

Questionnaire for Contracting Parties to the 1961 Apostille Convention



Armenia

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Questionnaire for Contracting Parties to the 1961 Apostille Convention

Please note that not all questions require a response from all Contracting Parties; some are directed only at Contracting Parties that have not implemented one or both components of the e-APP. Likewise, other questions are addressed solely to those who have implemented and operate the e-APP.

I. Implementation of the e-APP

The questions below are intended to identify all Contracting Parties that have implemented one or both components of the e-APP (*i.e.*, those that issue e-Apostilles and/or operate an e-Register). Likewise, for Contracting Parties that have implemented neither component, the questions seek to clarify the stage they have reached in considering the e-APP, as well as the challenges that may be preventing its implementation.

A. First component: e-Apostille

1 Does your State issue e-Apostilles?

Yes, e-Apostilles have been issued since [2021]

No, e-Apostilles have not been implemented yet.

If not, please specify:

We are studying the use of e-Apostilles and plan to implement the e-Apostille component.

Please specify, if relevant: N/A

We are not currently planning to implement the e-Apostille component.

For Parties that answered “No, e-Apostilles have not been implemented yet”, please answer question 1.1

1.1 What challenges is your State facing that may prevent it from implementing e-Apostilles?

More than one answer is possible.

Internal law limitations.

Judicial or administrative structure.

Implementation challenges (e.g., lack of resources, lack of infrastructure).

Cost.

System interoperability / compatibility.

Security concerns.

Other – please specify: N/A

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

2 Regardless of whether your State currently issues e-Apostilles, are your receiving agencies equipped or able to accept and process incoming e-Apostilles (*i.e.*, e-Apostilles issued by other Contracting Parties)?

Yes, all e-Apostilles can be processed.

Yes, but on certain conditions – please specify: N/A

No – please explain why not: N/A

Unknown.

Please explain further any of the items above, if relevant: N/A

B. Second component: e-Register

3 Does your State maintain an e-Register?

Yes, an e-Register has been implemented on [2021]

If yes, please indicate any specific features of your e-Register (e.g., whether your State maintains multiple e-Registers, different types of e-Registers for various Competent Authorities, or separate registers for paper and e-Apostilles, etc.): *[The Armenian e-Register to check the authenticity of the e-Apostille is the website www.e-verify.am. The e-Apostille itself contains an indication about this opportunity. Besides, there is a QR code on the e-Apostille which can be browsed and directed to the website automatically, proving that the e-Apostille is authentic and issued by the competent authority.]*

No, an e-Register has not been implemented yet.

If not, please specify:

We are studying the use of an e-Register and plan to implement the e-Register component.

Please specify, if relevant: N/A

We are not currently planning to implement the e-Register component.

For Parties that answered “No, an e-Register has not been implemented yet”, please answer question 3.1:

3.1 What challenges is your State facing that may prevent it from implementing an e-Register?

More than one answer is possible.

Internal law limitations.

Judicial or administrative structure.

Implementation challenges (e.g., lack of resources, lack of infrastructure).

Cost.

System interoperability / compatibility.

Security concerns.

Other – please specify: N/A

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

II. Technology and the e-APP (including the use of digital signatures)

The questions below are intended to further understand how Contracting Parties recognise and use electronic or digital signatures, and how electronic public documents interact with the Apostille process, particularly in cases where the e-Apostille component has not yet been implemented.

For the purposes of this questionnaire, an **electronic signature** is a name, initial, mark or symbol that is affixed to, or logically associated with, a document or other record in electronic form, to evidence the signing of that document or record. A **digital signature** is a special type of electronic signature which works with encryption technology and can be authenticated using a digital certificate.

4 Under your internal law, for your own domestic public documents, do you recognise electronic / digital signatures as functionally equivalent to handwritten (wet) signatures (i.e., allowing your public documents to be signed electronically)?

Yes, please specify (including whether there are any requirements or technical standards for using electronic / digital signatures): *[The Armenian legislation provides for requirements and technical standards regarding the means of electronic or digital signatures, which have been used for several years now and are fully recognised as functionally equivalent to handwritten signatures. Those requirements are set by the Law "On Electronic Document and Electronic Digital Signature" and the Government Decree N 572-N of May 25, 2017 (deriving from the Law) "On Establishing*

the Procedure for the Use of Electronic Documents and Electronic Digital Signatures in State Authorities, as well as Defining the General Technical Requirements for Electronic Systems Used when Obtaining, in Electronic form, Services or Performing Actions Provided by State and Local Self-Government Authorities through the Use of Electronic Digital Signatures". Currently there are 3 methods for electronic/digital signatures used and recognised in Armenia, which are: eID- electronic digital signatures signed by using physical ID cards, mID- electronic digital signatures using mobile IDs, verified by mobile operators and applD- electronic digital signatures signed using smart devices.

Below are the links to the above-mentioned law and decree in Armenian:

<https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/218694/latest>

<https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/209938>

No.

Other – for example, electronic signatures are only permissible for certain categories of documents. Please specify: N/A

Unknown.

For Parties that answered Q.4 affirmatively, please answer question 4.1:

4.1 For incoming electronic public documents (i.e., those issued by other Contracting Parties), does your State impose specific requirements or technical standards for accepting electronic / digital signatures?

Yes – please specify the applicable requirements or technical standards: N/A

No.

Other – please specify: N/A

Unknown.

5 Under your internal law, do foreign electronic public documents have the same probative value as paper public documents?

Yes – Please specify (including whether your receiving agencies are able to accept and process incoming electronic public documents): *[If the foreign electronic public document has the necessary requisites on it (electronic signature, electronic seal etc.) which can indicate its authenticity and can be used to check it, the Armenian relevant authorities accept and process such documents.]*

No.

It depends – please specify: N/A

Other – please specify: N/A

Unknown.

If relevant, please explain further any of the options above: N/A

6 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 1961 Apostille Convention)?

Yes, all public documents are executed or able to be executed in electronic form.

Yes, certain categories of public documents are executed or able to be executed in electronic form.

No, public documents are never executed in electronic form.

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

For Parties that answered affirmatively and execute, or are able to execute, public documents in electronic form, please answer question 6.1:

6.1 Can electronic public documents issued in your State be verified by foreign receiving agencies?

Yes – please specify how they can be verified: *[Electronic public documents issued by Armenian state authorities can be verified through QR codes or indication about the verification website (www.e-verify.am) on them.]*

No.

Other – please specify: N/A

Unknown.

6.2 If your State executes, or is able to execute, electronic public documents but has not implemented the e-Apostille component, how is an Apostille issued for such electronic documents?

The public document must first be executed in paper format.

A hard copy of the electronic public document is printed and a paper Apostille is issued and attached.

Other – please specify: N/A

III. Issuance of e-Apostilles

The questions below are intended to identify any requirements or conditions that Contracting Parties may impose for issuing e-Apostilles, as well as to understand the procedures followed by the Competent Authorities and how the underlying public document is treated.

7 Does your State have any requirements, conditions, or limitations for issuing e-Apostilles? If so, please describe them (e.g., requirements concerning the identity of the applicant; the use of specific platforms or digital solutions for applications; the nature or the form of the underlying public document; etc.).

Yes – please specify: *[There are certain requirements and limitations for issuing e-Apostilles. Online applications must be filed through the official e-platform (e-services.moj.am), and applications submitted via email or other websites are not accepted. Applicants are required to provide identification and pay the state duty electronically. A key technical requirement is the use of a valid 16-digit tracking number, which allows the system to automatically retrieve the electronic document. Additionally, online filing of applications for Apostille certification of civil status acts bearing an ink stamp and a handwritten signature, lacking both a tracking number and a QR code, including Soviet-style certificates, is not possible.*

Regarding the nature of the underlying public document, there is only one type of document for which Apostille is issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in paper form, that is the certificate of conviction and wanted status in Armenia (criminal record certificate).]

No.

Please explain further any of the items above, if relevant: N/A

8 Under your internal law, which of the following formats of public documents are eligible for the issuance of e-Apostilles?

More than one answer is possible.

Electronic public documents.

Paper public documents that have been scanned by a public official.

Paper public documents that have been scanned by applicants.

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

- 9 Does your State issue paper Apostilles alongside e-Apostilles?
- Yes.
 No, we only issue e-Apostilles.
- 9.1 If yes, please indicate the proportion of e-Apostilles issued in comparison to paper Apostilles. If known, provide any specific reasons that may explain the difference in proportions.
- 10 *[In Armenia, the predominance of electronic apostilles is due to the fact that the state has moved to digitalization process, and since 2021 the Civil Status Acts Registration Agency of the Ministry of Justice has been issuing only electronic apostilles for various types of documents, except for one, which is provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the other hand, provides only one type of apostille, and does so in paper form: this refers to the certificate of conviction and wanted status in Armenia (criminal record certificate).

This is why the number of electronic apostilles prevails, and their proportion is significantly higher than that of paper apostilles.]*
- 9.2 If yes, what are the criteria for issuing paper Apostilles versus e-Apostilles (e.g., is the nature or the form of the underlying public document decisive, or can applicants choose between the two formats)?
- [The criteria for issuing paper Apostilles versus e-Apostilles are determined by the domestic legislation, described above.

Applicants cannot choose the type of apostille at their discretion; it is determined by legislation, therefore the nature of the underlying public document is also decisive whether an electronic or paper form apostille will be issued, as only the certificate of conviction and wanted status in Armenia (criminal record certificate) requires a paper form apostille.

When paper documents are submitted, the competent authority of the Republic of Armenia eligible for issuing e-Apostilles, which is the Civil Status Acts Registration Agency of the Ministry of Justice, scans the paper documents, thereby converting them into electronic files. An electronic apostille is then issued for these files, attached to the end of the respective document, which cannot be detached. The file with the e-Apostille on it is sent to the applicant's email address, indicated in the application. Further on, when the applicant visits the Ministry of Justice to obtain their original paper documents, the e-Apostille is printed and provided alongside the documents, although only the e-Apostille sent to the e-mail address is considered the original one.]*
- 9.3 If not, how does your State issue e-Apostilles for paper-based documents?
- N/A
- 11 When issuing e-Apostilles for electronic public documents, does your State preserve the electronic / digital signature of the underlying document?
- Yes, the electronic / digital signature is preserved. Please explain how this is done: *[When the e-Apostille is issued on the electronic public document, the electronic/digital signature of the underlying document is preserved in the sense that it remains visible, but not active any longer.]*
- No, only the electronic / digital signature of the e-Apostille is preserved.
- If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A
- 12 When issuing e-Apostilles, how does your Competent Authority complete the standard informational items on the Certificate? Please indicate whether there are any differences compared with issuing paper Apostilles or authenticating paper public documents.
- The Competent Authority completes all standard informational items in the same manner as when issuing paper Apostilles or authenticating paper public documents.

The Competent Authority completes the items differently as follows:

- Items 2-4: N/A
- Items 7 and/or 10: N/A

13 **In addition to the digital signature, does your e-Apostille include any other security or technical features, such as QR codes, encryption, digital watermarks, or similar measures?**

[The Armenian e-Apostille has the following security and technical features on it: a digital wet blue ink seal reflected on the e-Apostille as a static visible picture, a wet blue signature of the official having signed the e-Apostille, which is scanned and reflected on it as a static visible picture, a QR code, a 16 digit tracking number (the last 2 features are used to verify the authenticity of the e-Apostille).]

IV. Operation of an e-Register

14 **What particulars are contained in your e-Register?**

More than one answer is possible.

- Number and date of the Apostille (required).
- Name and capacity of the person signing the document and / or the name of authority whose seal or stamp is affixed (required).
- Name and / or type of underlying document.
- Description of the contents of underlying document.
- Name of the applicant.
- State of destination.
- Copy of the Apostille.
- Copy of the underlying public document.
- Other – please specify: N/A

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: *[After verifying the authenticity of the e-Apostille in the e-Register (www.e-verify.am website serves as an e-Register in practice), it is possible to view the e-Apostille and the underlying public document itself and to download it. The e-Apostille and the underlying public document are shown as one document and it is not possible to disrupt the integrity of the document.]*

V. Issues with e-Apostilles

The questions below are intended to assess the practical acceptance of e-Apostilles among Contracting Parties to the 1961 Apostille Convention. They aim to identify whether e-Apostilles issued or received by a Contracting Party have ever been refused, the reasons for any such refusals, and the actions taken in response.

15 **Has an e-Apostille issued by your Competent Authority ever been refused by the authorities of another Contracting Party?**

- Unknown.
- No.
- Yes, please provide any further information, in particular the reasons why the e-Apostille was refused, if known: *[There have been cases when Armenian e-Apostilles, presented in foreign countries (signatory parties to the 1961 Apostille Convention) were not accepted due to the suspicion that they are not the original ones, because when printed on a regular A4 format paper it looks like a usual copy of an original paper document.]*

16 If an e-Apostille has been rejected, what actions were taken in response?

More than one answer is possible.

- A paper Apostille was issued instead.
- Contacted the receiving authority.
- Contacted the Competent Authority of the place of destination.
- Contacted nearest diplomatic mission of the place of destination.
- Contacted own diplomatic mission accredited to the place of destination.
- Contacted the Permanent Bureau.
- No action taken.

17 Other, please specify: *[As described in paragraph 16 above, there are cases when e-Apostilles issued by the Armenian competent authority are refused in some foreign states. In these cases applicants contact the Civil Status Acts Registration Agency of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia (the competent authority issuing e-Apostilles) and the latter issues an official letter clarifying this situation, stating that Armenia has been issuing e-Apostilles since 2021 and they are considered the original ones, meaning that the electronic form of the Apostilles serves as the original document and its authenticity is verified through www.e-verify.am. It is noteworthy, that such cases have gradually become less common.]*

Unknown.

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: N/A

18 Has an e-Apostille received by your authorities ever been refused?

Unknown.

No.

Yes, please provide any further information, in particular the reasons why the e-Apostille was refused, if known: N/A

If relevant, please explain any of the options above: *[Foreign e-Apostilles received specifically by the Civil Status Acts Registration Agency of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia (the competent authority issuing e-Apostilles) have never been refused, given the fact, that it has always been possible to verify their authenticity.*

The competent authority for issuing e-Apostilles has no information regarding the proportion of refusals (if any) of foreign e-Apostilles received by any other authorities or notary offices in Armenia.]

VI. Education and training

19 Has your State implemented training activities or issued any guidelines on the operation of the e-APP for officers in the Competent Authority(ies)?

No.

Yes, please specify: N/A

20 Has your State implemented training activities or issued any guidelines on the acceptance of e-Apostilles and the operation of e-Registers for receiving authorities?

No.

Yes, please specify: N/A

If your State has issued guidelines or supporting documentation for receiving authorities, please indicate the format used, the type of information included, how the documents have been distributed, and how frequently they are issued, if known: N/A

- 21 Is / Are your Competent Authority(ies) willing and able to meet with other Competent Authorities to discuss the implementation and operation of the e-APP and to exchange experiences?
- Yes, please specify: N/A.
 No, please specify: N/A.
 Unknown.

VII. Miscellaneous

- 22 Do you have any suggestions that could assist in the promotion, implementation, and / or operation of the e-APP?
- No.
 Yes – please specify: N/A
- 23 Are there any specific topics or practical issues related to the e-APP that your State would like have discussed at the 14th International Forum on the e-APP?
- No.
 Yes – please specify: *[Considering the growing use of e-Apostilles worldwide, we would suggest to discuss the topic of the necessary requisites to be reflected on the e-Apostilles, as provided in the model of certificate of the annex to the Convention (Article 4). Does it remain obligatory to write all those details on the e-Apostille or is it discussed to reduce that information to some extent?]*
- 24 Please confirm whether your responses to this questionnaire can be published on the HCCH website.
- No.
 Yes – please specify whether certain questions should not be published: *[All responses can be published on the HCCH website.]*

VIII. Additional information & supporting documents

- 25 Please indicate any additional information or documentation to support your response. This may include resources for the general public or guidelines for Competent Authority staff, as well as any recent judicial decisions, legislative developments, books, articles, or published works relevant to the operation of the 1961 Apostille Convention.
- N/A

Please attach any relevant documents when submitting the questionnaire to secretariat@hcch.net.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.