

Annual Updates

Every year, and any time the Ministry of Justice(MOJ) requests it, families must submit their annual updates to Bulgaria in order to stay active in the Bulgarian registry for adoption. All Annual Documents need to be provided to the MOJ **BEFORE** the family's I800A expiration date to stay active in the system. If they are not, the family will be excluded from being considered for matches until the documents are provided.

These documents which need to be valid at all times are:

1. **Apostilled Home study:** A valid home study is necessary to have on file until the child comes home to the USA. It usually takes between 3-5 months to complete a home study update depending on your agency and your state. Please reach out to your home study agency to understand when you should initiate these home study updates. Home study updates usually require a new medical appointment, background checks in your current state and a home visit but are a lot less work than your original home study. Once you complete your home study update, it will need to be apostilled.
2. **Apostilled Immigration (I800A approval):** You always need to have a valid approval at all times to remain eligible for a match. Keep in mind in order to apply for a I800A extension you need a home study that is not older than 6 months old. This usually means you'll have to start your home study update 7-8 months before your immigration approval expires. You have to apply for this immigration update before your I800A expiration date or you will need to begin the I800A process all over again. For Bulgaria, they need the new I800A approval (and other updates) **BEFORE** the expiration date of the previous one. To do this, we will apply for I800A renewal at the soonest possible time with USCIS, which is up to 90 days prior to the expiration date. Once you receive your new I800A approval, please have this notarized using the Notary Letter for NBC Notice of Approval letter on the portal, and then apostilled.
3. **Signed Annual Declaration:** The MOJ requires an annual declaration from the date of your dossier registration and at every home study update, to declare your intent to continue in the Bulgaria program. This declaration needs to match your current home study information. This document does not need a notary or apostille, but the signed original hard copy needs to be mailed to Bulgaria with your other documents. To fill it out, you can use the information from your home study and even copy and paste the answers over. If you need to change the verbiage to say "we or I" instead of your names to make more sense for the answer, you can. Please make sure the question about the special needs of a child includes the full list approved from your home study, word for word. Please see the example letter and the form to use on the portal under the waiting period tab.
4. **Signed Special Needs Checklist:** The MOJ requires a new special needs checklist annually or at every home study update. This special need checklist has to match your current home study information and the annual declaration. This document does not need a notary or apostille, but the signed original hard copy needs to be mailed to Bulgaria with your other updates.

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5. **Apostilled Additional Medicals:** Some families are requested to provide annual medical updates from their doctor on various conditions. If you are not sure if your family needs this, please contact your IAS. These letters typically need the following:
 - a. Addresses diagnosis and when you were diagnosed
 - b. States the specific kind of therapies/ treatments you have had, when you started, how often you attended, and when this ended.
 - c. Statement that shares that this does not affect your ability to be a safe and healthy adoptive parent.
 - d. Must be completed by your specific specialist, on their letterhead, and notarized with their signature.

After all the originals are completed and apostilled, you must first scan one virtual copy of each document to your IAS. Then you may mail all the originals to your IAS, who will send them to Bulgaria for you. You can confirm the address to use at this time.