

NATIONAL REPORT – THE NETHERLANDS

This brochure, issued by the Legal Aid Board, provides a broad outline of the legal aid system in the Netherlands, as well as a survey of the current facts and figures concerned with legal aid.

The Dutch Legal Aid system provides legal aid to people of limited means. Anyone in need of professional legal aid but unable to (fully) bear the costs, is entitled to call upon the provisions as set down in the Legal Aid Act (the last amendment of this law took effect on July 1st, 2009). Given their financial means, approximately 37% of the Dutch population (with a total of 16.6 million people) would, according to the latest estimates, qualify for legal aid if circumstances so require. The legal aid itself is mainly financed by the state (the Legal Aid Fund) and only for a minor part by an income-related fee of the individual client.

A body called the Legal Aid Board ('Raad voor Rechtsbijstand') is entrusted with all matters concerning administration, supervision and expenditure as well as with the actual implementation of the Legal Aid System. The Legal Aid Board consists of five regional offices and one central office.¹ Legal advice and, if necessary, help by a professional Bar-registered lawyer are made available by two parties: the so-called Legal Services Counters act as what is commonly known as the 'front office' (primary help), whereas private lawyers and mediators provide legal aid in more complicated or time-consuming matters (secondary help). The legal aid system, therefore, is a mixed model, consisting of public first-line and private second-line help. At present, the Legal Services Counters annually provide easily accessible, free legal services to over half a million clients. The Counters are meant as a first step to receive legal aid and, if necessary, referral to a lawyer or mediator.

Private lawyers and mediators who operate under the terms of the legal aid system need to be registered with the Legal Aid Board and comply with quality standards that have collectively been set down by the Board¹, The Dutch Bar Association and the Ministry of Justice². In order to be allowed to assist a client in a particular case, a registered lawyer submits an application to the Legal Aid Board on behalf of his client. It is an application for a so-called certificate, i.e. a statement by the Board that the client in question is entitled to legal aid. In 2010, the Legal Aid Register included the names of approximately 7,300 lawyers who dealt with a total of over 430,000 cases.

² The quality criteria for mediators have been adopted in consultation between the Netherlands Mediation Institute (NMI), the Council for the Judiciary and the Legal Aid Board.

1 The Legal Aid Act and the structure of the Dutch legal aid system

Under the European Convention on Human Rights and the Constitution of the Netherlands, each citizen of the Netherlands has the right to access courts, apply for

¹ In February 2009, the five regional Boards merged into one national Legal Aid Board with five regional offices and one central office.

² The quality criteria for mediators have been adopted in consultation between the Netherlands Mediation Institute (NMI), the Council for the Judiciary and the Legal Aid Board.

legal advice and representation and, if means do not suffice, receive state-financed legal aid³. Since 1994 legal aid has been regulated under the Legal Aid Act. This Act replaced the prior statutory system that dealt with the supply of legal aid and dates back as far as 1956. Residing under the competence of the Ministry of Justice, the Legal Aid Board is charged with the organisation and administration of legal aid. This includes matching the availability of legal experts with the demand of legal aid, as well as the supervision and quality control of the actual services provided. Annually, a Monitor is published that reports on the previous year's situation.

The Legal Aid Board also advises the Ministry of Justice on matters concerning the supply and demand of legal aid. Being financed by the Ministry of Justice, the Legal Aid Board accounts to this ministry for its budgetary allocations. Public expenditure on legal aid is increasing each year (see Table 1)⁴.

Table 1 Dutch population and expenditure on legal aid

	1994	1998	2002	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total Dutch population*	15,300	15,650	16,105	16,334	16,358	16,405	16,486	16,575
Total expenditure on legal aid in Euro*	184,000	195,000	315,000	398,000	420,000	441,000	463,000	475,000
Expenditure per capita in Euro	12	12	20	24	26	27	28	29

*in thousands

Two-fold model

The Dutch legal aid system is basically a two-fold model in that it encompasses two 'lines' that provide legal aid. The Legal Services Counters, being the first line, provide front services, i.e. primary legal advice. Legal matters are being clarified to clients and information and advice given. If necessary, clients will be referred to a private lawyer or a mediator, who act as the secondary line of legal aid. Clients can also apply for help from a subsidized lawyer directly. Private lawyers and mediators are paid by the Legal Aid Board to provide their services to clients of limited means. Generally they are paid a fixed fee, although exceptions can be made for more extensive cases. To some extent, trade unions and consumer organizations provide legal aid too. The number of legal aid insurances is rising too. In 2000, 14% of the households had a legal aid insurance policy. By 2006 this percentage had doubled to 31%. By 2010 this percentage is 33%.

³ Constitution of the Netherlands Article 17: 'No-one may be prevented against his will from being heard by the courts to which he is entitled to apply under the law'. Article 18 (1) everyone may be legally represented in legal and administrative proceedings. (2) Terms concerning the supply of legal aid to persons of limited means shall be laid down by Act of Parliament.'

⁴ In 2008, the Parliament of the Netherlands have decided to cut the costs of legal aid by Euros 50 million per year in order to prevent them from becoming even higher. At the end of this paper the plans for cost reduction will be discussed in greater detail.

Client's fees

The costs of legal aid are partly covered by a fee from the client himself. This personal fee, though generally covering only a small part of the actual expenses, is meant to encourage clients to carefully weigh the pros and cons of taking a matter to court, and hence discouraging frivolous cases so as to remain in better control of the costs of the legal aid system at large. In case of relatively simple legal problems, private lawyers are allowed to charge a standard three-hours legal advice fee, of which the client contributes € 40 or € 74, depending on his income (see Table 2). At present, only a rough appraisal is made of the number of hours that the lawyer is likely to spend on the case. Whether or not a client is entitled to three-hour legal advice, depends on his taxable annual income two years prior to the year of application (t-2). It is that income that is the most recent reliable income information that the tax authorities have access to. A Board-registered lawyer submits an application to the Legal Aid Board on behalf of his client.

Table 2 Client's income and fee towards (max.) three-hour legal aid, from 01-07-2010

<i>Taxable annual income: married/single with child(ren)</i>	<i>Client's fee to legal aid; max. 3 hours</i>	<i>Taxable annual income: single</i>
0 - € 24,800	€ 40	0 - € 17,700
€ 24,801 - € 34,400	€ 74	€ 17,301 - € 24,400

If a problem is expected to take more than three hours, clients are entitled to legal aid only if they have been granted a so-called legal aid certificate. In order to obtain this, a (Board-registered) lawyer needs to submit an application to the Legal Aid Board on behalf of his client. The Board assesses each application both in terms of the client's means (t-2), merits and significance of the legal problem in question.

Since April 2005 it is also possible to apply for a mediation certificate. This allows the client to call in help from an independent mediator, so as to settle an issue between himself and another party. The client's fee towards the costs of mediation is generally less than that of regular legal aid. In 2010 the fee for mediation is set at a maximum of € 100.

Reform of the system in 2006: easier access to data concerning income and assets

In April 2006 the legal aid system was reformed. From then on, the eligibility for legal aid was based on both the client's annual income and his assets. The Legal Aid Board verifies the client's personal data with those in the municipal population register and checks the applicant's income with the tax authorities. Thanks to online connections with the tax offices, the Legal Aid Board is able to rapidly obtain information concerning the applicant's income and other available financial means. It is on the basis of this tax information and on the nature of the legal problem as outlined by the lawyer, that the Board decides whether or not legal aid will be granted. If legal aid is granted, a certificate is issued which allows the lawyer in question to deal with the case. The certificate also specifies the client's fee, which is based on the information concerning his income and other financial means. In 2010 the fees to be paid by clients varied from € 100 to € 750 per case (see Table 3).

Individuals whose income exceeds € 34,400 (partner income included) or € 24,400 (single) are not entitled to legal aid.

Table 3 Income and client's fee, from 01-01-2010

<i>Taxable annual income: married/single with child(ren)</i>	<i>Client's fee</i>	<i>Taxable annual income: single</i>
0 - 24,000	100	0 - 17,200
24,001 - 24,800	158	17,201 - 17,700
24,801 - 26,100	272	17,701 - 18,700
26,101 - 29,000	478	18,701 - 20,500
29,001 - 34,400	750	20,501 - 24,400

Sometimes clients are exempted from individual fees. This applies to all cases where people have been deprived of their freedom.

Assessment of the applicant's income level (and hence his potential eligibility for legal aid) is based on his income two years prior to the application date. That is the so-called reference year (t-2). The reason to use that year's income data, is that those data are the latest that are available from the tax authorities. Moreover, those data have generally been found correct and therefore final. So, for a certificate to be granted in 2010, the applicant's income in 2008 is leading.

Requests can be made for adaptation of the reference year, if the applicant's income in the year of application has decreased substantially compared to that in the reference year. This holds if the applicant's reference-year income would not make him eligible for legal aid, whereas his present income would. If an applicant wishes to be eligible for a lower fee, his income needs to have decreased by at least 15% since the reference year⁵.

Eligibility for legal aid, however, is not only subject to the level of income but to the availability of other financial means (such as savings) too. The applicant's capital must not exceed € 20,014 (with a supplementary allowance of € 2.762 per child under 18 in his care).

Table 4 Maximum capital (in reference year 2008) to be eligible for legal aid in 2010*

<i>Couples</i>	€ 41,322
<i>Single with or without child(ren)</i>	€ 20,661
<i>Supplementary allowance per child under 18</i>	€ 2,762

*Under certain conditions, applicants of 65 or above are allowed a higher maximum capital.

If a client is in need of a second certificate within six months, his fee will be reduced by 50%; this reduction applies to a maximum of three certificates within six months.

⁵ In 2010, 14,814 requests for reference year adaptation were made. This amounts to 3.4% of the total of legal aid certificates granted.

2. Legal Services Counters

As outlined above, the Legal Services Counters act as front offices that provide primary legal aid. They offer general information concerning rules and regulations as well as legal procedures. They give advice in simple legal matters, and refer clients to private lawyers or mediators if their problems turn out to be more complicated or time-consuming. All services are free of charge and are provided on the spot or as part of a consultation hour (max. 60 minutes). Clients can turn to the Counters with problems that concern civil, administrative, criminal as well as immigration law.

The initial contact at the Counters is meant to clarify the nature of the problems and helps staff members to find out:

- whether the problem is actually a legal problem and, if so,
- whether the problem is within the scope of the legal services provided by the Counters (not all legal problems – e.g. those between businesses – are dealt with by the Counters);
- what kind of help is most suitable for the client.

At this stage, clients are also informed on the chances of success, the time that is needed and the costs of a subsequent procedure. On the basis of this information, clients can weigh the case and decide whether or not to proceed.

If the case requires in-depth help by a professional and if the client decides to continue, he can be referred to a private lawyer or a mediator, who has agreed to be available for these referrals. The choice of a specific professional is based on his availability, his specialism, the travel distance between his office and the client's home, and the number of referrals that he has recently obtained. As soon as the referral is made, the client is held to pay an (income-related) fee towards the costs.

The focus, by the Counters, on primary legal aid is meant to serve two major goals. First, the help provided is readily available and free of charge. That is why the Service Counters are generally regarded as easily accessible and fairly informal. Secondly, they have an important screening function, in that they tackle disputes and legal problems at an early stage and thereby help to avoid escalation as well as minimize costs, both for the individual in question and for society at large.

Reform of the system in 2003: establishment of Legal Services Counters

Between 2003 and 2006 a major reform took place in the Dutch legal aid system. Legal Services Counters were set up to take over the primary (informative) function of the former Legal Aid and Advice Centres⁶; the secondary function (extended consultation and actual legal aid) was to be dealt with by private lawyers only. This operation was necessary in order to keep the focus on primary legal aid and achieve more transparency of the legal aid system as a whole.

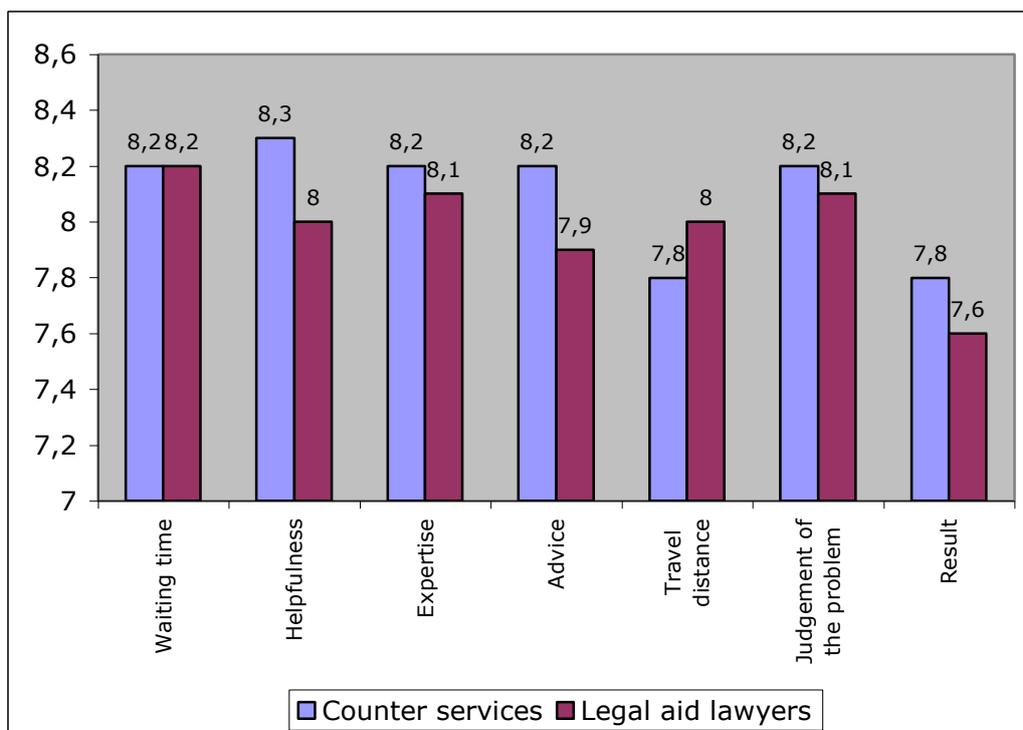
⁶ The former Legal Aid and Advice Centres used to provide both information and legal aid. In the course of time, however, this multiple nature of the Centres caused an increasing loss of insight into the actual proceedings at the Centre. It was, therefore, considered necessary to maintain a strict distinction between informative services on the one hand and legal aid on the other.

A total of 30 Legal Services Counters has been established that share a website and a call centre. They have been evenly set up geographically, so that every Dutch citizen is within easy reach of a Legal Services Counter, at an approximately one hour journey by public transport. In general, each Legal Services Counter is staffed with at least six legal advisers. Some Counters, particularly those in major cities, employ more staff. Since the services of the current Counters do not include extensive legal aid and representation in court, paralegals can be employed too. The Dutch bachelor education system recently started a law course to train students for this purpose.

The premises of the Counters have been designed to look as inviting to visitors as possible. Actually, they look more like a shop than an office. Inside is an open space with a waiting area and three desks. The call centre and rooms for private consultation are located at the back of the shop. There are also shelves with information brochures on legal matters.

In the waiting area, computer terminals are available with references to documentation on a wide range of legal topics. The legal advisers at the Counters work in turns, both in the call centre (inquiries both by telephone and e-mail), at the counter, and in the consultation rooms. The call centres of all the Counters are interconnected in order to spread the workload evenly and nationwide. Sophisticated computer software, specifically designed for the Legal Services Counters, is at the staff's disposal and helps them to answer the client's questions correctly and quickly. In due course, several features of the software will also become available for client consultation at the computer terminals in the waiting areas. Customer surveys have shown that, in general, clients rate the services by the Counters as 'good' or even 'very good' (with an average score of 8.2). The services of the legal aid lawyers are also rated as 'good' (7.9).

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Legal Services Counters: facts and figures

Below, figures can be found concerning the nature of the client contacts at the Legal Services Counters. In 2010 the Counters attended to 770,374 contacts.

The majority of services are provided by telephone (see Table 5). Because the Legal Services Counters are a fairly new facility, the figures after 2007 do not easily compare to those of the previous years.

Table 5 Nature of client contacts of Legal Services Counters (2009 and 2010)

	<i>Total number 2009</i>	<i>percentages 2009</i>	<i>Total number 2010</i>	<i>percentages 2010</i>
Telephone	451,305	58	438,893	57
Desk	189,880	24	180,414	23
Consultation hour	92,792	16	87,828	11
E-mail + website	49,100	4	63,239	8
Total	783,077	100	770,374	100

*All figures have been rounded off. That is why the total does not always exactly equal the sum of the separate figures.

The Legal Services Counters provide several kinds of services. The majority deals with providing information and answering questions (86%). The Counters also refer clients from desk or telephone to the consultation hours, or to lawyers or mediators.

Referrals to lawyers are made electronically, with the help of software that was specifically designed for this purpose. The software helps the Counter's staff to evenly distribute referrals among the lawyers that have been registered for referral. As stated before selection of a lawyer is based on criteria concerning (1) his availability on particular dates and times, (2) expertise in the law field of the case at hand, (3) accessibility for the client in terms of travel distance and (4) the number of referrals obtained within a set period of time.

As soon as the referral is made, the lawyer receives an electronic message with information regarding the client and his problem, and with the preliminary advice (if any) that the client received from the Legal Services Counter.

The client, on the other hand, is informed by the Counter on the terms and procedures of the legal aid system.

Table 6 Services provided by Legal Services Counters (2009 and 2010)

	<i>Total number 2009</i>	<i>Percentages 2009</i>	<i>Total number 2010</i>	<i>Percentages 2010</i>
Supplying information and answering questions	724,409	86	711,182	86
Internal referral to consultation hour	82,172	10	82,340	10
Referral to lawyer	38,836	5	33,448	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>845,417</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>826,970</i>	<i>100</i>

*All figures have been rounded off. That is why the total does not always exactly equal the sum of the separate figures.

Table 7 shows how often referrals to mediation were made.

Table 7 Successfully completed referrals to mediation (2009 and 2010)

	<i>Total number of referrals</i>
2009	3,123
2010	2,611

Finally, Table 8 shows how client inquiries at the Legal Services Counter are distributed across the various fields of law. The majority of inquiries concern contract/consumer (24%), employment (25%), and family issues (17%).

Table 8 Fields of law (2009 and 2010)

	<i>Percentages 2009</i>	<i>Percentages 2010</i>
Contract/consumer	24	24
Labour/employment	26	25
Family	16	17
Social security	7	8
Housing	7	8
Criminal	4	4
Immigration	3	3
Administrative	4	4
Other civil cases	9	8

3 Online assistance to solve actual conflicts

In addition to the Counters, there is also an interactive online application called *Rechtwijzer* (=‘Roadmap to Justice’; see www.rechtwijzer.nl). This, too, is an easy way to obtain legal information. It helps users to find their way towards solving a conflict. The application, developed by the Legal Aid Board in close cooperation with the University of Tilburg, consists of a ‘dispute roadmap’ that, on the basis of a number of choices, guides users step by step along all the legal aspects of the conflict at hand. The software covers the fields of housing, labour, family, consumer and administrative law.

Apart from further development of this Dispute Roadmap, new applications will be added to the website too: the Divorce and Parenthood Plan and Mediation Online. These applications will soon be ready for use and are also meant to encourage users to solve legal conflicts themselves.

The Dispute Roadmap can be seen as a first help towards settling actual conflicts. The website of the Legal Services Counters, on the other hand, contains lots of documentation and is meant first and foremost to inform visitors on all sorts of legal matters. It is of a much more comprehensive nature than the Dispute Roadmap, which focuses on well-defined conflicts.

That is why the Dispute Roadmap software sometimes refers visitors to one of the Counters.

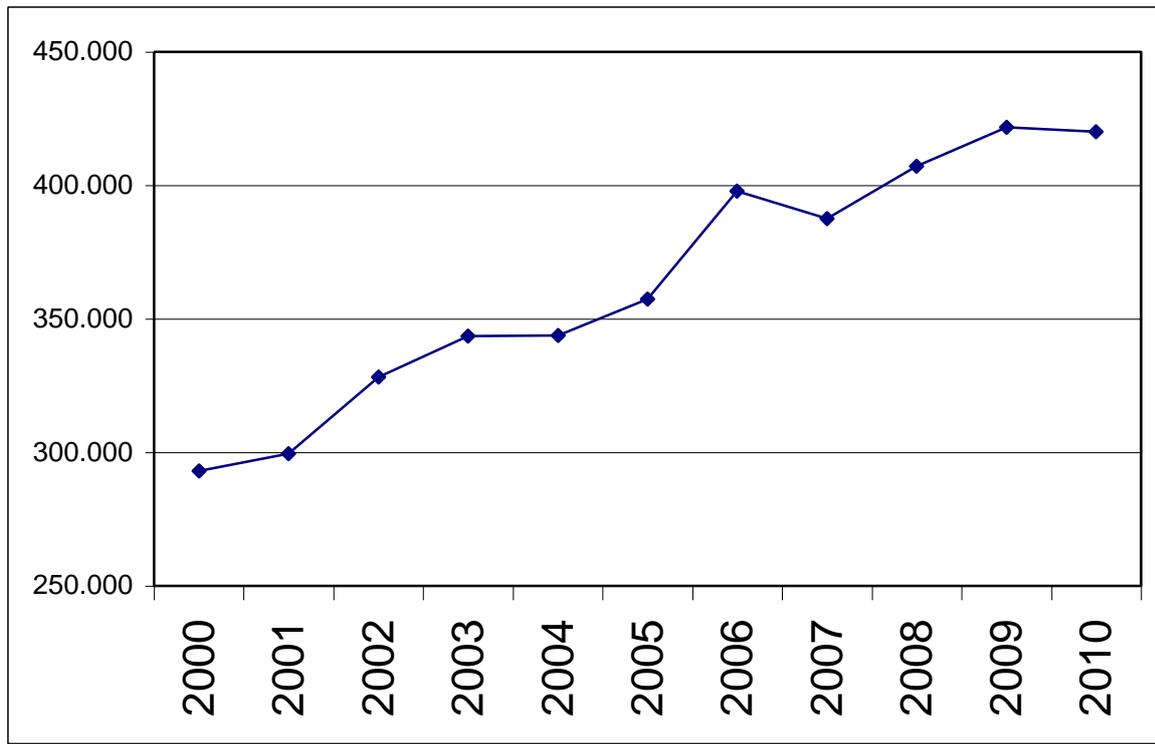
4 Certificates

In 2010 as many as 429,970 legal aid certificates were issued. Since 2000 the number of certificates has risen by 47%⁷. In addition to regular legal aid certificates – 420,086 in 2010 – 9.884 ‘minor aid’ certificates (i.e. for max. three-hour legal aid) have been issued as well as 7,330 mediation certificates.

⁷ In 2006 the number of certificates shows a more than average upward trend. This is probably due to the implementation of new procedures concerning the issue of certificates. Procedures to obtain a certificate have been simplified and terms slightly adapted. The number of certificates issued in 2007 and 2008 matches the upward trend since 2000.

The number of mediation certificates is growing, although still marginal.

Figure 2 shows the development, since 2000.



For every certificate issued, the Legal Aid Board keeps account of the (major) field of law that the certificate is concerned with. Below, figures can be found as regards the fields of law that legal aid certificates are concerned with.

Table 9 shows a rise of certificates in all law fields except that of asylum.

Table 9 Regular legal aid certificates, according to field of law and index *

Year	Civil legal aid	Index	Criminal legal aid	Index	Asylum	Index
2000	149,279	100	94,769	100	49,032	100
2001	146,865	98	102,187	108	50,430	103
2002	159,069	107	116,684	123	52,455	107
2003	181,130	121	129,416	137	32,927	67
2004	184,673	124	136,060	144	22,984	47
2005	197,233	132	139,001	147	21,174	43
2006	223,429	150	153,050	161	21,389	44
2007	218,852	147	152,644	161	15,963	33
2008	230,003	154	158,057	167	19,176	39
2009	240,912	161	155,725	164	25,164	51
2010	241,420	162	148,945	157	29,721	61

Table 10 shows more in detail that most certificates concern criminal (39%) and family-related cases (24%).

Table 10: Types of cases represented in legal aid certificates (2007 + 2008)

	<i>Percentage 2009</i>	<i>Percentages 2010</i>
Criminal	38	36
Family	24	25
Social security	9	8
Contract/consumer	8	9
Immigration	6	5
Asylum	6	7
Labour/employment	4	4
Housing	3	3
Administrative	2	3
Other civil cases	<1	<1
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Number of legal aid applicants

Compared to 2000, last year (2010) showed an increase by 28% of the number of applicants that were granted at least one certificate per year.

From 2000 to 2008 the average number of certificates rose from 1.33 to 1.53 per applicant. Apart from a substantial rise in 2002, the number has remained fairly even over the last few years, with a slight increase in 2008.

In 2000 and 2001 the percentage of 'single certificate' clients (i.e. clients with one certificate per year) was slightly higher (78% and 77% respectively) than the following years. In 2010 the percentage amounted to 71%. These figures give evidence that the number of 'multiple' certificate clients (more than one certificate per year) is growing.

Scope of Legal Aid System within Dutch population and client profile

Thanks to online connections with the tax authorities, it has become possible – more accurately so than in the past – to assess the scope of the Legal Aid System and gain a better insight into the socio-economic characteristics of those who apply for legal aid. Estimates are that approximately 37% of the Dutch population would, on the basis of their financial means, qualify for legal aid.

Holders of a legal aid certificate are predominantly male and between 20 and 45 years of age; certificate holders of under 15 or over 60 are fairly infrequent. Youngsters/students, employed and retired workers are found to be fairly underrepresented, whereas recipients of social benefit and other non-working persons are overrepresented. In all, as much as 56% of all certificate holders is without a job. Certificate holders are also found to be more often divorced and less often married (married persons without children, in particular, are underrepresented),

whereas holders living in single-parent families are overrepresented. Furthermore, certificate holders are more often non-western immigrants and live mainly in cities of over 250,000 residents and less often in cities under 50,000 residents.

5 Private lawyers and mediators

Legal aid in the Netherlands is usually provided by private lawyers/law firms that provide legal advice and represent clients in cases that deal with the major fields of law: criminal, family, labour/employment, housing, social security, consumer, administrative, asylum and immigration. Private lawyers obtain legal aid cases in two ways: one of the Legal Services Counters refers a client to a lawyer, or a client contacts a registered lawyer on his own accord.

To be entitled to accept legal aid cases, private lawyers need to be registered with the Legal Aid Board and comply with a set of quality standards. The Board's major requirement is submission to a three-year audit by the Dutch Bar Association that checks if the law firm works according to the Bar's standards of decent office practice. The audits are carried out by experienced lawyers who have received special audit training. If the auditor passes a negative judgement, a re-audit will be carried out a few months later. Should the re-audit still indicate serious deficiencies, the law firm in question is no longer allowed to provide legal aid. Lawyers that hold the quality mark of the Dutch Foundation Viadicte are also entitled to accept legal aid cases. They are under the obligation to participate in Viadicte's peer review system.

For some fields of law – criminal, mental health, asylum and immigration law – additional terms apply. These are mainly concerned with specific training: the lawyer must both have adequate expertise and sufficient experience in that particular field.

Payment of lawyers and mediators

As soon as a case is closed, the lawyer bills the Legal Aid Board for the services provided. The Board, however, does not pay an hourly rate but a fixed fee for different types of services. These fees are based on extensive analyses of legal aid cases from the past and are supposed to correspond with the average time spent on a specific kind of case by a lawyer. A few examples are presented in Table 11.

Table 11 Examples of types of cases and the corresponding fixed number of paid working hours

<i>Type of case</i>	<i>Fixed number of paid working hours</i>
Labour: dismissal	11
Divorce	10
Asylum	4
Felony	6/8
Criminal offence	5

Broadly speaking, the fees in 2010 correspond to an hourly rate of approximately € 112 (see also Table 12 for the fees paid since 2000).

This means that a lawyer is paid 10 times € 112 for legal aid in divorce proceedings. In 1994 the hourly rate was € 26. Over the last decade, fees have been raised substantially, because lawyers operating under the legal aid system were relatively underpaid. The last few years, fees have been raised following the current price index.

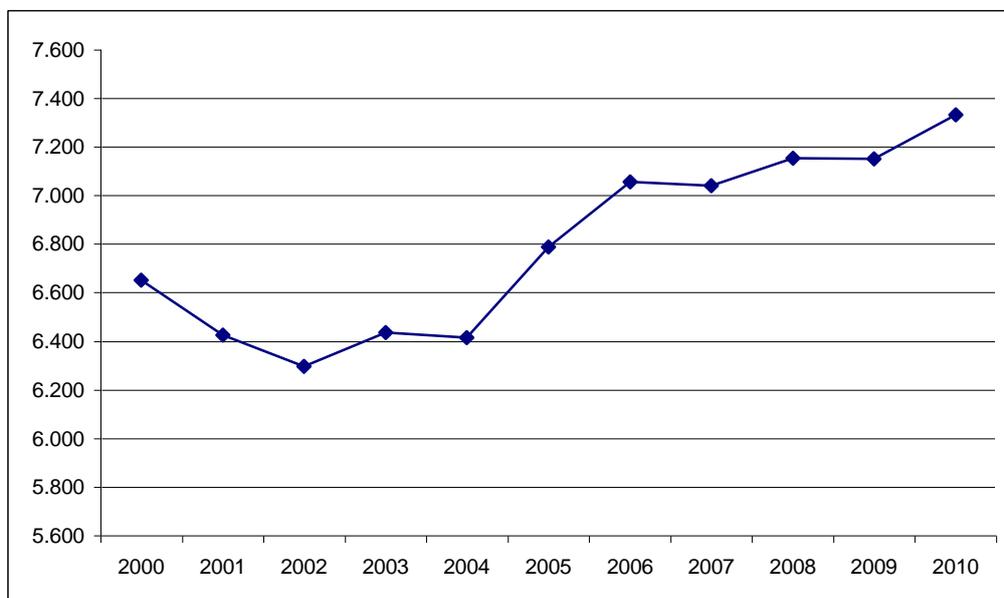
Table 12 Hourly rate of lawyers* in the legal aid system (2000 - 2009)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Hourly rate</i>	<i>Index hourly rate</i>
2000-01-01 until 2000-06-30	€ 70	100
2000-07-01 until 2001-06-30	€ 73	104
2001-07-01 until 2002-06-30	€ 76	108
2002-07-01 until 2003-06-30	€ 87	125
2003-07-01 until 2003-12-31	€ 90	129
2004-01-01 until 2004-06-30	€ 94	134
2004-07-01 until 2004-12-31	€ 95	136
2005-01-01 until 2005-06-30	€ 99	141
2005-07-01 until 2006-05-15	€ 99	142
2006-05-15 until 2006-06-30	€ 99	142
2006-07-01 until 2007-06-30	€ 101	144
2007-07-01 until 2008-06-30	€ 103	147
2008-07-01 until 2009-06-30	€ 107	153
2009-07-01 until 2010-06-30	€ 110	157
Since 2010-07-01	€ 112	160

*Mediators are paid a standard four- or eight-hours service fee.

Number of lawyers and mediators

In 2010 as many as 7,332 lawyers provided legal aid in at least one case. This number is slightly higher than in 2009.



In 2010, 46% of all lawyers registered with the Bar work within the legal aid system. Just like the number of legal aid lawyers, the number of mediators has increased – by 36% – compared to 2007. In 2010, 509 mediators applied for a mediation certificate. Since 2002 the number of female legal aid lawyers has increased both absolutely and proportionally, and continuously too. In 2010 their number amounted to 46% of all legal aid lawyers. Compared to the percentages of female members of the Bar (42%), female lawyers are slightly overrepresented in the legal aid system.

Up to 2010 inclusive, the number of certificates issued has increased, and so has the number of lawyers in the legal aid system. The latter, however, has risen less fast. As a result, from 2000 to 2008 the average number of certificates per lawyer has risen by 34%, from 44 to 59 certificates per year.

Figures also indicate that the vast majority of legal aid lawyers (almost 90%) remain active within the system for years.