



**Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center
Legal Assistance Information**

**How to Get Married in
Germany, Denmark
& other Countries**



This information paper provides basic information only, and is not intended to serve as a substitute for a personal consultation with a Legal Assistance Attorney. For an appointment to see an attorney, dial DSN 483-8848 or Civilian 0631-411-8848.

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I. HOW TO GET MARRIED IN GERMANY

A. General Procedure

a. **MANDATORY CIVIL WEDDING.** Germany does not recognize common law marriages and requires a mandatory civil wedding ceremony before a registrar of vital statistics ("Standesbeamter") at the local Office of Vital Statistics ("Standesamt"), located in the Town Hall ("Rathaus"), § 1310 BGB (Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, German Civil Code). Both spouses must be present at the mandatory civil wedding ceremony, § 1311 BGB. A religious ceremony by a military chaplain or civilian clergyman is optional. From January 1, 1876(!) until January 1, 2009 that ceremony could only be held after the civil wedding ceremony. Now, it can also be held before. But only the civil wedding ceremony constitutes a valid marriage, § 1310 para. 1 BGB. All marriages performed in Germany according to the German law are recognized in the United States.

b. **NOTICE OF IMPENDING MARRIAGE.** If you contemplate getting married in Germany you have to visit the "Standesamt" to give notice of the impending marriage ("Anmeldung der Eheschließung" formerly known as "Aufgebot"), § 12 PStG (Personenstandsgesetz, Personal Status Act). At that point your fiancé(e) does not have to accompany you if he or she has given a power of attorney to you for the registering process. Call the "Standesamt" to verify opening hours before visiting because most likely the office will be open only for a couple of hours during the week. The clerk should provide you with a detailed list of all documents required in your specific case.

c. **CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY TO MARRY.** After all necessary documents have been turned in, the paperwork is then sent off to the Higher Regional Court of Zweibruecken ("Oberlandesgericht Zweibrücken"), in order to obtain an exemption from the production of a certificate of eligibility to marry ("Befreiung vom Ehefähigkeitszeugnis"), § 1309 BGB, § 12 para. 3 PStG. In exceptional cases you may be allowed to take the paperwork to Zweibruecken yourself, to speed up the process, otherwise the registrar will receive the packet back in about 2 weeks. In any event, a transfer form, which can be obtained from the registrar, has to be filled out and the court fees have to be paid.

d. **FEES.** A registrar's fee of approx. €60 needs to be paid at the time you turn all the assembled documents. If the wedding takes place in another Town Hall than the one where you are registering, being the one having jurisdiction over either you or your fiancé(e), you will have to pay the registrar's fee twice. Additionally, there is a court fee charged by the Higher Regional Court in Zweibruecken. According to Article 14 of the SOFA Supplementary Agreement the court fees for the exemption from the production of a certificate of eligibility to marry ("Befreiung vom Ehefähigkeitszeugnis") is set at €25. The court fee can be paid at the Higher Regional Court, at any German bank or the German Post Office. In the latter cases you have to show the receipt ("Quittung") to the registrar as proof of payment.

d. **BEST MAN.** It is optional to have one, two or no witnesses present at the mandatory civil ceremony, § 1312 BGB. However, any witness needs to be over the age of 18 and he/she needs to prove his/her identity with either a passport or military I.D. card. If you decide to have witnesses present, you should inform the registrar about the witnesses' names at least eight days before the wedding.

e. **TRANSLATOR.** Unless both persons to be wed speak German fluently, you will need to bring a translator or interpreter with you to the Town Hall when you give notice of the impending marriage. Preferably, the same translator or interpreter should also translate during the wedding ceremony. You will also have to have a translator or interpreter present when the witness to the marriage is not in command of the German language. Even though your fiancé(e) may speak German fluently, she/he will not be allowed to translate for you or your best man.

B. Necessary Documents

a. **SIX-MONTH DEADLINE.** It takes time to assemble and to fill out all the necessary documents. Once you have all papers prepared and turned in, then - depending on your special case - it will be only a matter of 6-8 weeks before the wedding bells ring. Upon completion of the registry process, you have to get married within the following 6 months, § 13 para. 4 PStG. If you fail to do so within that time period, *e.g.*, because of a sudden deployment, you have to start the whole process anew and do it all over again. However, how fast you can come up with the required documents depends on you. Most of the non-German documents need to be furnished to the "Standesamt" in a certified copy as well as in a translated version.

b. **DOCUMENTS NEEDED.** You will need at least the following documents:

(1) **PASSPORT.** Military I.D. Cards are not always accepted. Passports are preferred and a "must have" unless you are a US citizen or a German citizen. If you were born outside the United States, you may also be required to present your naturalization certificate. Note, not all US nationals are US citizens; however all US citizens are US nationals. The U.S. passports normally make no distinction between the two, mentioning only the bearer's nationality, not citizenship. If your name has been legally changed since the issuance of your birth certificate or passport, you should present an official court decree to this effect.

(2) **BIRTH CERTIFICATE.** An ORIGINAL birth certificate is needed, certified copies or hospital birth certificates are usually not accepted. The birth certificate should state your parents' names ("Abstammungsurkunde mit Elternangabe"). Birth certificates for any children you may have had with your fiancé(e) prior to the marriage will also have to be presented. Some States allow you to order your birth certificate online (<http://www.vitalcheck.com>).

(3) RESIDENCE PERMIT. Your fiancé(e) will need a residence permit ("Aufenthalts- oder Meldebescheinigung") from his/her hometown not older than 6 weeks, unless he/she has

- a blue SOFA stamp/card, *i.e.*, your fiancé(e) is already subject to the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, prior to the marriage for other reasons, or
- a fiancé(e) visa (not a tourist visa!), *i.e.*, your fiancé(e) arrived in Germany from a country, where a visa is needed to travel to Germany. In such a case your fiancé(e)'s papers had been checked before the fiancé(e) visa was issued.

(4) STATEMENT OF BEING SINGLE. If you have never been married before, you will need to provide the "Standesamt" with an affidavit stating that you are single ("Ledigkeitsbescheinigung"). It can be prepared at the Legal Assistance Office.

(5) POWER OF ATTORNEY TO REGISTER. If your fiancé(e) cannot be present when you register for the impending marriage, then you need to present a written statement indicating that he/she agrees to the initiation of the registry process ("Beitrittserklärung"). It is done very easily by simply having your fiancé(e) sign the power of attorney form, only obtainable at the "Standesamt".

(6) MISCELLANEOUS. Other additional documents as needed in your specific case, *e.g.*, if either of you is divorced, widowed, under 18,... The clerk at the "Standesamt" should provide you with a detailed list when you go there to inquire about the papers needed for getting married in Germany.

C. Divorces, Widowed or Under 18 and other Problem Cases

a. DIVORCED. Except for divorces from States where an interlocutory (temporary) decree had been issued prior to the issuance of the final decree, the German as well as the Danish authorities require the submission of a Certificate of Finality of Divorce in order to be completely sure that the divorce decree was not set aside by a higher court upon an appeal. The judgment of dissolution of marriage or the divorce decree itself stating that it is final, is generally NOT good enough! Your OSJA will be happy to assist you in obtaining the necessary certificate. Only for a few States such proof can be ordered online (<http://www.vitalcheck.com>). Even if you were divorced years ago, the authorities will require such a certificate indicating the final dissolution of marriage, simply because they are extremely thorough and not familiar with your State's laws. Additionally, a certified copy of the dissolution of marriage is required. All this usually involves a small fee of up to \$15 charged by that State's court; an online order - where possible - will cost slightly more. In addition to all of the above, the marriage certificate from the previous marriage has to be presented as well. In case you have been married more than one time, the previous marriage certificates need to be presented as well. Furthermore, you may be even required to present an affidavit in which you state your marital history, where several years have passed since the granting of your divorce. Finally, all these papers need to be officially translated into

German or Danish as applicable. Excerpt translations of the divorce decree are accepted. Summed up, you will need the following:

- (1) Certificate of Finality of Divorce
- (2) Certified copy of the divorce judgment
- (3) Marriage Certificate (of all previous marriages)
- (4) Bi-lingual Affidavit of Marital History
- (5) official translations of (1) through (3)

b. **WIDOWED.** Widowed persons must submit the death certificate of their former spouse. The death certificate must be either the original document or a signed and sealed copy issued by the governmental agency which officially registers deaths. Furthermore, it needs to be translated into German, too.

c. **UNDER 18.** If one of the parties to be wed is at least 16 years old but not yet 18 years old, the German age of emancipation, then that party needs to seek approval from the Family Court in order to be wed, § 1303 BGB. Consent of the concerned party's parents is not sufficient.

d. **FOREIGN FIANCÉ(E).** A foreign fiancé(e) not residing within Germany or another European Union (EU) country has to either apply for a fiancé(e) VISA (not a Schengen/tourist visa) or may enter the country without a VISA (where possible), § 4 AufenthG (Aufenthaltsgesetz, German Residence Act), § 1 AufenthVO (Aufenthaltsverordnung, German Residence Regulation). The 3-month time frame for a tourist visa will hardly be sufficient to assemble all the documents and to register for the impending marriage. An extension of the Tourist Visa is not possible! Therefore, it is important that you start the registering process before your fiancé(e) comes into the country or apply for a fiancé(e) VISA right away. Note, with a tourist visa you are not permitted to work in Germany. If the fiancé(e) is going to stay at your place, he/she must register at your local town hall immediately and deregister once she/he obtained a SOFA stamp, Article 13 Rpf. MeldeG (Rheinland-Pfälzisches Meldegesetz, Registration Act of Rhineland Palatinate), § 11 MRRG (Melderechtsrahmengesetz, Federal Framework Registration Act)! Otherwise your fiancé(e) will be in violation of the applicable German registry laws and regulations.

D. Local Addresses

a. The mandatory civil wedding ceremony takes place at the local Office of Vital Statistics ("Standesamt"). It is located in the Town Hall ("Rathaus"), situated at the municipal administration ("Gemeindeverwaltung") or Town Management ("Stadtverwaltung"). Generally, you can choose between three "Standesämter":

- (1) the one where you are stationed (Kleber Kaserne, Daenner Kaserne, Rhine Ordinance Barracks (ROB) --> Kaiserslautern; Sembach Kaserne --> Winnweiler)

- (2) the one where your fiancé(e) resides or
- (3) any other "Standesamt" in Germany provided that you contacted one of the above-mentioned "Standesämter" first. Note, this will almost double your registration fees.

b. Addresses and telephone numbers of some of the "Standesämter" in the Kaiserslautern Military Community (KMC) are:

Stadt Kaiserslautern
 Stadtverwaltung Rathaus
 Standesamt Kaiserslautern
 Willy-Brandt-Platz 1
 67653 KAISERSLAUTERN
 Tel.: 0631-365-0

Standesamt Landstuhl
 (NOT located in the Town Hall but in the
 "Alte Rentei" Building)
 Kirchenstr. 41
 66849 LANDSTUHL
 Tel.: 06371-83-0

Verbandsgemeindeverwaltung Rathaus
 Standesamt Winnweiler
 Jacobstr. 29
 67722 WINNWEILER
 Tel.: (06302) 602-0

Verbandsgemeindeverwaltung Rathaus
 Standesamt Miesau
 Am Rathaus 2
 66892 BRUCHMÜHLBACH-MIESAU
 Tel.: 06372-922-000

Verbandsgemeindeverwaltung Rathaus
 Standesamt Ramstein
 Am neuen Markt 6
 66877 RAMSTEIN-MIESENBACH
 Tel.: 06371-592-0

II. GERMAN DOMESTIC RELATIONS LAW

a. Getting married to a German national may subject you to German family law - no matter where in the world the wedding ceremony is performed, Article 14 EGBG (Einführungsgesetz zum Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuch, Introduction to the German Civil Code). It is not the intent of this paper to provide you with a thorough overview of the German domestic relations law but rather to encourage you to contact your Legal Assistance Office if you have any questions concerning your specific case. Moreover, you may also have questions involving other areas of law, *e.g.*, double taxation and the law of succession.

b. FAMILY NAME. Under German law you and your German spouse may choose a joint family name, § 1355 BGB. You have the choice between your or your spouse's name (maiden name or married name alike). The spouse, whose name did not become the joint family name, may add his/her name to the joint family name, giving that spouse only a double name. If you exercise one of these options the choice you make will be final and, therefore, the name can never be modified or changed again while you are married. Problems always arise, however,

with Spanish double names, *e.g.*, Puerto Rico. In such a case it is better not to choose a family name according to German law but to do it according to the laws of your home state.

c. **NAME CHANGE AND ADOPTION.** Upon application by your spouse and yourself, any illegitimate children of either spouse, that are living with you and your spouse, can be given the new family name without the other spouse incurring the support obligation and without the consent of the biological father unless the child carries his name, §1618 BGB. Alternatively, you may add the new family name to the child's existing last name. However, the courts evaluate these issues by weighing whether it is in the best interest of the child. A legal adoption (which is more than a simple name change) is the only way that the adopting parent will assume a support obligation, § 1741 BGB. In such a case generally the consent of both biological parents and the adopting parent is required, § 1747 BGB.

d. **PRE-NUPTIAL AGREEMENTS.** In order to be valid and enforceable, pre-nuptial agreements made in Germany need to be sealed and signed before a German Notary ("Notar"), § 1410 BGB. Unlike in the United States, German Notaries are no legal lay persons but specially trained lawyers and publicly appointed legal officers, § 5 BNotO (Bundesnotarordnung, Federal Regulations for Notaries). They have the right to charge a substantial amount of fees for their services, § 140 KostO (Kostenordnung, Regulations on Ex-parte Costs).

e. **DIVORCE.** In the hopefully unlikely event that your marriage does not work out, you will be subject to German law if your spouse files for a divorce in Germany. German jurisdiction will be based on Council Regulation (EC) No. 2201/2003 of 27 November 2003 concerning jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and the matters of parental responsibility (OJ No. L 338, 23 December 2003, p. 1), more commonly known as Brussels-IIa ("EuEheVO, Brüssel-IIa-VO"). And the applicable law will be decided IAW Art. 17 EGBGB (to be replaced as of June 21, 2012 by Council Regulation (EU) No. 1259/2010 of 20 December 2010 implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of the law applicable to divorce and legal separation (OJ No. L 343, 29 December 2010, p. 10) a.k.a. "Rome III". German law not only requires the non-custodial parent (usually the military spouse!), to pay child support (§ 1612a BGB) but also requires spousal support payments to be made during the time while living separate and apart (§ 1361 BGB) as well as after a divorce if ordered so (§ 1569 BGB), *e.g.*, because there is a joint child under the age of three (§ 1570 BGB). The exact figures are based on your net income. Please note that not all of your debts are taken into consideration for calculating your net income, thus the support payments may weigh heavily.

f. **TAXES.** If after the marriage your spouse starts working or continues to work on the German economy, you should caution her/him about applying for a marital status under tax class 3 ("Steuerklasse 3") but advise her/him to keep the tax class 1 ("Steuerklasse 1"), requiring her/him to file taxes single(!). Her/his tax class 3 status will take you out-of-the SOFA protection with regard to income taxes (Art. X SOFA). Although it might seem profitable, your spouse could end up owing taxes instead of getting a tax return because your income, which might(!) remain non-taxable under Art. 19 Double Taxation Treaty¹, will at least have an effect on your

¹ Convention between the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income and Capital and to certain

spouse's tax rate. In addition to that, you might be liable for your spouse's tax debt to the German IRS ("Finanzamt"). After you are married, your spouse will be entitled to legal assistance, too, and may seek advice about her/his specific case before she/he changes her/his tax class. Furthermore, there is also a handout available at the Legal Assistance Office dealing with these specific issues ("Grundzüge des deutschen Steuerrecht - Einkommen- / Lohnsteuer").

other Taxes, dated 28 August 1989, as amended by protocol, dated 1 June 2006, in force since 28 December 2007. (Abkommen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika zur Vermeidung der Doppelbesteuerung und zur Verhinderung der Steuerverkürzung auf dem Gebiet der Steuern vom Einkommen und vom Vermögen und einiger anderer Steuern vom 28. August 1989, Änderungsprotokoll vom 1. Juni 2006, in Kraft seit dem 28. Dezember 2007, DBA-USA 2006/07).

III. DANISH WEDDING

A. Procedure and Documents Needed

a. **LOCATIONS AND FEES.** The cities of Haderslev, Horsens, Tøndern, and Vejle allow you to get married within a couple of days, *i.e.*, if you have all your paperwork ready. The Danish authorities charge a fee of roughly DKR 500 for their services plus the costs for a translator (Danish/ English/ German). Only Danish money will be accepted. Please note, often there is a requirement to stay at least 3 days before the wedding can be performed.

b. **NECESSARY DOCUMENTS.** Basically you will need the same documents as for a marriage in Germany:

- (1) passport (see above)
- (2) an original birth certificate or notarized copy not older than 6 months
- (3) the German partner needs to present an original birth-certificate.
- (4) residence permit, *e.g.*, SOFA card or a valid visa if required (see above)
- (5) leave orders for Denmark if you are in the military
- (6) miscellaneous documents (see above)

c. **PROBLEM CASES.** If you are widowed, divorced or under 18, things are more complicated and the preparation is a little bit more time consuming. In such a case you need to go through a prior approval process with the appropriate Danish "Statsforvalting" (do not confuse it with the German word "Standesamt"!) which could easily take up to a month or even longer. Send only the required paper(s) to the "Statsamt" by registered mail and use a German return address. Upon approval the papers are returned to you via mail and you can proceed with your marriage preparations.

B. Registration Process

a. **REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGE.** If you decide to get married outside of Germany to a German national, then your spouse should immediately after your return to Germany contact his/her "Standesamt" and have the marriage registered in Germany.

b. **VISA REQUIREMENTS.** Denmark neither requires a Visa for US citizens nor Germans or other citizens of the European Union. As of 26 March 2001 the Schengener Treaty, which simplifies Visa regulations within the European Union, is also in effect in Denmark. Consequently, any Schengen VISA issued for traveling to the European Union is valid in Denmark, too.

C. Danish Addresses

The Danish Municipality Reform became effective on January 1, 2007. It divides the country now into five regions and 98 municipalities (<http://www.statsforvaltning.dk>). Therefore, there are 98 Offices of Vital Statistics in Denmark. Almost every office has some special requirements of its own. Consequently, you have to directly contact the office where you would like to get married and - if needed - the appropriate "Statsforvaltning", too. It will do you no good if you contact one of the below listed addresses without having the intention to actually get married there:

Horsens Kommune
Rådhusstorvet 4
DK-8700 Horsens
Tel. 0045-76-292929

Tøndern Kommune
Kongevej 57
DK-6270 Tøndern
Tel. 0045-74-929292

Vejle Kommune
Skolegade 1
DK-7100 Vejle
Tel. 0045-76-810000

Haderslev Kommune
Gåskaergade 26-28
DK-6100 Haderslev
Tel. 0045-74-343434

Aabenraa Kommune
Skelbaekvej 2
DK-6200 Aabenraa
Tel.: 0045-73-767676

The appropriate "Statsforvaltning" is for:

Horsend and Vejle:

Vejle Statsamt
Vedelsgade 17 B
DK-7100 Vejle
Tel.: 0045-75-82330-0

Haderslev, Tondern, Vojens and Padberg:

Sønderjylland Statsamt
H.P. Hansens Gade 42
DK-6200 Aabenraa
Tel.: 0045-74-313131

Further information can also be found on the website of the US Embassy in Copenhagen, Denmark at <http://www.denmark.usembassy.gov/getting--married.html>.

IV. BONDS OF MATRIMONY IN OTHER EU COUNTRIES

A. Switzerland

1. Swiss Procedure

a. NATO-PERSONNEL. The Swiss Canton of Basel offers a special service available for US NATO-personnel only. If you and your fiancé(e) are both US citizens and stationed here in Europe, you can get married in Basel, Switzerland. However, you cannot marry your German fiancé(e) in Basel, unless she/he permanently resides there. The address for the registrar, the Civil Office of Vital Statistics ("Zivilstandesamt"), is the following:

Zivilstandesamt Basel-Stadt
Rittergasse 11
CH-4010 Basel
Tel.: 0041-61-267-9590

b. PROCEDURE. Persons who wish to be married in Basel must first telephone the Basel registrar to obtain permission for submitting the required documents. The registrar can be reached by phone from 8:00 - 11:00 and 14:00 - 16:00 hours at CIV 0041-61-267-9596. The preferred language is German, but English is spoken as well. The marriage ceremony itself normally takes place on a Tuesday.

c. FEES. The fees, payable in Swiss francs, vary according to your needs, *e.g.*, depending on whether you need them to furnish two witnesses or bring those yourself and if you would like to have a marriage certificate issued in the English language or not.

2. Necessary Documents

a. DOCUMENTS NEEDED. Basically you will need the same documents as for a marriage in Germany. All documents need to be provided in certified German translations. The waiting period after submission of all documents is approximately three weeks. Documents needed include the following:

- (1) Passport (see above)
- (2) an original birth certificate or notarized copy not older than 6 months
- (3) leave orders for Switzerland if you are in the military
- (4) miscellaneous documents, *e.g.*, Statement of Being Single or Certificate of Finality of Divorce, (see above)

b. PROBLEM CASES. Once again, if you are widowed, divorced or under 18, things are more complicated and the preparation is a little bit more time consuming. In such a case you

need to go through a prior approval process with the appropriate Swiss authority, which could take a couple of weeks in addition to the three-week waiting period.

c. Further information (in German only) can be found on the Swiss website of “Bevölkerungsdienste und Migration” of the City of Basel at <http://www.bdm.bs.ch/dienstleistungen/eheschliessung.htm> and on the website of the US Embassy in Bern, Switzerland at http://bern.usembassy.gov/marriage_in_switzerland.html.

B. United Kingdom: Scotland

a. The “Las Vegas” of Great Britain is in the Scottish city of Gretna Green. However, Great Britain is NOT a member of the EU Schengen Treaty and, therefore, strict visa rules apply. Furthermore, the registration fees (payable in British pounds) are generally much higher than in Germany or Denmark.

b. For further and more detailed information turn to the English website at <http://www.gretnaonline.net>.

V. RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

A. Getting Married in the USA

a. If you are just flying to the United States to get married and, thereafter return to Germany, you and your fiancé(e) will simply need to meet the requirements of the State in which you are to be married.

b. In case you and your fiancé(e) plan to get married in the United States **and** intend to stay in the USA, for a period exceeding 90 days, your fiancé(e) will need a so called "K-visa". Therefore, you (not your fiancé(e)!) need to file a petition with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) formerly known as the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) having jurisdiction over your place of residence in the United States. The appropriate application forms (Form I-129F and Form G-325A) as well as the USCIS address are available at the American Consulate General in Frankfurt or the Central Processing Facility (ID Card Section) on Kleber Kaserne (Bldg. 3245). Forms can also be downloaded at <http://www.uscis.gov> by clicking on “Forms”. However, the Consulate will neither approve nor adjudicate the petition. This can only be done by the USCIS back in the States. The approved petition will be forwarded by USCIS to the American Consulate where your fiancé(e) will apply for his or her visa. Further information can also be obtained from the internet page: http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1315.html equires you to complete the marriage in the United States within 90 days and allows your spouse to stay in the United States, exceeding a period of 90 days upon filing an application for (conditional) permanent residency.

A tourist visa ("B-visa") will be good only for up to 90 days even if the holder is married to a United States citizen. Thereafter, the B-visa holder must leave the United States.

c. If your future spouse is a German citizen, she/he needs to make sure to file the marriage with her/his German Town Hall (if you return to Germany right away) or to inform the nearest German Consulate (if you remain in the USA). All marriages involving at least one non-German citizen will be centrally registered at the "Standesamt I" in Berlin.

B. How to bring your Foreign Spouse to the USA

a. Should a non-American wish to accompany a United States citizen spouse to the United States to live, the non-American spouse should apply for a non-quota immigration visa at the American Consulate General, Gießener Str. 30, 60435 Frankfurt/M. (Tel. 069-7535-0). However, in most cases a Form I-130 needs to be filled out first by you. Therefore, you have to furnish proof of your US citizenship (military ID cards are not proof of US citizenship!) and proof of a legal relationship between you and your alien relative, *e.g.*, marriage certificate. In order to ensure you have adequate finances to support your family, you will be required to provide copies of your tax returns for the past 3 years. Approved petitions are sent to the Department of State Visa Processing Center. It can take up to four months for the application to be approved. Further information material may be obtained either from the American Consulate General in Frankfurt or the Central Processing Facility (ID Card Section) on Kleber Kaserne (Bldg. 3245). You may also consult the internet page: <http://travel.state.gov/visa>.

b. GREEN CARD. The Alien Registration Card (ARC), commonly known as the "Green Card", is issued on Form I-551. A person marrying a US citizen is given a temporary residence and after two years, they are required to file a joint petition on a Form I-751 in order to remove the temporary conditions. If they are not married at the two year mark, the alien spouse can still file an I-751, but as a waiver of the requirement to file a joint petition. That waiver can be based on either the marriage being one of good faith (so long as the alien spouse did not end the marriage) or based on extreme hardship to the alien, if the waiver is not granted.

c. LRP. Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) whose I-130 has not been pending for 3 years or who have been waiting for the immigrant visa (once I-130 is approved) for 3 years can bring their spouse to the USA on a V-visa. However, that spouse cannot leave the USA and return on this visa.

VI. NATO STATUS AND SOFA STAMP/CARD

A. Application for SOFA Identification Certificate

a. **IMPORTANT CHANGE.** Citizens from certain countries will only be acknowledged as dependents once they have obtained homeland security clearance first because as of June 14, 2006 AER 600-77 (USAFE Inst 51-714) has been changed. A spouse will NO longer be automatically entitled to a SOFA stamp any more. For certain foreign spouses, *e.g.*, citizens of the Philippines, Russia, and many African countries, a SOFA stamp will only be issued AFTER proper US Immigration papers have been approved first. The requirements are laid out in AER 600-77 para. 8.b.(c) referring to the Foreign Clearance Guide. With respect to these third-country nationals, US Immigration authorities will review and determine their eligibility to enter into the USA first. AER 600-77 does not authorize for any exceptions to policy but basically applies the same concept as if the sponsor were stationed CONUS and needed to bring a foreign spouse to the USA to the sponsor's situation in USAREUR.

b. The electronic Foreign Clearance Guide provides the following information on its website (<https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/fcg.cfm>):

I.A. IDENTIFICATION CREDENTIALS REQUIRED FOR OFFICIAL TRAVEL

4. Third-country nationals (including eligible family members).

(a) Citizens or nationals from one of the countries listed below must obtain a SOFA identification certificate from Region Director, IMCOM – Europe prior to arrival in Germany.

(b) Documents required by Region Director, IMCOM – Europe, in Schwetzingen, Germany.

- (1) Passport
- (2) Copy of orders to Germany
- (3) AE Form 600/77A or DD Form 1056
- (4) Copy of one of the following documents:
 - (a) Copy of lawful permanent residence card (aka “green card”), or
 - (b) US customs/United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) stamp in passport extending validity of lawful permanent residence card, or
 - (c) USCIS document confirming an approved immigrant visa petition, *e.g.*, Form I-171 (Notice of Approval of Relative Immigrant Visa Petition) or Form I-797 (Notice of Action).

(c) Mail the documents shown above to either of the following addresses:

IMCOM – Europe (IMEU-HMT/SOFA)
UNIT 29055

APO AE 09081-9055

Or international mail (must be sent via DHL, UPS, or FedEx)

IMCOM – Europe (IMEU-HMT/SOFA)

Friedrichfelder Landstrasse

Kilbourne Kaserne

68723 Schwetzingen, Germany

(d) Countries requiring issuance of a SOFA identification certificate by Region Director, IMCOM – Europe, are indicated below. SOFA identification certificates will not be issued until documentation is provided substantiating the individual's US permanent residence status or approval for US immigration. Forms of documentation required are noted in Section I.A.4.b, above.

(4) Countries requiring issuance of a SOFA identification certificate by Region Director, IMCOM – Europe: [List of Countries]...

B. Issuance of SOFA Identification Certificate

a. Once your spouse has been approved for a SOFA status, the following steps can be taken:

(1) Central Processing Facility - Customer Service (Kleber Kaserne Bldg. 3245)

(a) Obtain an ID card for your new dependents(s)/Name change on ID card (if applicable)

(b) Update your military records to reflect the new marital status

(c) Enroll your dependent(s) into DERRS/update DEERS, *e.g.*, DD Form 1172, Record of Emergency Data (DD Form 93), SGLI Form 8286

(d) Apply for command sponsorship/joined spouse assignment

(e) Application Form (SS-5) to change the name on the Social Security Card (if applicable)

(2) Central Processing Facility - Finance (Kleber Kaserne Bldg. 3245, DSN 483-6609)

(a) Complete Emergency Payment Authorization (DD Form 1337)

(b) Update pay records (DD Form 1172)

(3) Orderly Room (S-1, PAC office)

(a) Obtain Ration Card(s) for dependent(s)

(b) update NEO records

- for HHC 21st TSC it's located on Panzer Kaserne, Bldg. 3014, Rm 112, DSN 484-8248

(4) Drivers Testing (Daenner Kaserne, Bldg. 3104, DSN 483-7332)

- Obtain a U.S. Forces Certificate of License a.k.a. as USAREUR Driver's License for your new dependent(s)

(5) Housing Office (Vogelweh, Bldg. 1001, DSN 489-6671)

- Apply for government quarters, if desired

(6) Clinic (Kleber 3287, DSN 483-1750 or LRMC)

- Enrollment into TRICARE/CHAMPUIS (DD Form 1172) at (Kleber Kaserne, Bldg. 3245)

(7) Post Office (local)

- Inform personnel of your new last name, so they can update your records and P.O. Box information

b. Please note, SOFA status (AER 600-77) and Individual Logistical Support (ILS) (AER 600-700) are two separate issues. Your spouse may lose ILS, *e.g.*, get barred, but will maintain his/her approved SOFA status as long as the sponsor remains stationed in the country, which is generally the sponsor's date eligible for return from overseas (DEROS) or other conditions set forth in AER 600-77 para. 11 are met.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Legalization & Apostille

a. Legalization is a very formal and time-consuming process of authenticating a document. Most countries have adopted a system under which the Legalization process is simplified by issuing an Apostille². The Apostille is an internationally recognized certification that the notarization conforms to the legal standards of the country of origin. Yet, for documents originating from some Caribbean, Central American, South American and African countries a formal legalization is still required.

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| <p>Apostille (Convention de La Haye du 5 octobre 1961)</p> | |
| 1. Country: | |
| | This public document |
| 2. has been signed by | |
| 3. acting in the capacity of | |
| 4. bear the seal/stamp of | |
| | Certified |
| 5. at | |
| 6. the | |
| 7. by | |
| 8. No. | |
| 9. Seal/Stamp: | 10. Signature: |

b. In Germany US citizens usually do not need to obtain an Apostille. Unless the original document is needed, notarizations by a military notary are sufficient. However, the US

² Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents, dated 5 October 1961. (Übereinkommen zur Befreiung ausländischer öffentlicher Urkunden von der Legalisation vom 5. Oktober 1961).

Department of State is the Apostille authority for Federal documents and notarizations. Documents notarized either by a military notary or a US Consular official need to be mailed to the main office of the State Department, Authentication Office, 5188 23rd St. N.W., SA-1 Columbia Plaza, Washington DC 20520 for the issuance of the Apostille along with a daytime phone number, a stamped self addressed envelope, and the name of the country where the document will be used. There is a fee of approx. \$5.00 per document. The turn around time is about 5 days. For State documents, each and every State has designated its own authority. A list of these authorities is available at your Legal Assistance Office.

B. Army Regulations (AR)

a. The two Army regulations pertaining to marriage of U.S. Army personnel abroad have been rescinded (AR 608-61 and AR 600-240) since September 1996. USAREUR Supplements relying on the basic regulations are no longer valid. The Army considers marriages to be a personal matter for the soldiers since. Should your "Standesamt" have not been made aware of this yet, please contact the Legal Assistance Office at your OSJA. AE Form 1680, AE FL 1536-R and AE FL 1676-R are no longer issued.

b. However, you may need to report to your unit security monitor to complete necessary paperwork required for updating the security clearance when marrying a non-US citizen.

C. Air Force Instructions (AFI)

a. Note, the U.S. Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2609, dated 11 August 1998 (certified current 17 February 2009), covers "Marriage in Overseas Command". The Air Force still insists on Commanders authorizing the marriage. However, the Commander's approval of the pre-marriage does not mean that the US immigration authorities (USCIS) will approve the visa petition concerning an Air Force Service member's foreign spouse.

b. At the end of this handout, you'll find a sample of the necessary Air Force memorandums. U.S. Army soldiers do NOT need these forms!

D. How to file American taxes jointly

a. In order to claim a dependent spouse on your tax form and to file jointly, your spouse will need an SSN (Social Security Number). Yet, a nonresident alien does not get an SSN unless she/he has worked or lived in the United States. Therefore, in case your spouse does not qualify for an SSN, you have to obtain an ITIN (Individual Tax Identification Number).

b. SSN. If your spouse is eligible to obtain a SSN you may pick up a social security application package at your Legal Assistance Office or visit the Social Security Administration's website at <http://www.ssa.gov> and download Form SS-5.

c. For German tax issues see above (II.)(f).

E. ITIN – Apply when filing a tax return (Plan B)

a. You will have to download the most recent version of Form W-7 (Application for IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number) from the IRS web site at <http://www.irs.gov>; fill it out; check block “e” (“spouse of a US citizen/resident alien”) and have spouse sign. Have certified copies of the following identity documents made at the Legal Assistance Office (bring the original documents with you!):

- (1) spouse's passport or spouse's German ID card (“Personalausweis”)
- (2) EU driver's license
- (3) spouse's birth certificate
- (4) marriage certificate

b. Prepare your federal income tax return, but leave the space for spouse's SSN blank; attach W-7 form, with the certified copies of the identity document(s), to the front of it, and mail it to the IRS address, located on your W-7.

Internal Revenue Service
Philadelphia Service Center
ITIN Operation
P.O. Box 149342
Austin, TX 78714-9342

c. Free assistance is available at the Kaiserslautern Tax Assistance Center all year. Call DSN 483-7684/8848 and ask to speak to Mr. Davis.

d. The ITIN Unit will assign your spouse an ITIN, write it in the blank space for spouse's SSN on the tax return, and forward the return to the Philadelphia Service Center for processing. This will delay refunds for several weeks! The ITIN Unit will also mail a letter to your spouse bearing her/his ITIN for use on future returns. ITIN cards are no longer being issued.

e. Note: You canNOT e-file in the year when you request an ITIN while filing a tax return.

Prepared by Joerg C. Modellmog, German Attorney-Advisor

VIII. ANNEXES

AFFIDAVIT OF BEING SINGLE & CITIZENSHIP

WITH THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES)
)
AT KAISERSLAUTERN, GERMANY, APO AE 09227)

I being duly sworn under oath, do hereby depose, state and swear that the following information is true and correct:

(Ordnungsgemäß vereidigt, erkläre, schwöre und gebe ich hiermit zu Protokoll, daß die folgenden Angaben wahr sind:)

Last Name / *Nachname:*

Name / *Vorname:*

Middle Name / *2. Vorname:*

SSN / *Sozialversicherungs-Nr.:*

Place of Birth / *Geburtsort:*

Date of Birth / *Geburtsdatum:*

(DD/MM/YYYY) (*TT/MM/JJJJ*)

Citizenship / *Staatsbürgerschaft:* **US American / US Amerikaner**

Rank / *Rang:*

Unit / *Einheit:*

APO AE 09

I have never been married prior to this date and I am free to marry.

(Ich war bisher noch nie verheiratet und bin frei zu heiraten).

SIGNATURE BLOCK

Rank, U.S. Army

Subscribed, sworn to and acknowledged before me by is known to me to be a service member on active duty outside the United States. This acknowledgment is executed in my official capacity under the authority granted by Title 10, United States Code, Section 1044a, which also states that no seal is required on this acknowledgment, on this ... day of,

SIGNATURE BLOCK

Rank, U.S. Army

Legal Assistance, NCOIC

AFFIDAVIT OF MARITAL HISTORY & CITIZENSHIP

WITH THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES)
)
AT KAISERSLAUTERN, GERMANY, APO AE 09227)

I being duly sworn under oath, do hereby depose, state and swear that the following information is true and correct:
(*Ordnungsgemäß vereidigt, erkläre, schwöre und gebe ich hiermit zu Protokoll, daß die folgenden Angaben wahr sind:*)

Last Name / *Nachname:*
Name / *Vorname:*
Middle Name / *2. Vorname:*
SSN / *Sozialversicherungs-Nr.:*

Place of Birth / *Geburtsort:*
Date of Birth / *Geburtsdatum:*
(DD/MM/YYYY) (*TT/MM/JJJJ*)
Citizenship / *Staatsbürgerschaft:* **US American / US Amerikaner**

Rank / *Rang:*
Unit / *Einheit:*

APO AE 09

Total number of previous marriages of mine: []
(*Gesamtanzahl meiner bisherigen Ehen*)

I have not concealed any annulled, dissolved, divorced or otherwise terminated marriage.
(*Ich habe keine für nichtig erklärte, aufgehobene, geschiedene oder andersartig beendete Ehe verschwiegen*)

I married in, on The marriage was divorced in, on Thereafter, I was married to in, on The Superior Court of the State of, County, USA dissolved the marriage on I have never remarried nor lived as wife/husband with anyone else since the granting of that dissolution of marriage and, therefore, I am free to marry.
(*..... heiratete ich in, Die Ehe wurde am in,, geschieden. Danach habe ich am in, geheiratet. Die Ehe wurde am durch den Superior Court of the State of, County, USA aufgelöst. Ich habe niemals wieder geheiratet oder mit jemandem als Ehefrau/Ehemann zusammengelebt, seit diese Ehe aufgelöst wurde und bin daher frei zu heiraten.*)

SIGNATURE BLOCK
Rank, U.S. Army

Subscribed, sworn to and acknowledged before me by is known to me to be in the Armed Forces outside the United States. This acknowledgment is executed in my official capacity under the authority granted by Title 10, United States Code, Section 1044a, which also states that no seal is required on this acknowledgment, on this ... day of,

SIGNATURE BLOCK
Rank, U.S. Army
Legal Assistance, NCOIC

CERTIFICATION OF FINAL DECREE
(*Rechtskraftzeugnis*)

In re the Marriage of:
(*In der Ehesache von*)

vs.
(*gegen*)

Case No.
(*Aktenzeichen*)

Date of Judgment
(*Datum des Urteils*)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN
(*Wen es angeht*)

I,
(*Ich*)

Clerk of the
(*Urkundsbeamter*
am Gericht)

County of
(*Bezirk*)

State
(*Staat*)

hereby certify as follows: Decree of Dissolution of Marriage was final on
(*bestätige hiermit, daß:*) (Das Scheidungsurteil ist rechtskräftig seit:)

- Such Court Order is one from which no appeal may be taken.
(*Dies Gerichtsurteil ist eines, gegen das kein Rechtsmittel eingelegt werden kann.*)
- The time allowed for an appeal has lapsed and no timely appeal was taken.
(*Die Rechtsmitteleinlegungsfrist ist verstrichen, ohne daß rechtzeitig ein Rechtsmittel eingelegt wurde.*)
- Timely appeal from such order was taken and the appeal has been passed upon adjudicated. Enclosed is a copy of the decision of the appellate court.
(*Fristgemäßes Rechtsmittel gegen dies Gerichtsurteil ist erfolgt und dem Rechtsmittel wurde stattgegeben. Anbei finden Sie eine Kopie der Entscheidung des Rechtsmittelgerichts.*)
- The Court Order has not been in any way amended or superseded.
(*Das Gerichtsurteil ist in keinsterweise ergänzt oder aufgehoben worden.*)
- The Court Order has been amended and enclosed is a copy of all amended orders.
(*Das Gerichtsurteil ist ergänzt worden und beigelegt ist eine Kopie aller ergänzenden Beschlüsse.*)
- A copy of the Decree of Dissolution is enclosed.
(*Eine Kopie des Scheidungsurteils ist beigelegt.*)
- By Law, each party may remarry.
(*Von Gesetzeswegen mag jede der Parteien wieder heiraten.*)

Date:
(Datum:)

Signature of the Clerk or Deputy Clerk of the Court
(*Unterschrift des Urkundsbeamten/in oder stellvertretenden Urkundsbeamten/in*)

SEAL (*Siegel*)

U. S. AIR FORCE – APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY

MEMORANDUM FOR: Commander,

FROM:

SUBJECT: Application for Authorization to Marry

1. I request authorization to marry. The following personal data is furnished:

- a. Last Name.
- b. Name:
- c. Middle Name:
- d. SSN:

- e. Place of Birth:
- f. Date of Birth: (DD/MM/YYYY)
- g. Citizenship: **US American / US Amerikaner**

- h. Rank:
- i. Unit Mailing Address:

- j. Marital Status:
- k. Number of Dependents:

2. The following data regarding my fiancé(e) is furnished:

- a. Last Name / *Nachname*:
- b. Name / *Vorname*:
- c. Middle Name / *2. Vorname*:

- d. Place of Birth / *Geburtsort*:
- e. Date of Birth / *Geburtsdatum*:
(DD/MM/YYYY) / (TT/MM/JJJJ)
- f. Citizenship / *Staatsbürgerschaft*:

- g. Address / *Adresse*:

- h. Marital Status / *Familienstand*:
- i. Number of Dependents / *Anzahl der
Haushaltsmitglieder*:

- j. Present Employer and Address /
Arbeitgeber und dessen Adresse:

3. If this application is approved, the marriage will take place in: _____, Germany.

4. I hereby certify that:

- a. The information given above and in all the accompanying enclosures is true and correct.
- b. I will comply with the local laws and requirements of the country in which the marriage is performed.
- c. I understand and acknowledge that marriage to a United States Citizen does not ensure issuance of an immigration visa to the alien spouse for entry into the United States. Even in cases in which a visa is granted, I understand there is no certainty that an alien spouse will be admitted into the United States at port of entry.
- d. I understand that final jurisdiction is within the cognizance of the commission of immigration and naturalization.
- e. I understand that the laws of some counties contain impediments to marriages contracted between persons of certain different areas, regardless of whether the marriage was performed in that country.
- f. I further understand that, should authority be granted to marry, the United States is not obligated to transport my spouse or dependents to the United States except as provided for in current Armed Forces directives.
- g. I certify that my intended spouse already possesses a valid passport or will have a passport in time for processing of visa application.
- h. Necessary arrangements have been made by me to provide for my prospective spouse and dependents, if any, in such a manner as to ensure that they do not become a public burden upon the US or governmental agencies of another country within the foreseeable future.
- i. I understand that travel in connection with leave to and from the country where the marriage is to take place, is my responsibility and will be at no expense to the US Government.
- j. Entrance into the United States or its territories is not contemplated for my prospective alien spouse and dependents, if any, for the following reasons:
.....
- k. I agree that, if my prospective spouse or myself change our intention to enter into this marriage before receipt of authority, I will notify my unit commander immediately so that processing of the application may be stopped.

5. Date:

SIGNATURE BLOCK
Rank, U.S. Air Force

U. S. AIR FORCE – APPROVAL OF AUTHORIZATION TO MARRY

MEMORANDUM FOR: _____

(Air Force Servicemember)

(Mitteilung an das Mitglied der US Luftstreitkräfte)

FROM: Commander,

(Von: Kommandeur,)

SUBJECT: Approval of Authority to Marry

(Betreff: Genehmigung zur Eheschließung,)

1. Your request for authorization to marry _____, a citizen of _____, is approved, disapproved.

(Ihr Antrag zur Genehmigung einer Eheschließung mit _____, einem/er Staatsbürger von _____ ist gebilligt, abgelehnt.)

2. Approval of this marriage is based upon your compliance with all appropriate civil laws and other requirements regarding the marriage to _____. In addition, this approval does not guarantee subsequent issuance of a visa/SOFA status to your alien spouse.

(Die Genehmigung steht unter dem Vorbehalt, daß Sie alle einschlägigen zivilen Gesetzen und anderen Erfordernissen in bezug auf die Heirat mit _____ beachten. Darüber hinaus garantiert diese Genehmigung nicht die nachfolgende Gewährung eines Visums /SOFA Status an Ihre/n ausländischen Ehepartner/in.)

3. Date. _____

(Datum)

SIGNATURE BLOCK

Rank, U.S. Air Force

Commanding

Beispiel einer TRAUREDE im Standesamt
(Example of a WEDDING SPEECH at the Office of Vital Statistics)

Ich begrüße Sie, sehr geehrtes Brautpaar, [Ihre Trauzeugen, Angehörigen und Gäste] ganz herzlich im Trausaal der Stadt

(I would like to welcome you, dear bride and groom [dear witnesses and guest] at the wedding hall of the City of)

Früher diente dieser Saal dem Stadtrat als Ratssitzungssaal, bevor er vor über sechzig Jahren den Brautpaaren als Trausaal gewidmet worden ist.

(In the past this hall served as conference hall for the City Council before it was designated as the wedding hall more than 60 years ago.)

Wir sind heute hier zu Ihrer Eheschließung zusammengekommen. Eine Eheschließung ist etwas nicht Alltägliches.

(Today we all gathered here in order to celebrate your wedding ceremony. A wedding is not an everyday occurrence.)

Eine rechtsgültige Eheschließung kommt dadurch zustande, daß beide Verlobten vor dem Standesbeamten übereinstimmend erklären, die Ehe miteinander eingehen zu wollen.

(Marriage takes legal effect when the bride and groom unanimously declare before the registrar that they want to get married to each other.)

Als zuständige Standesbeamter/in habe ich dabei die Aufgabe, öffentlich festzustellen und zu beurkunden, daß Sie mit Ihrem übereinstimmenden "Ja"-Wort rechtmäßig verbundene Ehegatten sind.

(In my capacity as the responsible registrar it is my duty to publicly establish and to document that after both of you said 'yes' you are legally married.)

Bei der Anmeldung der Eheschließung wurden Ihre Angaben geprüft. Es wurden keine Tatsachen festgestellt, die Ihrer Eheschließung entgegenstehen, so daß ich gerne bereit bin, Ihr "Ja"-Wort entgegenzunehmen.

(When you registered for marriage, all the information you provided was reviewed. No facts were found that would constitute an impediment to your marriage and therefore it is my pleasure to hear your "I do's".)

Vor diesem feierlichen Moment möchte ich Ihnen jedoch einige persönliche Worte und Gedanken mit auf den Weg geben.

(Nevertheless, allow me a few personal words and thoughts before we will proceed to the actual ceremony.)

Das kleine Wort „Ja“ im Sinne von „Ich will“ – heute ist es von großer Bedeutung.

(The little word "Yes" in the meaning of "I do" – is of great significance today.)

Sie sagen heute bewußt „Ja" zu Ihrem Partner, d. h. Sie erklären sich bereit, ihn mit seiner ganzen Persönlichkeit anzunehmen; so wie er eben ist: mit allen Fehlern und Schwächen, aber auch mit allen Talenten und Stärken.

(Today you consciously say "yes" to your partner, meaning that you accept him/her as a whole; with all faults and weaknesses but also with all talents and strengths.)

In ihrem künftigen Eheleben werden Sie Höhen und Tiefen erleben und durchstehen, aber auch den ganz normalen Alltag gemeinsam gestalten. Sie wollen sich dabei gegenseitig unterstützen, die Zukunft planen, einander an Ihrem Leben teilhaben lassen.

(In your future life as a married couple you will experience and master ups and downs and you will also shape your everyday lives together. In doing so you should support each other, plan for the future and let each other be part of your lives.)

Für eine gute Partnerschaft ist es wichtig, daß man den anderen an seinen Erfahrungen teilhaben läßt. Ehepaare, die schon lange verheiratet sind, antworten auf die Frage nach ihrem Rezept für eine glückliche Ehe oft: „Wir reden viel miteinander.“

(It is essential for a working partnership that each of you share your experience with the other partner. When couples who have been married for a long time are asked for their formula for a happy marriage, they will often say: "We talk a lot".)

Hören Sie nicht auf, über die großen und kleinen Dinge des Lebens miteinander zu reden. Hören Sie sich gegenseitig gut zu. Gute Gespräche sind Nahrung für Ihre gegenseitige Zuneigung, so wie regelmäßiges Gießen für das Gedeihen einer Pflanze wichtig ist.

(Don't ever stop to talk about the big and small things in life. Listen well to each other. Good conversations are as important for your love as regular watering is important for the thriving of plants.)

Gute Gespräche brauchen vor allem Zeit, gerade wenn es um schwierige Themen geht und unterschiedliche Meinungen besprochen werden.

(Good talks need time, especially when they are about difficult issues or when you have different opinions.)

Doch mit der Zuneigung, die man füreinander empfindet, gibt es stets einen Weg, Unstimmigkeiten und Meinungsverschiedenheiten beizulegen. Ihr Wille, aufeinander zuzugehen und miteinander zu sprechen, soll stets die Basis für ein glückliches und harmonisches Eheleben sein.

(But based on the love you hold for each other there will always be a way to settle your differences and disagreements. The will to come each other's way and to talk to each other should continually be the basis for a happy and harmonious marriage life.)

Ich wünsche Ihnen, daß Sie stets füreinander Zeit finden für gute Gespräche über Kleinigkeiten, aber auch über große Dinge, die Sie bewegen.

(I wish for you that you always find the time for good talks about the small things as well as the bigger issues that you have in mind.)

Ich werde Sie nun einzeln und nacheinander fragen, ob Sie bereit sind, die Ehe miteinander einzugehen.

(Now I will ask you individually and in turn whether you are willing to conclude the bonds of matrimony with each other.)

Ich bitte hierzu das Brautpaar [und die Trauzeugen], sich von den Plätzen zu erheben.

(For that purpose I would like to ask the bride and groom [and the witnesses] to rise from your seats.)

Ich frage Sie, Herr , sind Sie bereit, mit der hier anwesenden Frau die Ehe einzugehen, dann antworten Sie mit "Ja".

(I ask you Mr. is it your own and free will to marry the physically present Ms.? If this is the case please answer with "Yes".)

Sind auch Sie, Frau, bereit, mit dem hier anwesenden Herrn die Ehe einzugehen, dann antworten auch Sie mit "Ja".

(I also ask you Ms is it also your own and free will to marry the physically present Mr.? If this is the case, please answer with "Yes".)

Nachdem Sie beide die entscheidenden Fragen übereinstimmend mit "Ja" beantwortet haben, darf ich feststellen, daß Sie damit kraft Gesetzes zu einem rechtmäßig verbundenen Ehepaar geworden sind.

Meinen herzlichen Glückwunsch!

(After both of you affirmed in front of the registrar that you want to marry the other by saying "Yes", I hereby declare you husband and wife by virtue of law. Congratulations !)

Sie haben Ringe mitgebracht. Stecken Sie sich diese Ringe nun gegenseitig zum Zeichen an, daß Sie von nun an ein Ehepaar sind.

(You brought rings. As a visible sign of your marriage you may now exchange the rings.)

Sie können die Braut jetzt küssen.

(You may now kiss the bride.)

Bitte nehmen Sie noch einmal Platz! Es wurden Niederschriften zum Heiratseintrag und zur Namensführung in der Ehe aufgenommen, die ich jetzt nacheinander verlesen werde. Wenn alle Angaben richtig sind, kommen wir dann zur Unterschrift.

(Please have a seat again! Records were made regarding the entry into the marriage register and concerning the name you want to hold after marriage. I will now read these documents to you. If all information is correct, please sign those documents.)

...

(...)

Sind alle Angaben richtig?

(Are all entries correct?)

Dann darf ich das Brautpaar nach vorne zur Unterschrift auf den Dokumenten bitten.

(Now, I ask the bride and groom to come forward to sign the documents.)

[Die Trauzeugen bitte unterschreiben Sie auch.]

[(Witnesses, please sign, too.)]

Ich möchte mich nun verabschieden und wünsche Ihnen allen noch ein unvergeßliches Hochzeitsfest!

(Now, allow me to bid you farewell and I wish all of you an unforgettable wedding celebration.)