which you intend to use the official German document. If you need to legalise the document, the president of the Landgericht (regional court) will be able to issue a preliminary certification. Depending on the country in which you will use the official document, however, you must subsequently get the preliminary certification finalised. The Auswärtige Amt (German Foreign Office) has given the task of finalising preliminary certifications to the Bundesverwaltungsamt (Federal Office of Administration) in Cologne.

For further information on apostilles and legalisation, please visit the German Foreign Office's website ([www.auswaertiges-amt.de](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de)) or the Federal Office of Administration's website ([www.bundesverwaltungsamt.de](http://www.bundesverwaltungsamt.de)).

**The president of the Essen Regional Court will issue foreign certifications in the following instances:**

- official documents issued by notaries who are seated in the Essen Regional Court's jurisdiction
- court documents (writs, court orders, certificates of inheritance, register excerpts) issued by the Essen Regional Court and the local courts which are located in the Essen Regional Court's jurisdiction (Amtsgericht Bottrop, Amtsgericht Essen-Borbeck, Amtsgericht Essen-Steele, Amtsgericht Gelsenkirchen, Amtsgericht Gladbeck, Amtsgericht Hattingen and Amtsgericht Marl)
- official documents issued by other judicial authorities which are located in the Essen Regional Court's jurisdiction
- certifications of translations done by a certified interpreter or translator who is seated in the Essen Regional Court's jurisdiction

The Essen Regional Court is **NOT** responsible for any official documents issued by the city. In that case, please contact the competent district government.

To get your document certified, please schedule an appointment at

<https://www.lg-essen.nrw.de/aufgaben/Legalisationen-und-Apostillen/index.php>

Or send the official document or translation to the address below. Please state your address and telephone number as well as the country for which you require the apostille or legalisation when doing so.

Landgericht Essen  
Verwaltungsabteilung: Apostillen / Legalisationen  
Zweigertstr. 52  
45130 Essen

Please state if you or a third party will be picking up the official document once it has been certified, or if it should be mailed to your postal address.

You may use the following application form: [Antragsformular](#)

We will process your application as quickly as possible. Please note that processing can currently take 3-4 working days. In addition, returning the official document by mail can take up to five days. Please do not call to enquire about your document within that time.

Please confirm that the official court documents bear an original signature and official seal. We cannot certify copies.

Once we have attached the apostille or completed the legalisation process you may pick up the documents in room 287 at the Essen Regional Court. Office hours are Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 3.00pm. Otherwise, we will send your official document to you by mail.

The apostilles and legalisation service are subject to a fee. The fee for the certification of official signatures for the use in a foreign country is €25.00 per official document.

**Contacts for foreign certifications are listed under “Legalisationen und Apostillen” at <http://www.lg-essen.nrw.de>.**