Step 1 : Install the VPS (Germany's Virtual Post Office = an email client)

The VPS looks like an email system and it works like a mailbox and keeps track of in and outgoing messages. You first need to install it on your computer, open an account (called 'P.O.Box') and request the DESHt to activate the account before you can use it.

First read the Installation Guide that can be downloaded here. In particular, you have to make sure you have the right version of JAVA installed in your computer (JAVA 6).

Second, you need to download the VPS Postbox software and install it in your computer:

- Download the DEHSt-VPSMail here
- Open the DESHt-VPSMail
- Select 'Operator'
- Complete the Business card with your information
- Name of P.O. Box: select a random nickname
- Selection of encryption/decryption certificate: select 'create', insert a pin (pin contains six numbers and has to be created individually - it is very important to remember the pin) and save the certificate on your computer with a name of your choice
- Capture a screenshot of the business card and email it to vpsfreischaltung@dehst.de

The DEHSt will then activate your postbox and confirm the activation in a VPS message. You can then use the VPS to send and receive messages. More information, please check this page.

Download the administrator form, complete it, sign it and send it to the DEHSt via your VPS Mail account.

Step 2a : Install your QES (by requesting a signature card from a trust center)

A QES signature card looks like a credit card that you can use to electronically sign the messages that are sent though the VPS.

You need to request your signature from a trust center that is as well the signature card provider. The list of signature card providers can be downloaded here. For example, you can use DTrust. Select 'DTrust_bestellen'. Make sure you select the 'Standard Signaturkarte' either for 2 years or 4 years. The application process requires a legally valid proof of identity. Your identity may be confirmed by a notary or the German consulate in your country of residence.

Step 2b : Install your QES (by buying a card reader)

Signature card and card reader are needed together to apply your digital signature (QES) when sending a message through the VPS. You can find the list of card readers here.

Before sending a message through the VPS, you will insert the signaturecard into the card reader that is connected to your computer through the USB port which will allow you to electronically sign the message before it is sent.