



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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Albania: Description of valid birth and marriage certificates, including the general paper quality of original documents; register numbers and register years; description of family certificates; whether an individual with power of attorney who is applying for a birth certificate on behalf of an applicant may provide the applicant's photo to the authorities

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According to the United States (US) Visa Reciprocity and Country Documents Finder, civil documents in Albania "may appear crude and simplistic, but that is what is in use within the country" (4 Aug. 2005).

An official from the Rule of Law / Human Rights Department, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Presence in Albania stated that there is a new A4 birth certificate that has been in circulation since 2003 or 2004 and is now being used throughout Albania (OSCE Feb. 2006). The Official stated that the new birth certificate is "the only official form" of birth certificate (ibid.). According to information obtained by the OSCE Official from Albania's General Directorate of the Civil Registry, the birth certificate came into effect on 1 April 2004 following an 11 December 2003 ministerial ruling (ibid.). Roughly seven million birth certificates, which are valid for three months, are issued annually (ibid.). The OSCE Official noted that the new birth certificates have a serial number and a hologram (ibid.). Both a human rights organization and an official at the Embassy of the Republic of Albania in Washington, DC made reference to photos on birth certificates (AHC n.d.b.; Albania 25 Sept. 2007).

In a 26 September 2007 telephone interview, the Embassy Official stated that Albanians did not have to obtain a new birth certificate every three months. However, the Embassy Official explained that if a person is applying for a passport at the embassy, the birth certificate that is provided as supporting documentation cannot be older than three months (Albania 26 Sept. 2007).

The OSCE Official provided the following details to the Belgian Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons:

[Birth certificates] are distributed centrally by the General Directorate of the Civil Status (GDSC) of the Ministry of Interior who keep records of distributed certificates. The first three digits in the serial number refer to the number of the specific Civil Status Office (CSO) of the municipality/commune. There is also one generic three-digit number (if not