

Global BRIEF Immigration Alert | December 15, 2011



## COSTA RICA | Document Authentication by Apostille

On December 14, 2011, Costa Rica's Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a press statement confirming that official documents issued by the appropriate Costa Rican government agencies or documents certified by a Costa Rican Notary Public may now be authenticated using the Apostille Convention.

### What is an "Apostille"?

In diplomatic terms, the multi-national Hague Conference adopts various treaties ("conventions") in which member countries can join various conventions to provide procedural uniformity in international commercial dealings and legal proceedings with other member countries.

The French term "Apostille" loosely translates as a "certificate of attestation". The Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement for Legalization for Foreign Public Documents of 1961, known as the "Apostille Convention", is an international treaty that codifies the procedures by which a document can be certified as legally authentic in one member country for use in all other member countries.

### What is an Apostille Used For? / Where to Obtain in Costa Rica?

Including Costa Rica, the Apostille Convention now has 102 member countries that use a simplified certification procedure to authenticate official documents (e.g., family civil certificates, such as birth and marriage certificates), legal documents (adoption or divorce decrees) or certified documents (notarized documents or university diplomas). Documents are presented to a designated agency (usually a Secretary of State or Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in the document's country of origin and affixed with a 10-point certificate called an "Apostille".

To confirm which other member countries will accept a Costa Rican document affixed with an Apostille, please consult the Hague Conference's updated status

table: [http://www.hcch.net/index\\_en.php?act=conventions.status&cid=41](http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=conventions.status&cid=41)

(Note: Costa Rica is denoted as "Entered into Force" or "EIF" on 14-XII-2011.)

Persons who wish to authenticate legal, official and notarized documents originating in Costa Rica should consult with the designated Costa Rican authority, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ([http://www.hcch.net/index\\_en.php?act=authorities.details&aid=903](http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=authorities.details&aid=903)) on the appropriate protocols.

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### **ACTION ITEMS FOR EMPLOYERS**

For companies in Costa Rica issuing notarized documents (e.g., employment confirmation letters or labor agreements) or for employees and family members presenting family civil certificates, Costa Rica's adoption of the "Apostille Convention" will facilitate a quicker and more streamlined process for authenticating documents versus having to obtain legalization of these documents from a host country's consular post.

This news alert was provided in coordination with our Costa Rican KGNM- Costa Rica Relocation.

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#### **Caveat Lector | Warning to Reader**

This content is provided for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice or final guidance for any immigration matter. Readers are reminded that a country's immigration laws and requirements may change with little to no advance public notice. Questions regarding specific immigration matters should be addressed to your Pro-Link GLOBAL specialist.

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