

MARRIAGE, REGISTERED PARTNERSHIP AND COHABITATION

Couples who wish to formalise their relationship may choose one of three ways of doing so. They can enter into a civil marriage, a registered partnership or a cohabitation agreement. Since April 2001, all three forms have been open to couples of the same or different sexes. And of course people can always live together without making any official arrangements.

This booklet explains the similarities and differences between marriage, registered partnership and a cohabitation agreement. It describes the conditions and rules that apply in each case, the couples' rights and obligations, their family-law relationships with their children, the procedures for ending their relationship, and their rights and obligations after ending their relationship. It compares the situation in each type of partnership. Finally, you will find a summary of all the information at the back of the booklet.

The information provided here is fairly general. Separate booklets are available with more detailed information. You can also get information from lawyers' or notaries' associations or legal aid offices. You will find a list of the available booklets and useful addresses at the back of this booklet.

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Living together

In the Netherlands couples of the same sex or different sexes can get married or form a registered partnership or enter into a cohabitation agreement. And of course anyone can live together without making their relationship official.

Marriage and registered partnership

Marriage and registered partnership are similar in many ways. They are both relationships formalised by law. And to a large extent the law lays down the partners' rights and obligations, the conditions they have to meet in order to formalise their relationship, the procedures for doing so and for ending the relationship. But there are significant differences when it comes to children.

Cohabitation agreement

A cohabitation agreement is a contract between two people. It covers a variety of matters relevant to living together and sharing a home. For instance, a couple may agree to support each other financially and share the costs of running a household. They may also want to make arrangements about the use of each other's bank accounts, or dividing or sharing their property. They can either arrange these matters themselves or ask a notary to make provision in an official cohabitation agreement. However, an official agreement drawn up by a notary is always needed to be eligible for partner's pension schemes and certain fringe benefits.

Cohabitation

Even if a couple chooses not to formalise their relationship, the fact that they live together still has legal consequences. It has implications, for instance, for taxation and social security.

Who is allowed to formalise their relationship?

Who is permitted to cohabit or enter into a marriage or registered partnership? Anyone may enter into a cohabitation agreement, providing they are allowed to do so by law. In principle, this means that they must be at least 18 years old, and not under special guardianship (*onder curatele*). The terms of the agreement may not conflict with public morality, public policy or the law.

The law lays down the conditions applying to marriage and registered partnership,

and they are the same in both cases. The main rules are as follows.

One partner only People may marry or enter into a registered partnership with only one person at a time. A married person cannot enter into a registered partnership with anyone else, nor can someone in a registered partnership marry another person. However, more than two people can enter into a cohabitation agreement.

Age of consent Only people aged 18 and over may get married or enter into a registered partnership, although exceptions can be made in special cases.

Guardianship Anyone who has been placed under the supervision of a guardian must obtain their guardian's consent in order to marry or enter into a registered partnership.

Relatives Neither marriage nor registered partnership is allowed between parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, or brothers and sisters. Exceptions can be made, for instance in the case of people related through adoption.

Foreign partners or partners living abroad The following rules apply to non-Dutch nationals or residents.

- A couple may *not* marry or enter into a registered partnership in the Netherlands if neither is a Dutch national, and both live abroad.
- If neither partner is a Dutch national, they may marry or enter into a registered partnership in the Netherlands provided at least one of them is resident here.
- They may marry or enter into a registered partnership in the Netherlands if at least one partner is Dutch, even if they both live abroad.
- A couple may marry or enter into a registered partnership in the Netherlands if both partners live in the country, even if neither of them is a Dutch national.

If at least one of the partners lives in the Netherlands or has Dutch nationality, the question of whether they may marry or enter into a registered partnership is determined by Dutch law. If they satisfy the conditions, they may get married or enter into a registered partnership, regardless of whether they are allowed to do so under the law of the country of which the non-Dutch partner is a national.

Rights of residence To prevent marriages of convenience, non-Dutch nationals who

wish to marry or enter into a registered partnership must either have a permanent residence permit or obtain a statement from the Aliens Police regarding their status under the Aliens Act.

How to formalise a relationship

Marriages and registered partnerships are contracted by the registrar of births, deaths and marriages. Certain rules apply as regards giving notice, waiting time, witnesses, drawing up deeds, and other formalities.

Couples who wish to live together need not go through any formalities or deal with any official bodies. They may enter into a cohabitation agreement, if they choose to do so. In that case, they sign a contract arranging a variety of matters that come into play when people share a home.

The couple may arrange these affairs on their own. But it is often advisable to have an official agreement drawn up by a notary. In any event, an official agreement is needed to be eligible for certain benefits, such as partner's pension schemes and employment fringe benefits. The notary will charge a fee for these services.

The main formalities in the case of marriage or registered partnership are as follows.

Notice of intention to get married or register a partnership A couple intending to marry or register their partnership first have to give notice of their intention to the registrar of births, deaths and marriages, usually in the municipality in which one of them is resident. They also have to provide documents showing that they are eligible to marry or register their partnership. The nature of these documents will depend on the situation. In addition to a copy of their birth certificates, they may have to submit evidence that a previous marriage has been dissolved or their registered partnership terminated or a document giving them permission to proceed.

Time lapse The registrar enters a record confirming that notice has been given of the couple's intention to marry or register their partnership. As a rule, the marriage or registration ceremony cannot take place until two weeks have lapsed. Exceptions can be made in special circumstances.

Witnesses The marriage or registration ceremony must take place in the presence of

no fewer than two and no more than four witnesses, who are over the age of 18. Their names and addresses must be submitted to the registrar when the couple give notice of their intention to marry or register their partnership.

Vows The couple solemnise their relationship before the law by taking vows before the registrar of births, deaths and marriages. The marriage vows are prescribed, but couples registering as partners may choose the vows they wish to make.

Marriage or partners' certificate After taking their vows, the couple, their witnesses and the registrar of births, deaths and marriages sign the marriage or partners' certificate.

Costs There are costs attached to a civil marriage ceremony or the registration of a partnership. However, every municipality reserves certain times at which these ceremonies are performed free of charge. The cost of converting a registered partnership is discussed elsewhere in this booklet.

Church ceremony Marriages may only be blessed in church after the civil marriage has taken place. It is up to the church communities themselves whether to bless or solemnise the marriage. They are not obliged to do so.

Rights and obligations

Both marriage and registered partnership automatically entail rights and obligations, most of which are laid down by law. Couples who live together without formalising their relationship are bound only by the rights and obligations they commit themselves to in a cohabitation agreement. A cohabitation agreement covers whatever provisions the partners themselves choose. The obligation to provide for one another financially is an interesting example. It is an automatic obligation in marriage and registered partnership, but it only applies to other couples if it is laid down by contract.

Surnames Married or registered partners may use each other's surname, in combination with their own if they choose to do so. The only exception is in official documents, which have to show the person's own name. As a rule, all other couples may use only their own surnames.

Family relationships Certain family relationships are created through marriage or registered partnership. Relatives of one partner become in-laws of the other partner. In-laws have certain rights. In certain legal actions, for instance, they may be exempt from testifying against the relative-in-law. A cohabitation agreement does not create such relationships.

Legal transactions In certain cases, married or registered partners need one another's permission to take decisions or assume obligations. This may be the case, for instance, if they wish to sell a home they both occupy or buy anything on an instalment plan. Couples who have a cohabitation agreement may specify similar provisions, if they choose.

Legal consequences for third parties Marriage and registered partnership have legal consequences not only for the partners themselves, but also for their relationships with others. For example, they cannot be forced to testify against one another in court. A cohabitation agreement only has legal consequences for the partners themselves. In principle, it has no consequences for third parties, but the courts are starting to put couples with a cohabitation agreement on the same footing as married and registered couples. A cohabitation agreement drawn up by a notary may be required by third parties, such as pension funds, as proof that a couple are living together.

Financial responsibility Married and registered couples are obliged to support their partners financially and to provide for one another within their means. In principle, they are also jointly responsible for the costs of running their household, but they can make different arrangements by drawing up a premarital or pre-partnership agreement.

Couples who enter into a cohabitation agreement can decide on all these matters themselves.

Assets and property In principle, all possessions and debts are generally shared jointly in marriage and registered partnership, but different arrangements can be made by instructing a notary to draw up a premarital or pre-partnership agreement.

The opposite applies to unmarried couples and couples who are not registered partners. In principle, their assets and property are not held jointly. They can change

this to some extent by entering into a cohabitation agreement. They can also buy property jointly – a house, for example.

Inheritance Married and registered partners are automatically each other's heirs under the law of succession. This does not apply to other couples. Unmarried or unregistered couples must have a will drawn up by a notary in order to inherit from their partners. A cohabitation agreement can include a survivorship clause so that the surviving partner inherits the couple's joint property.

Pensions Anyone who contributes to a pension scheme builds up entitlement to a retirement pension. Many of these schemes also cover pensions for dependants. The surviving partner of a married or registered couple is eligible for a dependant's pension after the death of their partner.

Many pension schemes also provide for the surviving partner of unmarried and unregistered couples. Those who wish to benefit from these schemes must make appropriate provisions in a cohabitation agreement. Most schemes pay out only to those who have had a cohabitation agreement drawn up by a notary.

Children and family law

The nature of a couple's relationship has significant implications when a child is born. In this respect, there are major differences between heterosexual marriages, marriages between people of the same sex, registered partnership and cohabitation.

A husband and wife are by law the parents of any children born of their marriage. The woman who bears the child is the mother, and the law regards her husband as the child's father. Marriage creates a family-law relationship between the married couple and the child, which entails various rights and obligations. It has implications for the child's surname, parental responsibility, access, nationality and rights of succession.

In all cases other than marriage between a man and a woman, the birth of a child creates a family-law relationship only between the mother and the child. Family-law ties between the child and the mother's partner can be created through acknowledgement or adoption.

The main rules applying to couples other than a married couple of different sexes are as follows.

- The woman who bears a child is the mother, according to the law.
- A man who acknowledges paternity of a child, is its father, according to the law.
- If a man acknowledges the child of an unmarried woman who is not his registered partner, he does not automatically acquire parental responsibility. For this to be the case, the parents must make a joint application to the courts.
- No family-law ties exist between a child and a person who assumes responsibility for its care and upbringing, if that person is not the child's parent. Such ties can be created through acknowledgement or adoption.
- A parent and non-parent may assume equal responsibility for a child's care and upbringing by exercising joint responsibility (see p. ...).

What possibilities do these rules offer in practice for couples other than a married man and woman? The following are some examples.

- If a couple live together and a child is born, the woman is the child's mother. If the man acknowledges paternity, he becomes the child's father. He and the mother can ask the courts to grant him parental responsibility.
- A man with a child lives with a woman. If they wish, that woman may adopt the child or the couple may apply to for permission to exercise joint responsibility.
- If two men are bringing up a child and one is the father, his partner may adopt the child or the couple may apply for permission to exercise joint responsibility.

Certain conditions must be met in order to acknowledge paternity, adopt a child or exercise joint responsibility. All three entail rights and obligations.

Acknowledging paternity

In every case except that of a marriage between a man and a woman, a man who acknowledges paternity of a child becomes the child's father. He may do this before the child is born by having a deed of acknowledgement drawn up by the registrar of births, deaths and marriages or a notary. Alternatively, he can acknowledge the child when registering the birth or at any time afterwards. This is usually done before the registrar of births, deaths and marriages.

Conditions

- The man acknowledging the child must be at least 16 years old.
- The mother must give written consent in advance, if the child is under 16. Children aged 12 or over are required to give their consent as well. In other words, a child aged between 12 and 16 can only be acknowledged with the consent of that child and its mother.
- If the man is married to a person other than the child's mother, he must have close relationship with the mother or a close personal relationship with the child.
- A man who is too closely related by blood to the mother to marry her may not acknowledge her child.
- If the man acknowledging the child is under special guardianship (*onder curatele*), he must obtain the consent of a subdistrict judge.

You will find more information on this subject in the booklet *Afstamming. Wie zijn de juridische ouders van een kind* (only available in Dutch).

Parental responsibility and joint responsibility

Parental responsibility is exercised either by one or two parents over a child. Joint responsibility is exercised by a parent and a non-parent such as a partner who shares responsibility for the child's care and upbringing.

Anyone who has responsibility for a minor is obliged to care for and bring up the child. They must also act as the child's legal representative. Before 1 January 2002, only parents who were married to one another automatically shared parental responsibility for the children born of their marriage. Other couples could only share responsibility by applying to the subdistrict court. New legislation introduced on 1 January 2002 has changed the situation in a number of cases. Now, registered partners automatically share parental responsibility for any children born after that date, providing that the man has acknowledged the child. Similarly, two women who are married to one another or registered partners automatically have joint responsibility for any children born during their marriage or registered partnership, providing that the child has no other parent.

Responsibility of parents who are married or in a registered partnership

Parents who are married to each other share parental responsibility for their children. Since the introduction of new legislation on 1 January 2002, a man and a woman in a

registered partnership share parental responsibility for children born during the partnership, provided the man has acknowledged paternity of the child. Otherwise, he cannot be its legal parent.

Responsibility of unmarried parents and parents who are not in a registered partnership

An unmarried mother who is over the age of 18 automatically exercises parental responsibility for her child from the time of its birth. If the father wishes to share responsibility, he must acknowledge paternity of the child. Once he has done so, the couple may submit an application to a district court registry (*griffie*). The procedure is quite straightforward. The parents are required to complete an application form and return it to the registry, along with certain documents. The registrar checks that the parents meet all the conditions for responsibility. If so, the names of the parents are entered in the responsibility register.

Automatic responsibility of a parent and non-parent

A parent and a non-parent may exercise joint responsibility. Since 1 January 2002, the parent and his/her partner who is not the child's parent may have responsibility for the child automatically, without any need for a court decision. This is called automatic joint responsibility. The conditions for automatic joint responsibility are that the child was born during the marriage or registered partnership of the parent and the non-parent, and that there is no other parent. This mainly happens if the mother is married to or in registered partnership with a woman and a child is born during the marriage or partnership that has no father under the law. This may be the case if the birth was the result of artificial insemination by an anonymous donor.

However, if a third party – a parent – is involved, joint responsibility must always be conferred by a court. The exercise of joint responsibility does not create a family-law relationship between the child and the mother's partner. The mother's partner is not the child's legal parent. This situation can be changed if the partner adopts the child.

Court-conferred joint responsibility

If a person who is not the child's parent has a close relationship with the child, that person and the parent may ask the court to confer joint responsibility. A lawyer is always required. A decision to this effect has far-reaching consequences, particularly when the child has another parent. Applications are examined with great care and

the interests of the child are a priority. If the application is granted, the non-parent has the same rights, responsibilities and obligations as the parent and shares full responsibility for the child's care and upbringing. However, having the right to exercise responsibility is not the same as being the child's legal parent. Exercising joint responsibility does not create a family-law relationship between the non-parent and the child. For example, the child does not automatically have rights of succession and can only inherit from the non-parent if arrangements are made in a will.

Obligated to provide maintenance, but no joint responsibility

A non-parent who is married to or the registered partner of someone with children is obliged to provide for any children who form part of the family, regardless of whether they exercise joint responsibility. You will find more information on responsibility in the booklet *Responsibility, access and information*.

Adoption

Single people as well as couples of the same sex or different sexes can adopt a child that is habitually resident in the Netherlands. This applies regardless of whether the couple are married, registered partners or living together. A person who adopts a child becomes the child's legal parent. And all family-law ties between the child and its original parent or parents are broken. Adoption is thus a significant step and subject to strict conditions. It can only take place through the courts. For more information, see the booklet *Adoptie van een kind in Nederland* (Adopting a child in the Netherlands), which is only available in Dutch.

Different rules apply if a child is adopted abroad. Married couples of different sexes can adopt a child abroad. It is also possible for one person to adopt a child, regardless of whether they are single, living with a partner, married or in a registered partnership. You will find more information on this subject in the booklet *U wilt een kind uit het buitenland adopteren* (Adopting a child from abroad) which is only available in Dutch.

The child's surname

Married parents can decide after the birth of their first child whether to give that child the mother's or father's surname. If they do not choose a name, the child is

automatically given its father's name. The name given to the first child will be given to any subsequent children as well. If the parents' first child is adopted, they may still choose its surname.

If the parents are not married, the child is automatically given its mother's surname. If the father acknowledges paternity, the parents can choose either the mother's or father's surname. They must do so when the father acknowledges paternity, which can be done either before or after the child is born.

If a parent and a non-parent share parental responsibility, they can ask the court to change the child's surname to one of theirs (regardless of the legal form of their relationship).

For more information on this subject, see the booklets *Choice of name* and *Naamswijziging* (Changing your name) which is only available in Dutch.

Converting a registered partnership into a marriage

A registered partnership can be converted into a marriage. The registrar of births, deaths and marriages draws up a deed of conversion, which is entered in the marriage register. Conversion ends the registered partnership and effects the marriage. Similarly, a marriage can be converted into a registered partnership. In that case, the deed of conversion is entered in the register of partnerships. Conversion can be effected only in the municipality where one of the parties is resident.

The costs of conversion differ from one municipality to another and depend on the documents required and whether the parties choose to have a ceremony.

Consequences

In principle, conversion does not change the existing situation. For example, if two people in a registered partnership are bringing up a child and share responsibility for the child, converting their partnership into a marriage has no further implications. Nor are there any consequences for a couple who entered into a registered partnership in general community of property except, perhaps, if one or both partners are foreign nationals or resident abroad.

If one or both partners are foreign nationals or resident abroad

Couples who fall into one of these categories and wish to convert their marriage or registered partnership are subject to the rules and conditions set out under the heading *Conditions*. However, the rules and conditions described above apply to them as well. A marriage or registered partnership concluded abroad can be converted in the Netherlands, providing that it is recognised in this country.

Matrimonial property law

For people of different nationalities or couples residing outside the Netherlands, conversion may have implications for their matrimonial property regime, in that it may be subject to the law of a country other than the Netherlands. As a result, property held by the parties individually could become community property or vice versa. This would have consequences for their liability for debts, for instance, or for the way in which their estate (assets and liabilities) are shared after divorce or death. Couples should therefore consult a notary before going ahead with conversion. It may be advisable to make a choice of law or draw up a pre-nuptial or pre-partnership agreement. You will find more information on this subject in the booklet *Matrimonial property law and the Hague Convention*.

Ending a relationship

A marriage or registered partnership can only be ended in court or at the registry of births, deaths and marriages. Couples with a cohabitation agreement decide themselves when and how the contract can be terminated.

A marriage is dissolved when the court pronounces a divorce and the judgment is entered in the marriage register in the municipality where the marriage took place. Married couples can apply for a legal separation. This option is not open to registered partners.

Registered partners can end their relationship without going to court, as long as both parties agree. However, they must be able to demonstrate that they agree and have arranged their affairs to the satisfaction of both. For this purpose, they must have an agreement drawn up by a lawyer or notary, confirming that they wish to end their relationship and making arrangements regarding property, maintenance and so forth. This agreement must be entered in the registers of births, deaths and marriages. Only once this has been done is the registered partnership deemed officially ended.

Couples with a cohabitation agreement decide for themselves when they wish to regard their relationship and contract as having ended. To avoid any disagreement, they are advised to provide for this situation when drawing up their cohabitation agreement.

Rights and obligations after ending a relationship

The parties to a marriage or registered partnership continue have rights and obligations towards one another after the relationship has ended. Maintenance obligations and the division of pension rights are two important examples. The partner who is in a stronger financial position is obliged to support the other. This applies equally to married and registered partners.

When a cohabitation agreement ends, the only rights and obligations the partners have towards one another are those which are laid down in the agreement and which specifically apply after the relationship has ended. For example, the couple may want to provide for the division of their communal property, the right of one party to occupy their home, and possibly maintenance. It is important to note that neither party is obliged to pay maintenance unless the couple have made alternative arrangements in their cohabitation agreement.

Children

The nature of a couple's relationship is not decisive when it comes to their rights and obligations towards their children. The main factors are whether a person has biological or family-law ties with the child, or joint responsibility for the child. The mere fact of being a child's biological parent imposes the obligation to provide financial support for that child. This does not apply to donors.

Divorce in itself has no legal consequences for the relationship between parents and children. In principle, both parents continue to exercise parental responsibility after their divorce. They are expected by law to do so. If they wish to make other arrangements, they may ask a court to confer sole responsibility. The courts also usually make access arrangements between the children and the parent they are not living with. Both parents are obliged to contribute financially towards their children's care and upbringing, each according to their means. They can decide on child maintenance themselves or ask the court to set an amount that one parent will pay the other for the upbringing of the children.

Maintenance payable by a non-parent

If a parent and a non-parent are jointly responsible for a child and their joint responsibility ends through divorce, the parent is obliged to support the child up to the age of 18 or 21. Although the non-parent has been divested of responsibility, he or she is nevertheless still obliged to contribute towards the child's maintenance for a period equal to the duration of the joint responsibility. If this was five years, for example, he or she is obliged to support the child for another five years.

However, if the non-parent was not jointly responsible for the child, his or her obligation to support the child's ceases when the marriage or registered partnership ends. For more information on this subject, see the booklets *U gaat scheiden* (Preparing for a divorce) and *Alimentatie* (Maintenance), both of which are only available in Dutch.

Pensions Entitlements to an old-age pension built up during a marriage or registered partnership are divided between the partners when the relationship ends through divorce or separation. This does not apply to couples who are not married or registered partners. For more information, see the booklet *Verdeling van ouderdomspensioen bij scheiding* (Divorce and old-age pensions), which is only available in Dutch.

Recognition of different relationships abroad

Some European countries have introduced registered partnership, but the Netherlands has set an international precedent by according equal status to same-sex marriage as marriage between people of different sexes. At present, the institution of same-sex marriage is unique to this country. This means that same-sex married couples and registered partners should be aware that their relationship and its legal consequences will not always be accepted in other countries.

Legal advice

Same-sex married couples and registered partners travelling abroad may encounter practical, social or legal problems. During holidays or short stays, such problems, if any, are most likely to be practical or social. But couples who emigrate or spend relatively long periods abroad may face legal problems, for example in the matter of inheritance. The fact that a marriage or partnership is not recognised in a particular

country does not necessarily mean that no consequences are attached. The country in question might, for example, recognise the implications of the relationship under property law.

Couples are advised to seek legal advice on such matters, either in the Netherlands or abroad. For instance, they may need to make special provision as regards their property, or draw up a will. The local Dutch consulate can direct you to the appropriate office.

Summary

This booklet explains the main differences and similarities between marriage, registered partnership and a cohabitation agreement. The main points are summarised below.

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Legal aid

You may need legal advice in connection with some of the more complex problems or procedures discussed in this booklet, and some procedures can only be carried out by a lawyer. Under the heading *Addresses* you will find a list of the places where you can contact a district court, legal aid office or child protection board.

Costs

Court proceedings, such as divorce case, cost money. If you cannot afford legal counsel, a lawyer will be assigned to you. This means that the state will pay part of your legal fees. But you will always have to pay at least part of the costs. Besides your lawyer's fees you will also have to pay a court fee.

For more information on the costs of court proceedings and legal aid, see the booklets *Do you need legal assistance?* and, available in Dutch only, *Verklaring omtrent inkomen en vermogen* and *Griffierecht*.

More information

If you want more information or wish to order one of the booklets referred to above, please contact the government information line:

Postbus 51 Infolijn

Tel: 0800 8051 (freephone)

The line is open from Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 21.00

Website: www.postbus51.nl

Email: vragen@postbus51.nl

Or contact:

The Ministry of Justice

Information Department

Internal and External Communication Division

Postbus 20301

2500 EH Den Haag

Tel: 070 370 6850

Open from Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 17.00

Website: www.justitie.nl

Email: voorlichting@minjus.nl

Addresses

More information

You may not find all the answers you need in this booklet. If you would like more information, you should contact:

- the Population Affairs Department of your municipality
- the Notaristelefoon (the notary helpline): 0900 346 9393 (€ 0.25 per minute);
Monday to Friday from 9.00 to 14.00
Further information: www.notaris.nl
- the National Office of the Child Protection Board: tel. 030 239 2400
- the Central Office of the FIOB (for information on and help with adoption and step-parenting): tel. 073 612 8821

Other useful addresses

Vereniging Rechtshulp-organisaties Nederland (for questions about legal aid)

Postbus 10545

2501 HM Den Haag

Tel: 070 356 0620

Vereniging van Personen- en Familierecht Advocaten (an association of family lawyers)

Postbus 65707

2506 EA Den Haag

Tel: 070 427 1263

www.vpfa.nl

Vereniging van Advocaat-Scheidingsbemiddelaars (an association of divorce lawyers and counsellors)

Postbus 65707

2506 EA Den Haag

Tel: 070 362 6215

www.vas-scheidingsbemiddeling.nl

Nederlandse Orde van Advocaten (Dutch Bar Association)

Postbus 30851

2500 GW Den Haag

Tel: 0900 238 6228 (€ 0.25 per minute)

www.advocatenorde.nl

District courts, Legal Aid Offices and Child Protection Boards The

Netherlands is divided into 19 court districts. Each district has a main centre with a district court, Legal Aid Office and Child Protection Board. You will find addresses and telephone numbers in the telephone directory.

There are district courts at the following locations:

Alkmaar, Almelo, Amsterdam, Arnhem, Assen, Breda, Dordrecht, Groningen, Haarlem, The Hague, 's Hertogenbosch, Leeuwarden, Maastricht, Middelburg, Roermond, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Zutphen and Zwolle.

There are also legal aid offices in:

Almere-stad, Amersfoort, Amsterdam, Apeldoorn, Deventer, Drachten, Eindhoven, Emmen, Enschede, Gorinchem, Gouda, Heerlen, Helmond, Hoorn, Leiden, Lelystad, Nijmegen, Oss, Roosendaal, Tilburg, Venlo and Zaandam.

For more information about legal aid offices, you can consult their website:

www.bvr.rechtsbijstand.net

Finally, there are also Child Protection Boards in Eindhoven, Lelystad and Tilburg.

Other booklets in this series

The following booklets are available in English:

- Registered partnership
- Same-sex marriages
- Choice of name. Information on the rules for choosing a surname.
- Matrimonial property law and the Hague Convention
- Do you need legal assistance?
- Responsibility, access and information

The following are available in Dutch only:

- Afstamming. Wie zijn de juridische ouders van een kind.
- Naamswijziging
- Adoptie van een kind in Nederland
- U wilt een kind uit het buitenland adopteren
- U gaat scheiden
- Verdeling van ouderdomspensioen bij scheiding
- Alimentatie
- Curatele, bewind, mentorschap
- Griffierecht
- Verklaring omtrent inkomen en vermogen