

## FINLAND

### 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?	[b] No.
2. Are foreign public documents exempted from legalisation by virtue of your internal law, practice, or any bilateral / multilateral agreements (excluding the Apostille Convention)?	[a] Yes, under internal law. <i>Legalization or similar formality is rarely required by our national law. Formalities are exempted by virtue of certain Hague Conventions, Instruments of the European Union, Nordic Agreements and Bilateral Agreements.</i>
Competent Authorities	
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>	One authority, Digital and Population Data Services Agency, with multiple service locations.
4. Do your diplomatic missions abroad play a role in the Apostille issuance process?	[d] No.
Substantive Scope	
5. Is the concept of 'public document' defined in your internal law?	[b] No.
6. Have you experienced any difficulties in characterising a 'public document' for the purposes of the Apostille Convention?	[b] No.
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?	[c] No.
8. Do you think this Art. 1(3)(a) exclusion is justified in the context of the modern operation of the Convention?	[a] Yes.
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?	[c] No.
10. Do you think this Art. 1(3)(b) exclusion is justified in the context of the modern operation of the Convention?	[a] Yes.

11. Do you issue (outgoing) or accept (incoming) Apostilles for any of the following categories of document?		Issue	Accept
	Certificates of origin	X	
	Export licences		
	Import licences		
	Health and safety certificates issued by the relevant government authorities or agencies	X	
	Certificates of products registration		
	Certificates of conformity		
	End user certificates (i.e. documents certifying that the buyer is the end user of acquired goods)		
Commercial invoices			
<b>Apostille Process</b>			
<b>Certification of Public Documents</b>			
12. Do any of your public documents require some other intermediate certification before the issuance of an Apostille?	[b] No, an intermediate certification is not required for any public document; Apostilles are issued directly upon the public document.		
<b>Requesting an Apostille (Outgoing)</b>			
13. How can an Apostille be requested?	[a] In person.		X
	[b] By post.		X
	[c] By email.		
	[d] Through a website.		
	[e] Other.		
14. When issuing an Apostille, do you enquire about the State of destination?	[b] Yes, the enquiry is made orally.		
15. How long does it take for an Apostille to be issued?	In-person request (paper Apostille)	Other requests (from the time of receipt) (paper Apostille)	e-Apostille requests
	On the spot	On the following working day	
16. Does your Competent Authority impose a fee for issuing an Apostille?	[a] Yes, a single price for all Apostilles. 30 €		
<b>Issuing an Apostille (Outgoing)</b>			
17. How is the origin of a public document verified for the purpose of issuing an Apostille (i.e. 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. [iv] Other. <i>There is no database of sample signatures or stamps, the capacity of the signer is verified from the register if available or by phone or email.</i>		
18. How does a Competent Authority address situations where it is unable to verify the origin of the public document?	[d] Other. <i>There rarely are such cases, if we don't get an answer by phone or by email at once, we keep trying until we can verify the capacity of the signer.</i>		

19.	In what language(s) are the 10 standard items of your Apostilles available?	[c] In three languages. <i>Finnish - Swedish - English</i>	
20.	In what language(s) are the blank fields of your Apostilles filled in?	[a] In one language. <i>Finnish, Swedish or English, depending on the language used on the underlying document so the same language is used.</i>	
21.	How are the blank fields of your Apostilles filled in?	[b] Using computer software. <i>Word-document.</i>	
<b>Apostille Registers</b>			
22.	How is your Apostille register, required by Article 7, maintained?	[a] Single Competent Authority. [iv] Other. <i>Mainly in paper form except in Helsinki where it is an electronic form (not publicly accessible).</i>	
23.	What particulars are contained in your Apostille register?	[a] Number and date of the Apostille (required).	X
		[b] Name and capacity of the person signing the document and / or the name of authority whose seal or stamp is affixed (required).	X
		[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.	X
		[h] Copy of the underlying document.	
		[i] Other. <i>Name of the notary public signing the Apostille in Helsinki, copy of the Apostille at the other locations.</i>	X
24.	Is there a limit to how long records can be retained on the Apostille register?	[c] Yes, other. <i>4 years.</i>	
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?	[d] Between 10 and 20 times per year.	
<b>Technology &amp; the e-APP</b>			
26.	Under your internal law, do you recognise electronic / digital signatures as functionally equivalent to handwritten signatures (i.e. can a public document be signed electronically)?	[a] Yes. <i>For the purpose of the issuance of the Apostille a handwritten signature is, however, requested.</i>	
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)?	[a] Yes.	
For Parties that answered yes to Q27. 27.1. What categories of public documents are executed, or able to be executed, in electronic		[a] All public documents.	
		[b] Civil status documents (e.g. birth, death and marriage certificates) and certificates of non-impediment.	X

form (whether or not they are to be used abroad under the Convention)?	[c]	Other administrative documents (including decisions from administrative tribunals or decision-making bodies).	X
	[d]	Extracts from commercial registers and other registers.	
	[e]	Notarial authentications of signatures.	
	[f]	Other notarial acts.	
	[g]	Diplomas and other education documents.	X
	[h]	Court documents, including judgments.	
	[i]	Patents or other documents pertaining to intellectual property rights.	
	[j]	Documents relating to adoptions.	
	[k]	Translations.	
	[l]	Medical or health certificates.	X
	[m]	Criminal records.	X
	[n]	Import or export licences.	
	[o]	Certificates of origin.	
	[p]	Certificates of conformity.	X
[q]	Other.		
<p><i>For Parties that answered yes to Q27.</i></p> <p>27.2. Approximately what percentage of your public documents are originally executed in electronic form (whether or not they are to be used abroad under the Convention)?</p>	<p>Not accepted at the Notary Public for verification at the moment, no knowledge of the yearly amount of such documents. However we have started preparations for the change of the proceedings in the future.</p>		
28. Do you issue e-Apostilles?	<p>[b] No.  [i] We are studying the use of e-Apostilles and plan to implement the e-Apostille component.  <i>Preliminary study started, not scheduled yet.</i></p>		
<p><i>For Parties that answered no to Q28.</i></p> <p>28.1. What challenges are you facing that may prevent you from implementing the e-Apostille?</p>	[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.	
	[g]	Other.	
<p><i>For Parties that answered no to Q28.</i></p> <p>28.2. How do you issue an Apostille for a public document executed in electronic form?</p>	[c]	Other. <i>So far the Apostille is not issued if the document is in electronic form and the client is advised to get a signature and a wet stamp.</i>	

29. Are your authorities equipped to accept incoming e-Apostilles?	[b] Yes, but on certain conditions. <i>Digital and Population Data Services Agency accepts also e-Apostille if the underlying document is attached.</i>	
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>Preliminary study has been started.</i>	
For Parties that answered no to Q30. 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.	
	[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>We have made some contacts and are willing to exchange information and experience.</i>	
<b>Issues with Apostilles</b>		
32. Has an Apostille <b>issued</b> 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.	
	[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.	
	[h] The underlying document was not a public document under the law of the destination.	
	[i] Other. <i>Apostille was refused but no reasons for the refusal were given.</i>	X
	[j] Unknown.	
	[k] No / Not applicable.	
For Parties that answered other than "No" to Q32.	[a] The Apostille was reissued.	

32.1. If an Apostille was rejected, what action did you take?	[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.	
	[h]	Other. <i>We instructed the applicant to request more detailed information about the reasons for the rejection and the case is still open.</i>	X
	[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> ).	
	[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. <i>With regards e-Apostille the underlying document was missing, no detailed knowledge of the amount of such cases.</i>	X
	[k]	Unknown.	
[l]	No / Not applicable.		

Miscellaneous	
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>	[b] No.
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.
39. Are there any specific topics or practical issues that you would like discussed at the e-APP Forum? <i>If yes, would you like your answer to this question to be published without reference to your authority or State?</i>	[b] No.
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? <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> <i>If yes, would you like your answer to this question to be published without reference to your authority or State?</i>	[b] No.