**Stopping the service of depositing foreign marriage and civil partnership certificates with the General Register Offices (GROs) – Q & As.**

Q. What is changing?

A. From 1 January 2014 the FCO will no longer send foreign marriage or civil partnership certificates to General Register Offices (GROs) in the UK. GROs will not be able to accept certificates from you. You will need to make your own arrangements for the safekeeping of these certificates, as you do for other important documents in your possession.

Q. Why is the FCO making this change?

A. This change is being introduced as part of our 2013-16 Consular Strategy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fco-consular-strategy-2010-13> As the strategy makes clear, Consular Excellence is about high-quality, modern, cost effective and efficient support to British Nationals overseas. This change will help make better use of our scarce resources and modernise the way we deliver these services. This will allow us to concentrate on front-line consular work, providing more support to our vulnerable customers including, for example, minors, the elderly, people with mental health problems, and victims of serious crime abroad.

Q. Is there a legal requirement to deposit a foreign marriage or civil partnership with the GRO?

A. No. There is no legal requirement to deposit your foreign marriage or civil partnership certificate with the GRO, or to have your marriage/civil partnership recorded in the UK.  The deposit of a foreign certificate does not ‘recognise’ the marriage as a valid one. The validity in UK law of a marriage or civil partnership contracted in a foreign country is in no way affected by its having been, or not having been, recorded in the UK.

Q. What was the purpose of the deposit service?

A. It was simply a service to safeguard a foreign marriage certificate and to allow customers to obtain a certified copy of it in the future. Deposit did not “recognise” or “validate” the foreign marriage under UK law.

Q. What about certificates deposited before this change?

A. If you have deposited your certificate before this service ends on 1 January 2014, you will still be able to obtain a copy from the relevant GRO, for a fee. Details on how to do this are available on the GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/order-copy-birth-death-marriage-certificate>