# Official Signature in Austria

Official signatures are visual signatures that are defined in the Austrian E-Government Act as:

*Official Signature*

*19. (1) An official signature, being the electronic signature of a public authority, is an electronic signature within the meaning of the Signaturgesetz (Signature Act), the peculiarity of which is indicated by an appropriate attribute in the signature certificate.*

*(2) Official signatures serve to facilitate recognition of the fact that a document originates from an authority. Such signatures may therefore be used only by authorities, in accordance with the detailed conditions laid down in subparagraph 3, when signing electronically or drawing up the documents issued by them.*

*(3) The official signature shall be represented in the electronic version of the document by an image which the authority has published on the Internet in secure form as its own. In addition to the image, the electronic version must also show at least the serial number and the name and country of origin of the certification service provider as well as the actual value of the signature. It must be possible to verify the signature by converting the representation of the entire document into a form which enables the signature to be verified. The additional information required in order to retrieve the electronic document from the representation must likewise be published on the Internet in secure form by the issuer of the document.*

*Probative Value of Printouts*

*20. There shall be a presumption that electronic documents of authorities printed on paper are genuine if the document is signed with an official signature and it is possible to verify the signature even in printed form by reconstructing the electronic version of the document. For that purpose, the document must state that it may be reconstructed and contain a reference to the source on the Internet where the procedure for reconverting the printout into electronic form and the applicable verification mechanisms are explained.*

An official signature thus is a "visible signature" added to the document. To maintain the probative value of printouts, reconstruction to the (usually W3C XMLDSIG) format requires that the signature block identifies the form signed (e.g., a schema), the certificate issuer, the signatory (by the certificate's serial number), the signature value and the signing time.

Document formats in use are XML (e.g. electronic Certificate of Residence) or PDF (raw text extracted and filled in an XML structure; the signature block is inserted to the PDF). Demonstrators for other formats such as Word 2007 *.docx* are available.

The concept is used by the private sector – such as the following signature – by using an electronic signature that does not have the OID identifying the signatory as a public authority. This signature is a qualified signature created by an Austrian citizen card (my bank card in that very case).

| Signaturwert | `fGjXUG2ueTsEy++eYfbyYC9xGcUX4APbdtbwSFMy+gmBfAD6tWRXA5fn0ai2XLHX` | |
|---|---|---|
|  **Herbert Leitold** | Signator | `Herbert Leitold, A-SIT` |
| | Datum/Zeit-UTC | `2007-06-15T22:45:15Z` |
| | Aussteller | `CN=a-sign-Premium-Sig-02,OU=a-sign-Premium-Sig-02,O=A-Trust Ges. f. Sicherheitssysteme im elektr. Datenverkehr GmbH,C=AT` |
| | Serien-Nr. | `92575` |
| | Methode | `urn:pdfsigfilter:bka.gv.at:text:v1.0.0` |
| | Kennung | `etsi-bka-1.0@1181947515-18992859@567-11625-25544-24186-998` |
| Hinweis | `Prüfservice: https://demo.a-sit.at/signature-verification/` | |