

CORONA QUESTIONNAIRE  
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**1. What are the corona measures for all citizens in your country?**

**The Netherlands** is a small but very crowded country. We have 17 million citizens. The Corona-outbreak started just after the carnival-celebrations at the end of February. People had been celebrating for 4 days in cafés during which time the virus had ample opportunity to spread. There are also reports of Corona hotspots in nursing homes and religious communities. At the timing of writing, we are counting 10866 infected people and 771 people deceased.

We are not in a complete lockdown. Most people are working from home, restaurants, cafés and most shops are closed. Groups of more than 2 people should maintain social distance of 1,5m. Beaches and parks are closed and no cultural events are being scheduled. We are allowed to go out on the street without restriction. But everyday life is very quiet, like a Sunday-morning.

We work with 50 people in my firm Delissen Martens in the Hague. A small group, which includes me, is at the office to manage affaires. The rest of our staff is working on their laptops from home. We communicate with each other via videocalls on the Microsoft Teams-platform, which works great.

**2. What is the legal situation and in the courts?**

The courts are proceeding the best they see possible. All hearings, whether in court or in administrative procedures are being postponed and rescheduled. In some cases, parties are asked if they agree to proceed in writing without an oral hearing. In criminal cases, the pre-trial detention hearings are done by videoconference. New cases can being introduced.

**3. How is the situation of the lawyers and what are the Bars doing?**

Lawyers are not visiting police stations to support people who are arrested. They give first legal aid by telephone. Otherwise, we are continuing our work. The first week of Corona-measures, everybody was in a state of shock, but from the second week lawyers and client took off from where they left the case or the negotiation. It is remarkable how we all change our ways in a very flexible manner of going forward with our profession.

The Dutch Bar has a Corona-file on its website <https://www.advocatenorde.nl/dossier/coronavirus> and has taken the lead to assist lawyers in need. Financial support for lawyers working in legal aid cases was organised

quickly. Lawyers are on the list of the critical professions that are needed to maintain the rule of law. This means, for example, that if both parents have such a profession, children are still welcome in day care and in schools. The Bar is taking its role and lobbying on various topics that affect lawyers.

#### **4. Which measures are the most appreciated and what are the challenges?**

The government has announced a vast package of measures to support small and big businesses. Lawyers are included. For lawyers in need, an income guarantee of max 1500 euro per month net is available. A support on working capital, flexible loans and to pay the wages of employees has been organized.

The biggest challenge is the uncertainty how long this all will last. The President of the Dutch central bank says that we are in a state of hibernating, a winter sleep. The basic parameters of the economy remain very good. We have to be optimistic. As lawyers, we are problem solvers. In times of crisis, we still have to support our clients to help them through. We shall have to wait and see how our corporate and private clients will manage through this unprecedented and challenging times.

#### **5. Addition comments.**

To all our friends in the FBE, first of all, I hope you, your family and colleagues will stay healthy. I hope you will find a way through this difficult period. And surely, we will see each again other shortly, somewhere in Europe, or on Teams, Zoom or Whatsapp!

With warm regards,

**Bas Martens**

