

**TO LEGALISE OR NOT ?  
THAT WAS MY QUESTION**  
Part 1



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Dear reader,

I don't think I am anywhere near the Great Bard, but I think I can use a changed version of the famous quote by William Shakespeare.

As a trained legal practitioner I know how important it is to use the correct wordings and what great consequences incorrect wording can have. But that this can be double so when speaking in a foreign language was brought home to me by a request from an employee of the United World College in Maastricht.

**Can you legalize some documents ?**

I was asked this question and immediately said yes. But when my client came to the office, I discovered that I had made a wrong presumption.

A Dutch notary uses the term “legalisatie”. This sounds almost the same as “to legalize”. But it means different things. And since you might one day need a notary to legalize something, I think it is useful if I tell you a bit more on this subject.

**Legalisatie is not to legalize but means copy collationnee**

If you want to legalize a document, this means that a Dutch notary will make a copy of the original document and then will write some text of his or her own on the copy, place his seal of office and sign the copy. This procedure is called: copy collationnee and means that the Dutch notary makes a true copy of the original document.

By doing this, through the power invested by the Dutch King in the notary, it is made clear that the copy is the same as the original document. So a copy collationnee are the words you use with a Dutch notary when you need to have a document legalized.

This gives you the advantage that you keep the original document and can send the copy abroad if required to do so (say a graduation diploma when applying for a post-graduate course in another country).

### **So what does the Dutch “legalisatie” mean ?**

An understandable question since the Dutch notaries use the Dutch word “legalisatie”. When a Dutch notary uses this word he or she means that it is your signature that will be legalized, not the document which you sign.

A Dutch notary will ask you to sign the original document in his or her presence and then will add a special text after your signature and his or her seal of office and then will sign this original document too. In the text added by the notary it states that you have indeed signed the original document and by interference that you did so of your own free will and without having second thoughts.

So instead of getting a true copy for you to send away, you receive the original document back to put in the mail. But there can be no doubt that it is indeed your signature on this original document.

### **Why choose one above the other ?**

You ask the Dutch notary for a copy collationnee if you yourself don't have to sign a document, but need only a copy of one.

If on the other hand you need to sign an official document, you must ask for your signature to be “gelegaliseerd”.

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