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Russia: Marriage registration and the issuance of marriage certificates

Introduction

The following note describes the marriage registration procedure and the issuance of marriage certificates in Russia. In doing so, the note will include a description of the administrative structure and the legislative framework related to the issuance of civil status documents, as well as a description of archives and registration routines, related corruption and the trustworthiness of civil status documents in Russia.

The note is based on interviews conducted by NIDC in Russia in February 2019, as well as open source information. The note can be shared with interested parties.

The administrative structure and legislative framework in Russia

All vital events – birth, death, marriage, divorce, paternity, name changing - are recorded at the Civil Registry of Russia, ZAGS.¹ ZAGS has local civil registry offices all across the Russian Federation.

A new and digital central database was established 1st October 2018.² In time, all ZAGS offices across Russia will have access to this new database, entering registrations into it and being able to extract information from it. At present (April 2019), the database holds new records only, but according to plan, by the end of 2020 the database will be up to date on all registrations. That means that all Russian birth and marriage registrations done in Russia since 1926 will be registered in the new database and accessible from all ZAGS offices by ultimo 2020.

Russian couples that have been married outside of Russia will not be registered automatically in the new database. To do so, they will have to actively request for a registration.

¹ Запись Актов Гражданского Состояния (Record of civil status acts)

² NIDC meeting with ZAGS, Moscow, Russian Federation.

Marriage registration and issuance of marriage certificates

For a marriage to be recognized by the Russian Federation, it has to be registered at a civil registry office (ZAGS).³ The groom and bride will have to fill in an application with their names, date and place of birth, citizenship, place of residence, marital status and their mutual voluntary consent to enter into the marriage.⁴ Both parties also have to present their internal passport. In case one of the parties has been married before, he or she has to present a divorce certificate.

In general, the minimum age required for marriage is 18 years.⁵ In cases of special circumstances, e.g. a girl younger than 18 years is pregnant; permission is granted to marriage for persons under 18, but only if they can get a signed acceptance of the marriage by their legal guardian.⁶ It is not accepted to marry by proxy; both parties have to be present at the time of marriage.

³ The Civil Code of the Russian Federation, article 47.

⁴ The Federal Law on Civil Status of the Russian Federation, article 26.

⁵ NIDC meeting with ZAGS, Moscow, Russian Federation.

⁶ NIDC meeting with ZAGS, Moscow, Russian Federation.

The marriage certificate

The latest version of the marriage certificate is printed with a QR-code in the upper left corner. This version is from 2019 according to ZAGS.⁷

**СВИДЕТЕЛЬСТВО
О РОЖДЕНИИ**

родился(лась)
место рождения

о чем **2019** года **апреля** месяца **3** числа
составлена запись акта о рождении № **110199775005900429001**
Отец

« **6** » **сентября** (дата рождения) (полная дата рождения)

Мать

« **14** » **января** **1985** г. (полная дата рождения)
Место государственной регистрации **97750059 Орган ЗАГС Москвы № 59**
(наименование органа, выдавшего свидетельство)
Многофункциональный центр предоставления государственных услуг района
Ивановское (полное наименование органа, выдавшего свидетельство)

Место выдачи свидетельства **97750059 Орган ЗАГС Москвы № 59**
(наименование органа, выдавшего свидетельство)
Многофункциональный центр предоставления государственных услуг района
Ивановское (полное наименование органа, выдавшего свидетельство)

Дата выдачи « **3** » **апреля** **2019** г.
Руководитель (уполномоченный работник) **М.В. Тарасова**

Х-МЮ № 553200

Всего, №10 Москва, 2018 г.

With a QR-scanner one can check the document at hand against the document that is displayed on the QR-scanner. The 2019-version of the birth certificate has

⁷ NIDC meeting with ZAGS, Moscow, Russian Federation.

the same feature. Furthermore, the certificates can be verified at the ZAGS registry offices.

Reissuance

Once a registration is recorded in the new digital, central database any ZAGS office can reissue the marriage certificate on the basis of one of the parties presenting their internal passport. Until then, one of the parties will have to go the same ZAGS office in which the initial registration took place, bringing with them their internal passport, to get the marriage certificate reissued.

Corruption and trustworthiness of civil status documents

Corruption has been reported prevalent in Russia on more than one occasion.⁸ Even President Medvedev said himself that this was the case in 2009⁹ and he launched an anti-corruption plan in 2008.¹⁰ Since then, there has been an enhancement of control within government institutions responsible for issuing identity documents which, according to some accounts, have lowered the level of corruption, at least in the sphere of issuance of civil status documents.¹¹ This corroborates with what Western diplomatic sources told NIDC in Moscow during interviews in February 2019.¹² One Western source working with anti-fraud told NIDC, that the source had not seen any signs of corruption in the field of civil documents during the source's three years in Moscow. The reason, according to the source, is that bribes would be too expensive because of the high risk and government control is too good for low-ranking and middle-ranking officials to dare engage in corruption in the field of issuance of documents.¹³

The typical type of corruption is bribes in order to speed up lengthy processing time or bribes in order to get to enjoy services that citizens are in fact already entitled to, e.g. social/health services.¹⁴

In general, the Russian civil status documents issued by ZAGS, such as the birth certificate and the marriage certificate, are deemed trustworthy by the Western diplomatic sources that NIDC interviewed.

⁸ Landinfo 2017.

⁹ CORI 2010, s. 205.

¹⁰ Landinfo 2017.

¹¹ Landinfo 2017.

¹² NIDC interview with Western diplomatic source A and source B in Moscow, Russian Federation.

¹³ NIDC interview with Western diplomatic source A in Moscow, Russian Federation.

¹⁴ Landinfo 2017.

References

Meetings

Meeting with Western diplomatic Source A, Moscow, Russian Federation, February 2019.

Meeting with Western diplomatic source B, Moscow, Russian Federation, February 2019.

Meeting with the Civil Registry of Russia, ZAGS, Moscow, Russian Federation, February 2019.

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