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How to find a lawyer

Every Belgian lawyer comes under the Bar of the judicial district where his chambers are located. In Brussels, it consists of two associations, one covering French-speaking lawyers, the other covering Dutch-speaking lawyers.

The French- and German-speaking Bar Association (O.B.F.G) consists of the bars for the Walloon region and the French association in Brussels.

The capital's Dutch association and the Flemish bars both come under the "*Orde van de Vlaamse Balies*" (O.V.B.)

The list of lawyers can be found in the alphabetical telephone directory or yellow pages, or on the Internet (<https://avocats.be> or <http://www.advocaat.be/>). You can search for a lawyer who normally specialises in defending people before the criminal courts by doing a subject search under the heading "criminal law" ("*droit pénal*" in French, "*strafrecht*" in Dutch).

You can also find a lawyer close to you by searching by judicial area or district.

The secretariat of each bar association can also give you a list of its lawyers.

You can also contact a lawyer who has been recommended to you directly by e-mail, letter or telephone.

How to pay a lawyer

As a rule, it is you who pays your lawyer. You may be asked for a payment on account before any work is carried out. Fees are not set by law. However, the lawyer must tell you how his bill will be calculated: hourly rate applied according to the time spent on your defence or set amount for each type of service (consultation, reading file, pleading, etc.).

In addition to this there are the costs incurred by his chambers and the disbursements paid to the judicial administration department.

If you do not have sufficient income to pay a lawyer, you can request free legal aid from the Legal Aid Office covering your lawyer. The list of offices for each district is available on the Internet:

- [in French](#),
- [in Dutch](#).

If you receive benefits from the C.P.A.S, guaranteed income for elderly persons, income replacement allowance for disabled persons, have a dependent child who receives guaranteed family allowances, are a tenant in social housing, a minor, are insolvent (bankruptcy ruling), in custody, a remand prisoner summoned by record or are mentally ill, you will obtain the assistance of a lawyer free of charge.

The same applies if you live alone and have a monthly income of less than €860, or if you are living with someone and the total income of the adults living with you is less than €1 104 (plus €145.16 for each dependent person).

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