

**TO LEGALISE OR NOT ?
THAT WAS MY QUESTION**
Part 2



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Foto: [Harry Heuts](#)

Dear reader,

In my [last column](#) I told you about legalizing documents or “legaliseren” of your signature by a Dutch notary.

I ended by stating in short the difference between the two. But that is usually not were it ends for you. You probably will need an Apostille or even more.

Apostille: short or long way

In either case the fact that a Dutch notary has to be sworn into office and is appointed by the Dutch King, should be proof enough that everything is correctly executed. But sometimes this is not enough.

In which case you need to go to the nearest courthouse. There, the court-officials will attach an extra document. In this document, the presiding judge will declare that the signature placed by the notary is indeed the latter’s signature.
(you can say that the notary’s signature is now “gelegaliseerd” by the court).

Usually that is enough because of the Apostille Treaty. Signatory-countries to this treaty need to accept the court declaration and the signature of the judge. So this is the short Appostille-method.

But not all countries have signed this treaty. If you need to send the documents to one of those non-signatory countries, you must take extra action.

From the courthouse the document needs to go to The Hague. There it must usually be presented at the Ministerie van Justitie. The civil servants of this ministry will place an extra text on the document and declare that the signature placed by the judge is indeed the signature of the judge.

After you've got this extra declaration, you sometimes must then go to the Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken. The civil servants working there will sign off on the fact that the previous signature was put there by the Minister van Justitie.

After having gotten this declaration, you must ultimately go to the Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, which will add the final Dutch declaration that the last person signing was the Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken.

And just to finish everything, you must then proceed to the embassy in The Hague of the recipient country. The ambassador will then add the final text. This is (you might have guessed) that the signature of the Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken is indeed his. Thereby completing the whole "chain link" from the signature of the Dutch notary to the only reliable one (in the eyes of this foreign state). I.e. that of their ambassador to The Netherlands.

(Sometimes you can go directly from the Ministerie van Justitie to the Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, bypassing the Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken or to the embassy. Make sure you check with embassy officials before going to The Hague).

So if you need to have a document or your signature legalized, make sure that you know if you can follow the short route or need to take the extra time and drive the extra miles to The Hague and all the ministries.

On my site (www.ntrs.nl) you can subscribe to my free newsletter. You will receive an email with my latest columns or legal news.

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