Public documents

National information and online forms concerning Regulation No. 2016/1191

In July 2016, the European Union adopted a Regulation simplifying the circulation of certain public documents between EU countries. The Regulation aims at reducing red tape and costs for citizens when they need to present a public document issued by the authorities of an EU country to the authorities of another EU country. Under the Regulation, public documents (for example, a birth certificate or a marriage notarial document) issued in an EU country must be accepted as authentic in another EU country without the need for such documents to bear an authentication stamp (the apostille). The public documents covered by the Regulation are, in particular, civil status (for example, birth, death, marriage, registered partnership, adoption), but also residence and the absence of a criminal record.

The Regulation also abolishes the obligation to, in all cases, provide certified copies and certified translations of public documents issued in another EU country. The Regulation introduces optional multilingual, standard forms that can be attached to the public documents to avoid translation requirements. The Regulation does not govern the recognition in a EU country of the content or effects of a public document issued in another EU country. The recognition of such content or effects depends on the law of the receiving country. The Regulation is applicable from 16 February 2019.

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