

## ALBANIA

### Apostille Questionnaire 2021

*The responses are reflected as provided by Contracting Parties subject to minor typographical corrections.*

Joining the Apostille Convention	
1. Did you join the Convention after 2010?	[a] Yes.
<p><i>For Parties that joined the Convention after 2010.</i></p> <p>1.1. Did you require implementing legislation to give the Apostille Convention the force of law?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p><i>All documents issued by the Albanian administration are intended to be used abroad must be legalized. To be legalized you must also use foreign documents that will be submitted to our authorities.</i></p> <p><i>Legalization is a procedure for recognizing the regulation of a foreign document. For this the consular diplomats confirm the functioning of the functioning and the institution, in particular by certifying the signature and the seal. The issuing authority must first notify the persons entitled to issue the document and deposit their signatures.</i></p> <p><i>The authorities supervising the legalization and documentation for each foreign country can be found on the official websites of the foreign ministries. The legalization of Albanian documents for their use abroad and the legalization of foreign documents to be presented to the Albanian authorities regulate DCM no. 134, dated 07.03.2003</i></p> <p><i>In Albania, the authority responsible for the legalization and apostille of documents is the MFA, Consular Directorate. In other countries it may be the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, or even various local structures. The authorities responsible for legalizing documents for each foreign country can be found on the official websites of the foreign ministries. The authorities responsible for the apostille of documents are located at:</i></p> <p><u><a href="http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=conventions.authorities&amp;cid=41">http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=conventions.authorities&amp;cid=41</a></u></p>

<p>2. Are foreign public documents exempted from legalisation by virtue of your internal law, practice, or any bilateral / multilateral agreements (excluding the Apostille Convention)?</p>	<p>[b] Yes, under bilateral / multilateral agreements. <i>By bilateral agreement documents for some countries (Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania, Russia and Slovakia) are accepted directly without the need to be legalized or apostille.</i></p> <p>Attached:</p> <p><i>The list of countries whose documents are accepted without legalization or apostillation can be found here:</i></p> <p><i>By mutual agreement the countries of the list below are exempted from the obligation of legalization or prior apostilization of documents. Albanian authorities accept the documents of these countries without other formalities:</i></p> <p><i>Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Bulgaria.</i></p> <p><i>Submission of documents for legalization</i></p> <p><i>The submission of legalization documents for use abroad in Albania is done through the post offices of the Albanian Post, TNT, AC, ADEX with which the MFA cooperates.</i></p> <p><i>The submission for legalization of foreign documents for use in Albania in countries that do not adhere to the Hague Convention of October 5, 1961, for the Apostille is done at the Consular or Diplomatic Representations of the Republic of Albania.</i></p>
<p><b>Competent Authorities</b></p>	
<p>3. How many Competent Authorities have you designated under the Apostille Convention? <i>If unknown, please specify the reason for this and provide an approximate number.</i></p>	<p>One, MEFA</p>
<p>4. Do your diplomatic missions abroad play a role in the Apostille issuance process?</p>	<p>[a] Yes, our diplomatic missions issue Apostilles.</p>
<p><b>Substantive Scope</b></p>	
<p>5. Is the concept of 'public document' defined in your internal law?</p>	<p>[b] No.</p>
<p>6. Have you experienced any difficulties in characterising a 'public document' for the purposes of the Apostille Convention?</p>	<p>[b] No.</p>
<p>7. Has the exclusion of 'documents executed by diplomatic or consular agents' (Art. 1(3)(a)) from the scope of the Apostille Convention given rise to any difficulties?</p>	<p>[c] No.</p>
<p>8. Do you think this Art. 1(3)(a) exclusion is justified in the context of the modern operation of the Convention?</p>	<p>[a] Yes.</p>
<p>9. Has the exclusion of 'administrative documents dealing directly with commercial or customs operations' (Art. 1(3)(b)) from the scope of the Apostille Convention given rise to any difficulties?</p>	<p>[a] Yes, as the State of origin. <i>Based on the Apostille Convention, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs doesn't legalise business documents involving customs operations.</i></p>

<p><i>For Parties that answered yes to Q9.</i></p> <p>9.1. How has previous guidance on the interpretation of the Art. 1(3)(b) exclusion assisted in resolving these difficulties? (E.g. the 'extremely narrow' construction referred to in C&amp;R No 10 of the 2016 SC).</p>	<p>Maybe it is, but in some cases it has to do with the notary public's interpretation of the Convention.</p>		
<p>10. Do you think this Art. 1(3)(b) exclusion is justified in the context of the modern operation of the Convention?</p>	<p>[a] Yes.</p>		
<p>11. Do you issue (outgoing) or accept (incoming) Apostilles for any of the following categories of document?</p>		Issue	Accept
	Certificates of origin	X	X
	Export licences		
	Import licences		
	Health and safety certificates issued by the relevant government authorities or agencies	X	X
	Certificates of products registration	X	X
	Certificates of conformity		
	End user certificates (i.e. documents certifying that the buyer is the end user of acquired goods)		
Commercial invoices			
<p><b>Apostille Process</b></p>			
<p><b>Certification of Public Documents</b></p>			
<p>12. Do any of your public documents require some other intermediate certification before the issuance of an Apostille?</p>	<p>[b] No, an intermediate certification is not required for any public document; Apostilles are issued directly upon the public document.</p>		
<p><b>Requesting an Apostille (Outgoing)</b></p>			
<p>13. How can an Apostille be requested?</p>	[a] In person.		
	[b] By post.		X
	[c] By email.		
	[d] Through a website.		
	[e] Other.		
<p>14. When issuing an Apostille, do you enquire about the State of destination?</p>	<p>[a] Yes, in the application form.</p>		
<p>15. How long does it take for an Apostille to be issued?</p>	In-person request (paper Apostille)	Other requests (from the time of receipt) (paper Apostille)	e-Apostille requests
		On the same day	
<p>16. Does your Competent Authority impose a fee for issuing an Apostille?</p>	<p>[b] Yes, but the price is dependent on, for example, the category of public document(s), the Competent Authority, or the type of application. 200 ALL</p>		

Issuing an Apostille (Outgoing)	
17. How is the origin of a public document verified for the purpose of issuing an Apostille ( <i>i.e.</i> verification of the authenticity of the signature, the capacity of the signer, and the identity of the seal / stamp (Art. 5(2))?	[a] Single Competent Authority. [ii] An electronic database of sample signatures / seals / stamps.
18. How does a Competent Authority address situations where it is unable to verify the origin of the public document?	[a] The Competent Authority will contact the issuing authority to confirm authenticity, issue the Apostille, and then add the new signature, stamp or seal to the database.
19. In what language(s) are the 10 standard items of your Apostilles available?	[a] In one language. <i>English</i>
20. In what language(s) are the blank fields of your Apostilles filled in?	[a] In one language. <i>English</i>
21. How are the blank fields of your Apostilles filled in?	[b] Using computer software. <i>SHKO</i>
Apostille Registers	
22. How is your Apostille register, required by Article 7, maintained?	[a] Single Competent Authority. [ii] Electronic form, not publicly accessible online.
23. What particulars are contained in your Apostille register?	[a] Number and date of the Apostille ( <i>required</i> ). X
	[b] Name and capacity of the person signing the document and / or the name of authority whose seal or stamp is affixed ( <i>required</i> ).
	[c] Name and / or type of underlying document.
	[d] Description of the contents of underlying document.
	[e] Name of the applicant.
	[f] State of destination.
	[g] Copy of the Apostille.
	[h] Copy of the underlying document.
	[i] Other.
24. Is there a limit to how long records can be retained on the Apostille register?	[b] Yes, between five and ten years.
25. If your register is <i>not</i> publicly accessible, how frequently do your Competent Authorities receive requests to verify an Apostille they have issued in the register?	[c] Between 2 and 10 times per year.
Technology & the e-APP	
26. Under your internal law, do you recognise electronic / digital signatures as functionally equivalent to handwritten signatures ( <i>i.e.</i> can a public document be signed electronically)?	[b] No.

27. Under your internal law, are public documents executed, or able to be executed, in electronic form (whether or not they are to be used abroad under the Convention)?	[b] No, public documents are never executed in electronic form.	
28. Do you issue e-Apostilles?	[b] No. [i] We are studying the use of e-Apostilles and plan to implement the e-Apostille component. <i>We have worked out a plan for the implementation of this process</i>	
<i>For Parties that answered no to Q28.</i> 28.1. What challenges are you facing that may prevent you from implementing the e-Apostille?	[a] Internal law limitations.	
	[b] Judicial or administrative structure.	
	[c] Implementation challenges (e.g. lack of resources, lack of infrastructure).	X
	[d] Cost.	X
	[e] System interoperability / compatibility.	
	[f] Security concerns.	X
	[g] Other.	
<i>For Parties that answered no to Q28.</i> 28.2. How do you issue an Apostille for a public document executed in electronic form?	[a] Public documents are never executed in electronic form.	
29. Are your authorities equipped to accept incoming e-Apostilles?	[a] Yes, all e-Apostilles can be processed.	
30. Do you maintain an e-Register?	[b] No. [i] We are studying the use of an e-Register and plan to implement the e-Register component. <i>We have worked out a plan for the implementation of this process</i>	
<i>For Parties that answered no to Q30.</i> 30.1. What challenges are you facing that may prevent you from implementing the e-Register?	[a] Internal law limitations.	
	[b] Judicial or administrative structure.	
	[c] Implementation challenges (e.g. lack of resources, lack of infrastructure).	X
	[d] Cost.	X
	[e] System interoperability / compatibility.	X
	[f] Security concerns.	X
	[g] Other.	
31. Have you been in contact with other Competent Authorities that operate an e-APP component and exchanged information and / or relevant experience?	[a] Yes. <i>North Macedonia</i>	

Issues with Apostilles			
32. Has an Apostille <i>issued</i> by your Competent Authority ever been refused by the authorities of another Contracting Party on the following grounds:	[a]	Form requirements (e.g. square-shaped, sides of at least nine centimetres, border, ink, etc).	
	[b]	The manner in which the Apostille was affixed / attached to the underlying document.	
	[c]	The Apostille was not signed.	X
	[d]	One or more of the standard informational items were not filled in.	
	[e]	The Apostille was in electronic form ( <i>an e-Apostille</i> ).	
	[f]	The underlying public document was in electronic form.	
	[g]	The underlying public document had expired / was not issued within a certain timeframe.	X
	[h]	The underlying document was not a public document under the law of the destination.	
	[i]	Other.	
	[j]	Unknown.	
	[k]	No / Not applicable.	
<i>For Parties that answered other than "No" to Q32.</i> 32.1. If an Apostille was rejected, what action did you take?	[a]	The Apostille was reissued.	
	[b]	Contacted the receiving authority.	
	[c]	Contacted the Competent Authority of the place of destination.	
	[d]	Contacted nearest diplomatic mission of the place of destination.	
	[e]	Contacted own diplomatic mission accredited to the place of destination.	
	[f]	Contacted the Permanent Bureau.	
	[g]	No action taken.	X
	[h]	Other.	
	[i]	Unknown.	
33. Has your Competent Authority ever been requested by external Competent Authorities to certify or confirm your procedure for issuing Apostilles?	[b]	No.	

34. Has an Apostille <i>received</i> by your authorities ever been refused on the following grounds:	[a]	The issuing State was not a Contracting Party to the Apostille Convention.	
	[b]	Form requirements (e.g. square-shaped, sides of at least nine centimetres, border, ink, etc).	
	[c]	The manner in which the Apostille was affixed / attached to the underlying document.	
	[d]	The Apostille was not signed.	
	[e]	One or more of the standard informational items were not filled in.	
	[f]	The Apostille was in electronic form ( <i>an e-Apostille</i> ).	X
	[g]	The underlying public document was in electronic form.	
	[h]	The underlying public document had expired / was not issued within a certain timeframe.	
	[i]	The underlying document was not a public document under the law of the destination.	
	[j]	Other.	
	[k]	Unknown.	
	[l]	No / Not applicable.	
<b>Miscellaneous</b>			
35. Would you be interested in attending the 2021 meeting of the Special Commission on the practical operation of the Apostille Convention?	[a]	Yes, if possible, in person.	
36. Have you encountered any persistent difficulties, issues, or challenges in the operation of the Apostille Convention that you would like discussed at the 2021 Special Commission? <i>If yes, would you like your answer to this question to be published without reference to your authority or State?</i>	[a]	Yes. <i>We would like to share experiences with other countries regarding e-Apostille and e-Register.</i>	
37. Do you have any suggestions that could assist in the promotion, implementation, or operation of the Apostille Convention? <i>If yes, would you like your answer to this question to be published without reference to your authority or State?</i>	[b]	No.	
38. Would you be interested in attending the 12 <sup>th</sup> International Forum on the e-APP (to be held in conjunction with the meeting of the Special Commission)?	[a]	Yes, if possible, in person.	

<p>39. Are there any specific topics or practical issues that you would like discussed at the e-APP Forum?</p> <p><i>If yes, would you like your answer to this question to be published without reference to your authority or State?</i></p>	[b] No.
<p>40. The Permanent Bureau is in the process of drafting a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Apostille Handbook. Are there any specific topics, suggestions for presentation or formatting, or any other proposals for inclusion?</p> <p><i>Please note that answers to this question will not be incorporated into the first draft of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. The PB will take them into account in preparing subsequent drafts.</i></p> <p><i>If yes, would you like your answer to this question to be published without reference to your authority or State?</i></p>	[b] No.