Rechten van slachtoffers – per land

België

Je wordt beschouwd als een slachtoffer van een misdrijf als je schade hebt geleden ten gevolge van een bepaalde gebeurtenis waardoor je bijvoorbeeld gewond bent geraakt of waardoor je eigendommen beschadigd of gestolen werden, en de nationale wetten deze gebeurtenis als een misdrijf omschrijven.
Als slachtoffer van een misdrijf kent de wet je bepaalde individuele rechten toe zowel voor, tijdens als na het strafproces.
De strafprocedure in België bestaat uit een onderzoeksfase en een vonnisfase. In de meeste gevallen wordt het onderzoek gevoerd onder leiding van de procureur des Konings (opsporingsonderzoek) of – in bepaalde meer ingewikkelde dossiers – de onderzoeksrechter (gerechtelijk onderzoek). Tijdens het onderzoek wordt bewijs verzameld om te bewijzen dat er een misdrijf is gepleegd en door wie dat het misdrijf is gepleegd.
Nadat het onderzoek beëindigd is, wordt het dossier afgesloten of naar een rechtbank doorverwezen. Tijdens het strafproces zal de rechtbank het verzamelde bewijs evalueren en beoordelen of de verdachte inderdaad schuldig is. Als de verdachte schuldig wordt bevonden, wordt hij/zij veroordeeld en kan hem een straf worden opgelegd. De rechtbank kan echter ook oordelen dat de persoon onschuldig is en hem vrijspreken.
Als slachtoffer heb je een aantal rechten doorheen de strafprocedure. Als je op een meer actievere wijze wenst te worden betrokken in de strafprocedure, kan je ervoor kiezen je te laten registreren als **benadeelde persoon** of je **burgerlijke partij** stellen. In bepaalde omstandigheden kan je ervoor kiezen om zelf het strafproces op te starten via een rechtstreekse dagvaarding van de dader of door een klacht met burgerlijke partij stelling neer te leggen bij de onderzoeksrechter. Via de burgerlijke partijstelling is het mogelijk om een schadevergoeding te vorderen van de dader. Wanneer aan een aantal voorwaarden is voldaan (bijvoorbeeld als je het slachtoffer bent van een geweldsmisdrijf en de dader of de verzekeringsmaatschappij de schade niet kunnen vergoeden) kan je een tegemoetkoming krijgen van de Staat.
De volgende informatiefiches leiden je door de verschillende stappen in de strafprocedure en geven je een overzicht van je rechten tijdens het onderzoek, tijdens het strafproces en na het strafproces. Je kan hier ook meer informatie vinden over de bijstand en de hulp die je kan krijgen.
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De verschillende taalversies van deze pagina worden bijgehouden door de betrokken lidstaten. De informatie wordt vertaald door de diensten van de Europese Commissie. Eventuele aanpassingen zijn daarom mogelijk nog niet verwerkt in de vertalingen. De Europese Commissie aanvaardt geen verantwoordelijkheid of aansprakelijkheid met betrekking tot informatie of gegevens in dit document. Zie de juridische mededeling voor auteursrechtelijke bepalingen van de lidstaat die verantwoordelijk is voor deze pagina.

Let op: de oorspronkelijke versie van deze pagina (nl) is onlangs gewijzigd.
Aan de vertaling in het Nederlands wordt momenteel gewerkt.
De volgende vertalingen zijn al beschikbaar: fr

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How and where can I report a crime?

You can report a crime to the local police, preferably in the area where the crime has taken place. In an emergency you can always telephone 112 to contact the police. In non-emergency situations you can go to the nearest police station. The addresses of police stations are listed on the website of the local police force in Dutch and French.
If you are a Belgian citizen or a Belgian resident (e.g. you have been granted permanent residence in Belgium), you can report some petty crimes (e.g. vandalism, shoplifting and theft of a bicycle) online in Dutch, French or German. In addition, anybody, including tourists, can report internet-related crime online via a dedicated website which is available in Dutch, French, German and English.
A few offences can be prosecuted only if the victim files a complaint (e.g. stalking, defamation and libel).
You do not have to report the crime immediately, but it is in your interest to do so to enable the police to have detailed information about the facts and circumstances of the crime and any damage or injury that you have suffered as soon as possible. You should also bear in mind that after a certain period of time it will no longer be possible for the authorities to prosecute. This time bar or period of limitation is specified by law and varies according to the crime, ranging from six months to fifteen years.
The police will interview you and draw up an official report. During the interview you have a number of rights which continue to apply if you make another statement later on. Whether you are interviewed as a victim or as a witness, the police officer must explain to you before the interview that:
you can request that all questions and answers be recorded in your own words;
you can request the performance of a specific investigative step or the questioning of a specific person;
your statements may be used as evidence in court;
you can receive a copy of the record of your interview free of charge. You must ask for the copy at the end of the interview. In most cases you will receive your copy immediately.

If you speak a language other than that in which the proceedings are carried out, the police will provide a professional interpreter, unless the police officer can write your statement in your language or asks you to write your statement in your language yourself.
Your statement will be included in the official report which may include the following information:
your name, address, telephone number and any e-mail address;
details about the crime – who was involved in the crime, where, when and what happened, what are the consequences for you;
the contact details of any witnesses;
a description of the people involved, including height, build and clothing. Information such as age, hair colour and style, accent, and any distinguishing features like warts, scars, tattoos or birthmarks is also very useful;
any injuries you have sustained (a physician can write you a medical certificate which you can give to the police even several days after you have made the initial report); you can also ask your physician for a declaration that you are unfit to work;
any other (physical) damage to property you have suffered (it is useful to take pictures of any damage).
In your statement you can also indicate whether you need any type of practical, social, psychological or legal assistance.
You should provide the police with copies of any documents, as you may need the original documents later on, for example if you contact your insurance company.
If you are a victim of sexual violence, your interview will whenever possible take place in a special room that offers the necessary privacy.
In most cases the police will send the **official report (proces-verbaal/procès-verbal)** to the public prosecution service (*parket/parquet)*. The public prosecutor will then decide whether the police have to open an investigation or not. This investigation may be conducted either by the public prosecutor (*procureur des Konings/procureur du Roi)* (**a standard investigation (opsporingsonderzoek/enquête pénale)**) or in more complicated cases, or where more intrusive measures such as house searches are needed, by an investigating judge (**judicial investigation (gerechtelijk onderzoek/instruction judiciaire)**). In some cases the police can decide to conduct an investigation on their own authority and send a complete file to the public prosecution service for further action (**police investigation (ambtshalve politioneel onderzoek/enquête policière d'office)**). For a number of petty crimes (such as theft of a bicycle), and depending on the circumstances (e.g. if there is no trace of the perpetrator) the police will draw up a **simplified official report (vereenvoudigd proces-verbaal (VPV)/procès-verbal simplifié))**. This simplified official report will remain at the police station and will not be forwarded to the public prosecution service. Every month a list of all the simplified official reports which have been drawn up will be forwarded to the public prosecutor, and he or she will therefore be made aware of your case. If any new information comes to light which may have an impact on the case (for example, if the perpetrator of a crime is identified), the official report will be forwarded to the public prosecutor and the police will inform you accordingly.

How can I follow up on what the authorities do after I report a crime?

After you report a crime you will receive a certificate. On this certificate you can find your reference number, the name of the police officer who helped you the first time and contact details of the prosecution office, which you can contact to follow up on your case.
On your certificate you will clearly see whether your case will be handled as an **official report** (this means that the report is sent to the prosecution office, where the public prosecutor will decide whether the crime needs further investigation), a **police investigation** or a **simplified official report**.

How can I be involved in the investigation of the crime?

In the event of prosecution, if you have not taken any further steps beyond making your report to the police, you will be informed by the public prosecutor only of the date, time and place of the court hearing.
If you wish to receive information about any other action taken in respect of your report you have the legal right to register as an **injured party (*benadeelde persoon/personne lésée*)**. You can submit a declaration that you are an injured party, either personally or through a lawyer, to the police officer drawing up the official report, or to the secretariat of the public prosecution service, or at the police station, or by sending a registered letter to the secretariat of the public prosecution service. You will also receive a template for making such a declaration when you receive the document confirming you have made a report.
As an injured party you will receive information in writing about the decisions taken by the public prosecutor (for example, a decision to close the case and the reasons for this, or a decision to start a judicial investigation) and the date of any hearing before an examining court. You will also have the right to add any document that you deem useful to the file. You will additionally have the right to request access to the file and to obtain a copy of it.
If you want to make a claim for damages, or obtain further rights, you must enter a claim as a civil party to the criminal proceedings1 (*burgerlijke partij/partie civile*). You can do so by submitting an express declaration to that effect personally or through your lawyer at any stage of the proceedings. As a civil party you can request access to the case file and obtain a copy of it, ask for additional investigative steps to be taken, claim damages, bring legal challenges against the decisions reached, and be consulted and informed regarding the imprisonment of the offender.
As a civil party to the criminal proceedings or as an injured party you will have the right to be represented by a lawyer in your contacts with the authorities.
Investigations are confidential in Belgium, and it is not possible for you to be present during the investigation (e.g. for the questioning of the suspect), except where there is a visit to the scene of the crime in order to carry out a reconstruction, in which case a civil party may be present.
You are not required to prove either the occurrence of the crime or the guilt of the perpetrator yourself.
It is not possible to have your loss or damage reimbursed at this stage of the criminal proceedings.
Once the official report has been forwarded to the public prosecution service and prosecution has started, you can no longer stop the criminal proceedings. This is so even where the offence can be prosecuted only if reported by the victim, which is the case with stalking for example.

What are my rights as a witness?

During the investigation you are likely to be interviewed as a **witness**.
As a witness you (as well as your family members and relatives) can benefit from the following witness protection measures:
advise on preventive measures and help in installing preventive tools;
preventive police patrols;
registration of incoming and outgoing telephone calls;
provision of a secret telephone number, protected license plate for your car, mobile phone for emergency calls;
physical protection; and
relocation for a maximum of 45 days.
If you have suffered from a crime committed by a criminal organisation or from a serious offence such as the kidnapping of a minor, arson or murder and the measures listed above are not sufficient, special protection measures can be granted. These include (also applying to family members and relatives):
relocation for more than 45 days; and
change of identity.
Reimbursement may be available for any travel and accommodation expenses incurred as a result of acting as a witness in the criminal proceedings.
Witnesses can also apply for half-day compensation for time missed from work. These costs are paid by the state budget, but will have to be reimbursed by the defendant if found guilty.

When you have been granted a protection measure or if you are not in the country, you can be interviewed by videoconference or tele-conference by the public prosecutor or the investigating judge.

I am a minor. Do I have additional rights?

If you are **under 18 years of age** and you are the victim of a crime, you have the following additional rights during the interview:

to be accompanied by an adult of your own choice; and

to have your interview performed in a suitable room.

To prevent you from being interviewed several times your interview may be recorded or videotaped. If you are **under the age of 12** your interview may be recorded on video; you must be informed beforehand. If you are **older than 12** your interview may be recorded on video only if you give your permission. These interviews take place in specifically equipped rooms.

Where you have been the victim of sexual abuse, prostitution or pornography, the period of limitation after which the case can no longer be prosecuted does not start running until you have reached the age of 18.

If you are a victim of crime and a minor, the police will also refer you to a specialist centre for victims of child abuse.

You will also be shielded against disclosure of your identity in the media, that is to say that the publication or dissemination of pictures, drawings and other materials that may reveal your identity will be forbidden.

What information can I obtain from police or victim support organisations during the investigation of the crime?

The police will give you information about:

the type of services or organisations which you can turn to for support;

the procedures that will be followed after you have made your report;

the requirements for obtaining damages.

This information can be provided in leaflets and brochures or verbally. The brochures are available in the three official languages (Dutch, French and German). In practice, information given verbally may also be provided in other languages (e.g. English).

It is important to know that you will be kept informed of certain developments in your case only if you have registered as an injured party or have made a claim as a civil party to the criminal proceedings1. These are as follows:

a decision by the public prosecutor to close your case and the reason for this decision;

a decision by the public prosecutor to refer your case to an investigating judge for a judicial investigation;

a decision by the public prosecutor to propose an amicable agreement or mediation to the offender; and

the date your case will appear before a court.

As an injured party or civil party to the proceedings you will additionally have the right to request access to the file and to obtain a copy of it. This request must be addressed to the public prosecution service or to the investigating judge during the investigation.

You are allowed to make copies of the file, but you will be charged a fee for each copy (around 0.25 to 0.50 euros per copy). However, if your case is being handled by the assize court (*hof van assisen/cour d'assises*), copies are free of charge.

Can I receive legal aid?

For initial guidance you can ask for **frontline legal assistance (*juridische eerstelijnsbijstand/aide juridique de première ligne*)**, in which lawyers provide free legal advice at certain times on certain days. Where necessary they can refer you to a specialist service or organisation. Consultation are organised in court buildings, civil magistrates' courts (*vredegerecht/justice de paix*), law centres and some municipal administrations, etc. You can find a law centre (*justitiehuis /maison de justice*) in every judicial district (their contact details are available in French and Dutch) or you can contact one of the victim support services.

For detailed legal advice, assistance and representation, you need to enlist the services of a lawyer. Depending on your income this may be wholly or partially free of charge, through the **secondline legal assistance system (*juridische tweedelijnsbijstand/aide juridique de deuxième ligne*)**. A number of categories of persons in specific situations, such as minors or persons with a mental disability, are always entitled to free legal representation.

For secondline legal assistance you need to go to a Legal Aid Office (*bureau voor juridische bijstand/bureau d'aide juridique*) (details in French and Dutch), which is present in every court building. You will have to produce documentation showing either that you belong to one of the special categories or that you are on a low net income. The Office will decide within a fortnight whether to approve your application and send you the contact details of your assigned lawyer. It is also possible to ask a lawyer of your choosing whether he or she is willing to work under the second-line legal assistance arrangements. If the lawyer agrees to this, he or she will contact the Office on your behalf in order to seek approval for your application.

If your financial means are modest, under certain circumstances you can ask to be exempted from a number of procedural costs (e.g. bailiff's costs and the costs of copies from the book of evidence) under the **legal aid (*rechtsbijstand/assistance judiciaire*)** arrangements. To benefit you need to submit a request to the Legal Aid Office of the criminal court handling the case. If you are already a civil party to the criminal proceedings you can submit this request, in writing or verbally, to the criminal court handling the case.

You are also advised to check your insurance policies closely to see whether you have legal expenses insurance. Contact your insurance broker.

How can I get protection, if I am in danger?

If you are in danger the police will ensure your immediate **physical protection**. Physical protection is possible also for you as a **witness** if you are in danger as a consequence of statements you have made during the investigation and are willing to confirm your statement in court. In this case the public prosecutor or the investigating judge can send an application to the special **Commission on Witness Protection** when they deem protection measures are necessary.

If you are a victim of rape or sexual assault you will be protected against media coverage: the publication or spread of pictures, drawings and other materials that reveal your identity.

If you are a victim of domestic violence and you are afraid to return home the police will provide you (and your children) with a safe shelter.

You can also ask the police officer not to include your official details in the **official report.** Although the police are bound to give such details to the prosecution officer if requested.

In very threatening situations for you or a person related to you the investigating judge can grant you **full or partial anonymity** (the police does not have any authority in this matter) when certain conditions are met. You also have the right to ask for anonymity yourself. If the investigating judge rejects your request you cannot appeal against this decision.

Partial anonymity means that your identity will not be revealed in the official record of the interview of the hearing and is only possible if there is an investigation led either by an investigating judge or by the public prosecutor.

Full anonymity means that your identity will be kept secret during the whole criminal proceedings and is only possible if:

there is a judicial investigation by the investigating judge;

the provision of partial anonymity is not sufficient to protect you;

you feel that by making a statement you will cause yourself and your relatives danger and you indicate that for this reason you do not want to make a statement; and
the crime is committed by a criminal organisation or is a serious one (e.g. kidnapping of minors, arson, murder, etc.)

What services and assistance can I be given during the investigation of the crime?

All employees of the police force and the judicial authorities are obliged to provide you with any necessary information and, where appropriate, to refer you to **specialist services**. There are various specialist services which offer assistance to victims. During and even after the criminal proceedings you can request the following services:

The police offer initial reception, practical assistance, information, preparation of official reports, and referral to the appropriate services. When the attending police officer is unable to offer optimal support to you (e.g. in emergency or very serious situations) the specialist **police victim services (*politionele slachtofferbejegening/assistance policière aux victimes*)** can step in to provide the necessary support.

The **victim reception offices (*slachtofferonthaal/accueil des victimes*)** at the law centre can give you specialist information about your case. There is a law centre in every judicial district (their contact details are available in French in Dutch). This office can provide you with the necessary support and assistance throughout the entire legal proceedings. If necessary, and depending on the problem, the staff at the victim reception office will refer you to more specialised services. The staff at the victim reception office can support you during emotionally difficult moments in the proceedings, and provide help with access to your file, assistance during the court hearing, help with the return of documentary evidence, or support during a reconstruction of the crime. They can also help you to draw up a victim statement for use with regard to the application of the sentence.

The **victim support services (*diensten slachtofferhulp/services d'assistance aux victimes*)** provide further assistance to deal with the consequences of the crime: emotional and psychological support, information (on your rights, reparation of loss, the trial and the availability of legal assistance) together with assistance in contacting various institutions (such as insurance companies, the police, the judicial authorities, lawyers, hospitals, etc.). Usually you are referred to these services by the police or the judicial assistants but you can also contact them yourself.

Access to all of these services is free of charge and completely voluntary.

If you are a victim of human trafficking various private specialist services can provide support. Coordination and cooperation between these services is provided by the Centre for Equal Opportunities and the Prevention of Racism (*Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en voor Racismebestrijding/Centre pour l'Egalité des chances et la lutte contre le racisme*). You will also be eligible for a number of special arrangements on residence and work permits if you are granted protection as a victim of human trafficking2.

You can receive medical assistance, but you may be asked to pay for it unless you have valid health insurance (although you may include these costs in your claim for compensation). Citizens of the 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland can benefit from the European Health Insurance Card.

Are there opportunities to reach settlement/conciliation or to start mediation between the offender and myself?

Mediation is possible at all stages of the criminal proceedings: at the police stage (mediation at police level); at the level of the municipalities (mediation in connection with administrative penalties); at the level of the public prosecution service, before a decision on prosecution is taken (mediation in criminal cases) and after the public prosecution service has decided to prosecute (restorative mediation). Restorative mediation is also possible during and after the application of the sentence.

Mediation is available for all types of crimes. The public prosecutor, the investigating judge and the trial judge must inform you of the possibilities for mediation. You can also request mediation yourself.

Mediation at police level (*politionele schadebemiddeling/médiation policière*) is offered in cases of petty offences (e.g. graffiti, minor thefts, and vandalism) in order to settle the property damage. This type of mediation is available in the police districts of Leuven, Mechelen and Brussels. Mediation takes place before the official report is sent to the public prosecution service. The public prosecutor is informed of the results of the mediation exercise, and if an agreement has been reached the case is usually closed.

Mediation in connection with administrative penalties3 provided before imposing an administrative penalty. It is mandatory when the offender is under 16 years of age. The mediation aims primarily at reimbursement of the damage caused and is carried out by local authority officials.

Mediation in criminal cases (*bemiddeling in strafzaken/médiation pénale*) may be proposed by the public prosecutor where he or she believes that the crime is punishable by a maximum of two years' imprisonment. This type of mediation takes place before a decision to prosecute the offender is taken, and is carried out by staff of the law centre. As a victim of an offence your main interest will be mediation aimed at reimbursement of your damage. The public prosecutor may propose one or more additional measures to be taken in respect of the offender (psychological treatment or therapy, training, or the provision of services). If an agreement is reached between the offender and the victim over reparation of damage, and if the offender has complied with any additional measures imposed, the prosecution will be dropped (which means that the public prosecutor will no longer be able to bring the case to court). If the offender does not comply with the conditions, the case may be referred to court. Mediation of this kind requires your cooperation, and if you do not agree to cooperate the case will be returned to the public prosecutor, who will take a fresh decision on whether or not to prosecute.

Restorative mediation (*herstelbemiddeling/médiation réparatrice*) runs separately from the criminal proceedings and does not replace them. The judicial authorities therefore remain responsible for any decision involving criminal prosecution, sentencing, and the application of sentences. This does not, however, prevent you from initiating mediation at any point in the proceedings, that is before the case comes to court, whilst the case is being dealt with by the court, or after the judge has given sentence. Anyone who is directly affected by a criminal case may request mediation. This means that not only can the victim or a offender request mediation, but also, for example, a partner, a family member or a relative. Restorative mediation is carried out by two non-governmental organisations, Suggnomè for the Flemish region and Médiante for the Walloon region of the country. They have local sections in each judicial district. An agreement reached as a result of restorative mediation is confidential and is transmitted to the court only with the consent of both parties. The court's judgment must make mention of the restorative mediation, but does not have to take account of the agreement reached.

Mediation is also available in **juvenile cases**, and restorative mediation is possible both at the level of the public prosecution service and at the level of the juvenile courts themselves. A group conference (*herstelgericht groepsoverleg (hergo)/concertation restauratrice en groupe*) can be ordered only by the juvenile court. The judge is expected to give priority to a mediation measure (as opposed to sentencing an offender who is a minor), and to inform the parties to the conflict of this possibility. If the restorative mediation exercise results in an agreement between the victim and the offender, the judge must as a rule approve this agreement . The judge is not allowed to change the content of the agreement, but can refuse to recognise the agreement if the content clearly entails some danger to public safety. Mediation and group conferences are organised by local non-governmental organisations active in the sector of juvenile assistance.

How will my case continue after the end of the investigation?

The decisions taken at the end of the investigation differ depending on whether it is a judicial investigation or a standard investigation.

In the standard investigation, the public prosecutor can decide to:
close the case;

propose an **amicable agreement (*minnelijke schikking/résolution à l'aimable*)** to the offender – if the offender accepts the proposal and compensates your damage, the case will be closed;
propose **mediation in criminal cases (*bemiddeling in strafzaken/médiation dans les affaires pénales*)**;
send your case to court.
As an **injured party or civil party to the criminal proceedings** you will be informed of the public prosecutor's decision.
If a judicial investigation occurs the investigating judge must forward the file to the pretrial division of the court (*raadkamer/chambre du conseil*). The court hearings in the pretrial division are held *in camera:* the press and the public may not be present. You and your lawyer may be present, but your friends and family will not be allowed to attend. The pretrial division can decide to:
close the case, if it considers that there is not enough evidence against the defendant or that no offence has been committed;
refer the case to court for trial, if it considers that there is enough evidence to bring the defendant to court;
commit the offender to a specialised mental institution if he or she is mentally ill or in a serious state of mental deficiency which makes him or her unable to control his or her acts; in this case the defendant can request a public hearing;
suspend judgment: the pretrial division can decide to suspend judgment only when the offender has not been previously sentenced to more than six months' imprisonment; it will set a probation period of no more than five years, during which the offender will have to comply with a number of conditions; if he or she reoffends or does not comply with the conditions within the probation period, the court can decide to reopen the case.
If the pretrial division decides to commit the suspect to a mental institution or to suspend judgment, its decision is deemed equivalent to the full judgment of a criminal court, and it will also rule on your civil claim for damages.
As an **injured party** or civil party to the criminal proceedings1, you will be informed of the date of the hearing. If your case is referred to the criminal court, you will also be informed of the date of the hearing.

Can I appeal if my case is closed without reaching the court?

You cannot appeal against a decision of the public prosecutor to close the case. Depending on the facts and the circumstances of the case, and the reasons for closing it, it may still be possible to claim damages in the criminal courts (apart from any proceedings before the civil courts):
If the offence is a minor offence (*contravention/overtreding*) or an intermediate offence (*délit/wanbedrijf*), it is possible to **summon the offender to court directly** . To do so you must ask a bailiff to serve a summons on the offender.
You can also lodge a criminal complaint with the investigating judge, and make a claim as as a civil party to the criminal proceedings1; the judge is then obliged to initiate a judicial investigation. In order to do so, you must expressly declare to the investigating judge that you are making a claim as a civil party to the criminal proceedings. This may be done verbally or in writing. The investigating judge draws up an official report confirming that you are a civil party to the proceedings. You should be aware that in this case the investigating judge may require you to lodge a security to cover the cost of the proceedings. The amount of this payment is set by the judge. You should also be aware that the pretrial division of the court may still at the end of the investigation decide not to refer the case for trial if, for example, there is not not enough evidence against the defendant. At the trial you must confirm your status as a civil party to the proceedings.
You cannot summon the offender directly to court, nor lodge a complaint as a civil party to the criminal proceedings, if the offender is a minor.
As a civil party to criminal proceedings1, you can appeal against all decisions of the pretrial division, including any decision not to prosecute the defendant, before the indictment division of the court of appeal (*Kamer van inbeschuldigingstelling/Chambre des mises en accusation*). You cannot appeal against the decision of the indictment division, nor can you subsequently summon the offender to court yourself.
If a decision on damages is taken by the pretrial division (where the offender is committed to a mental institution or where judgment is suspended) you can appeal with regard to the damages awarded, but not against the criminal judgment. You have to appeal within fifteen days (or three days when the offender is in pretrial custody) at the registry office of the court. The indictment division of the court of appeal will then review your claim for damages.
If, for whatever reason, you did not take part in the criminal proceedings, you can choose to pursue a claim in the civil courts. This possibility is also open to you if the public prosecutor's office decides not to proceed with the criminal case. You bring the civil claim before the civil court by summoning the person who has caused the damage, unless all parties are willing to appear voluntarily. Where an insurer is involved (after a traffic accident, for example) you may also summon the insurer. Procedure in the civil courts differs fundamentally from criminal procedure. If you want to bring a claim in the civil court (*burgerlijke rechtbank/tribunal civil*) (for example if you were not involved in the criminal proceedings or if your case was closed), you must be prepared to prove that the wrongful act has been committed. If criminal proceedings are in progress the civil court has to suspend the proceedings before it pending the judgment of the criminal court. The civil court is bound by the findings in the criminal case. Bringing a claim before the civil courts will also incur costs.

I am a foreigner. How are my rights and interests protected?

If you are a foreigner who has suffered from a crime in Belgium you can benefit from all the rights explained above as well as some additional rights aimed to facilitate your participation in the procedure.
You have the right to ask for an interpreter free of charge when you do not speak the official language. It is also possible that you write your statement yourself (or that the police officer writes down your statement). If you are not in the country the public prosecutor or the investigating judge can interview you by videoconference or teleconference.
If you are an asylum seeker you can ask for the appointment of a lawyer free of charge.

More information:

The Constitution – in Dutch and French
The Judicial Code – in Dutch and French
The Code of Criminal Procedure – in Dutch and French
The Law on the police force of 5 August 1992 – in Dutch and French
The Law on State compensation of 1 August 1985 – in Dutch and French
The Law on suspension of judgment, postponement of the application of sentences and probation of 29 June 1964 in Dutch
Circular GPI 58 of 4 May 2007 on the treatment of victims in the integrated police force, structured on two levels – in Dutch
Circular of the College of Prosecutors-General COL 5/2009 concerning the use of uniform certificates of complaint, guidelines on handing over these certificates by the police and the modification of COL 8/2005, revised version of 20 December 2012.
Circular of 26 September 2008 on the introduction of multidisciplinary cooperation relating to human trafficking of victims and/or victims of serious forms of human smuggling – in Dutch
Circular COL 16/2012 of 12 November 2012 - Joint Circular from the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Home Affairs and the College of Prosecutors-General concerning the reception of victims by at the public prosecution services and courts

Circular COL 17/2012 of 12 November 2012 - Joint Circular from the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Home Affairs and the College of Prosecutors-General concerning the respectful handling of the deceased, the notification of death, respectful leavetaking and cleaning up the scene of the crime in cases where the judicial authorities are involved.
Circular COL 18/2012 of December 2012 - Joint Circular from the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Home Affairs and the College of Prosecutors-General concerning temporary bans on entering the home in the event of domestic violence
Royal Decree of 18 December 2003 on the conditions for partial or completely free secondline legal assistance and legal aid – in Dutch
Royal Decree of 16 May 2004 on combating human trafficking and smuggling – in Dutch
Royal Decree of 13 June 1999 on the organisation of the Law Centres Department of the Ministry of Justice – in Dutch and French
Royal Decree of 28 December 1950 laying down the general rules on legal costs in criminal cases
Cooperation agreement of 7 April 1998 between the State and the Flemish Community on victim care – in Dutch
Protocol Agreement of 5 June 2009 between the State, the Flemish Community, the French Community, the French Community Committee and the Joint Community Committee on Victim Care - in Dutch and French
Protocol Agreement of 5 June 2009 between the State, the French Community and the Walloon Region on Victim Care – in Dutch and French
Protocol Agreement of 5 June 2009 between the State and the German-speaking Community on Victim Care – in Dutch, French and German
Notes:
1. Civil party to criminal proceedings
You can bring a civil claim before the criminal court at any time during the criminal proceedings even if you have not lodged a police complaint. In addition to the ordinary rights of a victim, your status as a civil party to the criminal proceedings then also confers the right:
to request damages;
to be heard by the court;
to have costs reimbursed at the end of proceedings; and
to request an interpreter during court proceedings;
if your civil action is deemed admissible and well founded, you also receive a number of rights in the criminal proceedings without having to submit an application for recognition as a victim to the court for the application of sentences.
*You can register as a civil party to the criminal proceedings via an **express declaration** if the proceedings have already been launched by the public prosecutor's office. You can do this at any stage during the investigation and the actual trial, but it is no longer possible at the appeal stage. If the offence is a minor offence (contravention/overtreding) or an intermediate offence (délit/wanbedrijf), you can lodge a civil claim before the investigating judge, who is then obliged to launch a criminal investigation. Bear in mind that at the end of the investigation the pre-trial chamber is still free to decide that there is insufficient evidence to bring the alleged offender to court.*
*If you wish to obtain **damages**, you will need to prove the damage you have suffered. The court will assess whether your application is admissible and either admit or dismiss it.*
As a civil party to the criminal proceedings, you are entitled to bring the matter before the indictment division of the court of appeal if the criminal investigation is still ongoing one year after it began. This option gives you indirect control over the investigation's progress.
2. Protection as a victim of human trafficking
Since the beginning of the 1990s Belgium has offered victims of human trafficking a system of resident status. The following categories of victims are entitled to the status of 'victim of human trafficking':
victims of human trafficking (i.e. trafficking for the purpose of various forms of sexual exploitation, exploitation of begging, economic exploitation, removal of organs, forced criminal acts);
victims of human smuggling (i.e. assisting illegal immigration with a view to profit) when there are aggravating circumstances. Victims who are subject to violence or whose life is in danger are entitled to this status.
Recognition as a victim of human trafficking makes you eligible for special arrangements regarding residence and work permits, if you:
break off contact with the suspected offenders;
accept the mandatory assistance offered by an approved centre specialising in providing reception facilities and assisting trafficked persons;
cooperate with the judicial authorities by making a statement or lodging a complaint.
3. Administrative penalties
Administrative penalties are imposed by local authorities and are not criminal penalties. Local authorities have the power to punish certain petty offences and nuisances by means of administrative sanctions (fines, closure of buildings or premises, or suspension of permits or licences). The municipality may impose these penalties for violation of its regulations, certain forms of vandalism, etc. Prosecution does not depend directly on the public prosecutor.
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2 - My rights during the trial

How can I be involved in the trial?
What are my rights as a witness?
I am a minor. Do I have additional rights?
Can I receive legal aid?
How can I get protection, if I am in danger?
How can I claim damages from the offender or receive compensation from the state?
Are there opportunities to reach settlement/conciliation or to start mediation between the offender and myself?
I am a foreigner. How are my rights and interests protected?
More information

How can I be involved in the trial?

As a civil party (1) or a registered victim you will be notified by letter of the date your case will appear before a court. It is still possible for you to register yourself as a civil party during the trial until the closure of the debates and to claim compensation before the judge.
If you do not have a lawyer and you wish to present your civil claim during the hearing you have to:
be on time;
sign up with the court officer and ask if this is the room where the hearing will take place;
go to the presiding judge when you hear the judge calling the name of the offender from whom you want to claim compensation;
give your claim to the judge together with all the documents certifying your damage;
give a copy of the claim to the lawyer of the offender;
keep the original documents for yourself;
the presiding judge may ask you for additional information and will then make a decision as regards your request for compensation.
In principle the trial is public and every person who is older then 14 years of age can attend the court hearings. So your friends, neighbours and family (as well as members of the press and public) are allowed to be present at the trial. Only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. sexual offences) will the hearings be non-public and civilians and the press will be banned from the courtroom. To attend these hearings you need to be a civil party. The final judgement of the case is always pronounced in public.
If you submit a claim for compensation **(civil claim)** you do have to prove the damage you suffered. Your civil claim will be assessed by the court. You need to prove the claim during the trial proceedings; thereupon the court will admit or reject the claim.
If you are a civil party you need to be present at the court hearings. If you want to avoid direct contact with the defendant your lawyer can represent you (there is however no possibility to refuse the presence of the defendant in the court room). The only time that you have to attend in person is when you are called as a **witness**.
You cannot discuss the case with the prosecutor and you cannot make a victim impact statement.

What are my rights as a witness?

When you have given evidence as a witness during the criminal investigations you may not, or only very seldom, be questioned during the court hearings, except for the Assize Court (2).
When you are called in person and when you have been granted a protection measure and/or are not in the country you can be interviewed by videoconference or teleconference. If necessary, there is a possibility for voice alteration and concealment of your face.
If you are called to court as a witness you can request reimbursement for your travel and accommodation expenses. You can also get a half-day compensation for taking days off. You have to ask for this compensation yourself. The judge will grant you this compensation when pronouncing the judgment. These costs are paid by the state budget, but will have to be reimbursed by the defendant if found guilty.

I am a minor. Do I have additional rights?

If you are a minor you are protected against media coverage: the publication or spread of pictures, drawings and other materials that reveal your identity.
If an audiovisual recording of your interview has been done during the investigation your personal appearance is not required unless the court finds it necessary to establish the truth. In this case the court will ask you to attend and will explain the reasons thereof. You can ask the judge to hold a non-public hearing behind closed doors. The law expressly provides for this if you are a victim of a sexual crime like rape or sexual assault. The court may also hold a non-public hearing if it is necessary for protecting the interest of a minor or the private lives of the parties.

Can I receive legal aid?

If you have brought a civil claim as a civil party to the criminal proceedings, you can choose to attend the session yourself or opt for legal representation.
For initial legal advice, you can consult the **front-line legal assistance team** (*aide juridique de première ligne/juridische eerstelijnsbijstand*), whose lawyers provide free advice at certain times on specific days and can refer you to specialist services where appropriate. Consultations are organised in court buildings, civil magistrates' courts, law centres, municipal administrations, and so on. Law centres (*maisons de justice/justitiehuizen*) can be found in any judicial district (contact details available in French or Dutch), or you can get in touch with a victim support service.
For detailed legal advice, assistance and representation, you need to enlist the services of a lawyer. Depending on your income, some or all of this assistance may be provided free of charge under **second-line legal assistance** arrangements. A number of categories of persons in specific situations, such as minors or persons with a mental disability, are always entitled to free legal representation.
If you want to apply for second-line assistance, you need to contact the Legal Aid Office (*Bureau d'Aide Juridique/Bureau voor Juridische Bijstand*) which is located in every court building. You will have to produce documentation showing either that you belong to one of the special categories or that you are on a low net income. The Office will decide within a fortnight whether to approve your application and send you the contact details of your assigned lawyer. It is also possible to ask a lawyer of your choosing whether he or she is willing to work under the second-line legal assistance arrangements. If the lawyer agrees to this, he or she will contact the Office on your behalf in order to seek approval for your application.
If your financial means are modest, under certain circumstances you can ask to be exempted from a number of procedural costs (e.g. bailiff's costs and the costs of copies from the book of evidence) under the **legal aid** arrangements. To benefit you need to submit a request to the Legal Aid Office of the criminal court handling the case. If you are already a civil party to the criminal proceedings (see below) you can submit this request, in writing or verbally, to the criminal court handling the case.
You are also advised to check your insurance policies closely to see whether you have legal expenses insurance. Contact your insurance broker.
During the court proceedings, you can be aided by the staff of a law centre or a victim support service.

How can I get protection, if I am in danger?

When you are in danger and you have been granted partial or full anonymity by the investigation judge during the investigation stage, at the trial you can be interviewed by videoconference or teleconference. If necessary, there is a possibility for voice alteration and concealment of your face.
When you need to appear before the court as a witness and have not been interviewed during the investigation the judge can order that your identity must not be revealed in the official record of the hearing.
If you have suffered from sexual assault or rape you are protected against media coverage: the publication or spread of pictures, drawings or other materials that reveal your identity.
If the defendant is not taken into custody during the investigation and you feel concerned about possibility to stand face to face with the defendant while waiting for your case to be handled, you can contact a justice assistant. In some courthouses separate waiting rooms have been installed in order to give you the opportunity to avoid direct contact with the defendant.

How can I claim damages from the offender or receive compensation from the State?

If you want to seek financial compensation at the criminal trial, you need to bring a **civil claim** in the criminal proceedings. Your claim can list all kinds of damage suffered, such as physical injuries and related medical costs, moral damage, material damage (e.g. loss of earnings, the repeat of a study year, loss of employment and damage to vehicles or clothing), funeral expenses, etc.

If the offender is found guilty the criminal court will rule on your civil claim and find that you are entitled to damages. The court will then evaluate the content of the damages claim.
If, for whatever reason, you did not take part in the criminal proceedings, you can choose to pursue a claim in the **civil courts**. This possibility is also open to you if the public prosecutor's office decides not to proceed with the criminal case. You bring the civil claim before the civil court by summoning the person who has caused the damage, unless all parties are willing to appear voluntarily. Where an insurer is involved (after a traffic accident, for example) you may also summon the insurer. Procedure in the civil courts differs fundamentally from criminal procedure. For instance, you yourself must prove that the opposing party is liable for your damage, though you may do this by producing copies of evidence from the criminal case, even if the proceedings were discontinued. If criminal proceedings are in progress the civil court has to suspend the proceedings before it pending the judgment of the criminal court. The civil court is bound by the findings in the criminal case. Remember that launching a claim before the civil court also entails costs.
If the public prosecutor has moved for a criminal action to be dropped (amicable settlement or mediation in criminal cases), this is another way for you to obtain compensation from the offender. You can also obtain damages from the offender through mediation. For instance, in most cases you will receive damages if the public prosecutor proposes **mediation in criminal cases** or an **amicable settlement** to the offender.
It is not always possible to obtain damages from the offender (for instance, it may be that the offender cannot be identified or detained), or to recover compensation in full from an insurer. If you have been the victim of a premeditated violent crime, under certain circumstances you can obtain compensation from the State. For more information about possible **compensation from the State**, please consult the European Legal Network's information pages on compensation for victims in Belgium (available in French, Dutch, German and English and in other languages).
If the accused is found guilty, he or she must repay the costs of your civil action, which will include a share of your lawyer's fees. The court sets the relevant compensation figure when it gives its judgment in the case.
If the proceedings began because you summoned the accused directly or initiated criminal proceedings by lodging a criminal complaint with a civil claim, and the accused is then found not guilty, the court can order you to repay all or a specified proportion of the costs incurred by the State and by the accused.

Are there opportunities to reach settlement/conciliation or to start mediation between the offender and myself?

You can ask for restorative mediation (*médiation réparatrice/herstelbemiddeling*) at any time during proceedings: before a case goes to court, while the court is handling it, and after the court has passed sentence. Restorative mediation runs separate from the criminal proceedings and does not replace them. The judicial authorities therefore remain responsible for any decision involving criminal prosecution, sentencing, and the application of sentences.
Restorative mediation is not performed by the State but by two non-profit associations, Suggnomè in Flanders and Médiante in Wallonia. They have local sections in each judicial district.
An agreement reached as a result of restorative mediation is confidential and is transmitted to the court only with the consent of both parties. The court's judgment must make mention of the restorative mediation, but does not have to take account of the agreement reached.
A judge of the **juvenile court** can deliver a judgment ordering restorative mediation or a group conference (*concertation restauratrice en groupe/hergo*).

I am a foreigner. How are my rights and interests protected?

If you as a civil party (1) or **witness** do not speak the official language of the region where the proceedings take place, an interpreter will be appointed. You cannot have your documents translated free of charge.

More information:

Law of 1 August 1985 concerning tax and other measures – in Dutch and French
Law of 8 April 1965 on the protection of young people, the responsibility of minors committing an act constituting a crime and the restoration of the damage caused by this act – in Dutch
Constitution – in Dutch and French
Code of Criminal Procedure – in Dutch, French and English
Judicial Code – in Dutch and French
Royal Decree of 28 December 1950 laying down general rules on legal costs for enforcement measures

Notes:

1. Civil party to criminal proceedings

You can bring a civil claim before the criminal court at any time during the criminal proceedings even if you have not lodged a police complaint. In addition to the ordinary rights of a victim, your status as a civil party to the criminal proceedings then also confers the right:
to request damages
to be heard by the court
to have costs reimbursed at the end of proceedings
to request an interpreter during court proceedings
if your civil action is deemed admissible and well founded, you also receive a number of rights in the criminal proceedings without having to submit an application for recognition as a victim to the court for the application of sentences
*You can register as a civil party to the criminal proceedings via an **express declaration** if the proceedings have already been launched by the public prosecutor's office. You can do this at any stage during the investigation and the actual trial, but it is no longer possible at the appeal stage. If the offence is a minor offence (contravention/overtreding) or an intermediate offence (délit/wanbedrijf), you can lodge a civil claim before the investigating judge, who is then obliged to launch a criminal investigation. Bear in mind that at the end of the investigation the pre-trial chamber is still free to decide that there is insufficient evidence to bring the alleged offender to court.*
*If you wish to obtain **damages**, you will need to prove the damage you have suffered. The court will assess whether your application is admissible and either admit or dismiss it.*
As a civil party to the criminal proceedings, you are entitled to bring the matter before the court's indictment division if the criminal investigation is still ongoing one year after it began. This option gives you indirect control over the investigation's progress.

2. Assize court

The assize court (contact details available in Dutch and French) is a temporary criminal court that can be convened in any province or in the Brussels district. Assize courts are empowered to deal with all serious crimes (crimes/misdaden, i.e. murder and other serious criminal offences punishable by a custodial sentence of five years to life), political offences, and press offences (save for those which are racist or xenophobic in origin). Unlike a permanent criminal court, the assize court has to be reconstituted for each new case. Its president is a court of appeal judge. The president is assisted by two judges from the court of first instance. The jury is made up of 12 members of the general public, chosen by lot, no more than two thirds of the initial members being of the same sex. Members of the jury must be entitled to vote and enjoy full civil and political rights, they must be aged between 28 and 65, must be able to

read and write and must not have any criminal convictions for which they were sentenced to a term of imprisonment of more than four months or to community service of more than 60 hours. The jury alone decides whether the accused is guilty or innocent. To decide the sentence the jury sits together with the professional judges. The judgments of the assize court can be appealed only on points of law to the Court of Cassation.

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3 - My rights after the (first) trial

Can I appeal against a sentence or if the defendant is declared not guilty?
Is further appeal possible?
What rights do I have after the court sentence enters into force?
More information

Can I appeal against a sentence or if the defendant is declared not guilty?

If you have entered a claim as a civil party to the criminal proceedings (*partie civile/burgerlijke partij*), you can appeal if the court dismisses your claim for damages or if you consider that the compensation awarded is too small. You cannot appeal if the defendant is found not guilty, or if you think the sentence imposed on the defendant is too mild. (The public prosecutor may appeal on those grounds.)

Make up your mind quickly, because in criminal cases any appeal usually has to be entered within 15 days. Appeals have to be submitted at the registry (*greffe/griffie*) of the court that delivered the contested judgment. You can obtain further information at the registry. If there is an appeal, the case will be considered afresh by a higher court. You will be given notice of times and places. The procedure on appeal is much the same as the procedure at the first trial. You do not have to register a second time as a civil party to the proceedings. But you cannot register as a civil party for the first time when the case has gone to appeal.

A full appeal, on points of fact and law (*appel/hoger beroep*), cannot be brought against the judgment of an assize court, but an appeal may be brought before the Court of Cassation on points of law only (*pourvoi/voorziening*).

Is further appeal possible?

A judgment delivered on a full appeal (*appel/hoger beroep*) is not open to a further full appeal.

A full appeal cannot be brought against the judgment of an assize court, but an appeal on points of law may be brought before the Court of Cassation.

The Court of Cassation will not examine the facts of the case: it merely considers whether there was any breach of proper procedure and whether the law has been wrongly applied or wrongly interpreted. The Court of Cassation can only uphold or quash the judgment. It cannot take further evidence or judge the case afresh. If it does quash the judgment, it refers it back for retrial by another court at the same level as the court that delivered the earlier judgement. The judgment of the Court of Cassation is not binding on the new court.

What rights do I have after the court sentence enters into force?

It is important to realise at the outset that as a victim you will not be informed of the court's judgment automatically (unless you have entered a claim as a civil party to the criminal proceedings). If you or your lawyer were not present when the judgment was delivered in court, you need to contact the authorities yourself or ask the staff of the **law centre** (*maison de justice/justitiehuis*) to inform you.

As a victim you can under certain conditions ask to be informed or to be heard regarding the manner in which the sentence is to be served, for example regarding prison leave, limited detention, electronic surveillance, provisional release with a view to deportation or surrender to another country, or conditional release.

If your civil claim is successful, you can under certain conditions ask to be informed or to be heard if the condemned person is granted any special arrangement for the service of the sentence.

Otherwise you can ask to be recognised as a victim by applying to the court for the application of sentences (*tribunal d'application des peines /strafuitvoeringsrechtbank*). Your request will be accepted if the court decides that you have a legitimate interest.

Under certain conditions you have the following rights as a victim:

to **be informed** of decisions related to the application of the sentence (including initial prison leave, electronic surveillance, conditional leave, etc.);

to **propose specific conditions** that might be imposed on the offender;

to **be heard** in relation to specific conditions that might be imposed on the offender in your interest.

Examples

you can ask to be heard by the court for the application of sentences regarding conditions that might be imposed on the offender if electronic surveillance is allowed;

you can ask the court to notify you if it grants the offender conditional release;

you can ask to be informed if the Minister for Justice grants the offender prison leave.

If you want to exercise any of these rights you must fill in a victim statement form, and hand it in or send it to the registry of the court for the application of sentences or to a justice centre.

At the hearings of the court for the application of sentences you can always be assisted or represented by a lawyer. You can also ask for help from one of the officially recognised victim support organisations, or by a victim support service or the victim reception offices at the court, for example when you are going to attend a court hearing

You can obtain more information from the law centre, from victim reception offices or from your lawyer.

During and after the application of the sentence, whether the offender is serving the sentence in prison or outside it, you can always have recourse to mediation.

More information:

Law on the external legal position of persons sentenced to a custodial sentence and on the rights of victims in connection with the manner in which sentences are served – in French or Dutch.

Notes:

1. Civil Party:

You can register as a civil party before a judge, at any stage of the proceedings, even if you have not reported the crime to the police. This status gives you some additional rights:
to become a party in the proceedings;
to speak at the court hearing;
to be able to claim for compensation before the court;
to have your cost reimbursed after the trial; and
to have the right of an interpreter free of charge during the proceedings.
You can also join the proceedings that were already put in motion by the public prosecutor through a statement. This remains possible during the whole stage of investigation and before the court, but never in the stage of appeal against a court's decision. In case of offence punishable by more than eight days of imprisonment you can take an action by filing a report with the investigating judge. The investigating judge is obliged to start a judicial investigation but after the end of the investigation it is still up to the judicial authorities to decide whether enough evidence exists to bring the offender before a court.
If you submit a civil claim you do have to prove the damage you are claiming for. The court will assess the eligibility of your civil claim and will admit or dismiss it.
If you act as a civil party you have if the judicial investigation has not finished - within one year after the initiation, the right to bring the case before the Indictment Chamber of the Court of Appeals. This allows you an indirect form of control over the progress of the investigations.
2. The Assize Court
*The Assize Court (contact information available in **Dutch** and **French**) in Belgium is sitting in each of the ten provinces and in the judicial districts of Brussels. It has jurisdiction over all crimes punished by more than five years of imprisonment, political offences, press-related offences (except those inspired by racism or xenophobia), and crimes of international law such as genocide and crimes against humanity. Unlike the other courts, which have a permanent structure, the Court of Assize has to be constituted for each specific case. It comprises three professional judges and 12 jurors. The presiding judge is a judge of a court of appeal and is assisted by two judges of courts of first instance. The jury invariably consists of twelve members, who are elected from among all citizens having the right to vote at elections. Members of the jury must be between 28 and 65 years of age and must be able to read and write. The jury alone decides upon the facts of a case, and determines the penalty along with the judge. There is no appeal of verdicts, apart from one before the Court of Cassation.*

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4 - Help and support for victims of crime

Local and Federal Police
Federal Public Service Justice
The Commission for Financial Aid for Victims of Deliberate Acts of Violence
CAW's
Federation of Services for Help to Parties in Proceedings
Sozial-Psychologischen Zentrum (SPZ)
Child Trust Centres
Federation of SOS Children's Services
Jugendhilfedienst (JHD)

Local and Federal Police

The Local and federal police are under the competence of the Ministry of Interior. The local police are responsible for the basic police duties and operate within the 'community policing' philosophy. The federal police are responsible for specialised police tasks.
The Local and federal police
receive victims in a polite and respectful manner
provide practical assistance to victims of crime, information and referral to appropriate services
draw up the official report as to the victim's identity and their wish to be informed later on in the proceedings
take contact with the victim a short time after the complaint was filed.
CONTACTS :
Website: http://www.ibz.fgov.be/

Federal Public Service Justice

The Federal Public Service for Justice hosts several departments and committees that look after the interests of victims, including the DirectorateGeneral for Legislation, Fundamental Rights and Freedoms and the DirectorateGeneral for Law Centres.
The DirectorateGeneral for Legislation, Fundamental Rights and Freedoms
prepares and drafts legislation;
advises the Minister for Justice and other players, drafts answers to parliamentary questions, and participates in international negotiations;
works in close collaboration with other departments, such as the DirectorateGeneral for Law Centres, and with outside parties.
The DirectorateGeneral for Justice Centres
manages 28 law centres (*maisons de justice/justitiehuizen*) under the authority of the Minister of Justice (Flanders and Wallonia each have 13 law centres, and Brussels has two, one French-speaking and one Dutch-speaking);
in every law centre there are specialised staff forming a victim reception office.
CONTACTS:
Federal Public Service for Justice: website: https://justitie.belgium.be
For the contact details of the law centres click here.

The Commission for Financial Aid for Victims of Deliberate Acts of Violence

The Commission for Financial Aid for Victims of Deliberate Acts of Violence, which has been established by the 1 August 1985 Act, has as core mission to provide State compensation for victims of crime, i.e. financial compensation.
The Commission for Financial Aid for Victims of Deliberate Acts of Violence
provides the opportunity for the State to grant financial assistance to victims of intentional acts of violence and, in some cases, for their families
also provides a procedure to assist the victims of acts that took place in a member country of the European Union
can grant assistance even if the assailant is unknown or is not responsible for his actions
does not include offenses by carelessness or negligence
CONTACTS:
Website: https://justice.belgium.be

General Welfare Centres (CAW's)

In Flanders and Brussels there are 11 General Welfare Centres (*Centra Algemeen Welzijnswerk* — CAWs), each of which has a department that assists crime victims.
The Centres
via the support body called the Steunpunt Algemeen Welzijnswerk, are members of Victim Support Europe;
are open to anyone with a question or problem;
provide victim assistance services in Flanders and Brussels;
offer psychosocial help to victims and their families, surviving members of the families of people who have committed suicide, victims of disasters and their families, and victims of traffic accidents and their families;
provide victims with psychological, practical and legal assistance.
CONTACTS:
Website https://www.caw.be
For the contact details of all the 25 CAW's click here.

Federation of Services for Help to Parties in Proceedings

The Federation of Services for Help to Parties in Proceedings is an organisation operating in the French-speaking part of the country which does not only offer assistance to victims of crime, it also offers assistance to e.g. prisoners and released prisoners.
Federation of Services for Help to Parties in Proceedings
consists of five local divisions (one in each province) in the French speaking part of the country
is financed by The French Community government
provides psychological, medical and social help to the defendants, inmates, offenders, victims and parents and/or relatives of those individuals
is composed of professionals working in multidisciplinary teams
CONTACTS:
Website: http://www.ulb.ac.be/
For the contact details of the local divisions of Federation of Services for Help to Parties in Proceedings click here.

Sozial-Psychologischen Zentrum (SPZ)

The SPZ is an organisation operating in the German-speaking part of the country, which offers assistance to victims of crime.
The Sozial-Psychologisches Zentrum (SPZ)
is a non-governmental organisation that operates in the German speaking part of Belgium
has branches St. Vith and Eupen
offers an individual approach to all victims of crime by a multidisciplinary team consisting of psychologists, therapists, social workers and a psychiatrist
CONTACTS:
Website: http://www.ulb.ac.be/

Child Trust Centres

Child Trust Centres are specialized centres, set up by the Flemish government, which have their own way of working aimed at the child's safety and wellness.
The Child Trust Centres
are based in each Flemish province and in the Brussels Capital Region
are multidisciplinary and have a medical, psychological/educational and social function and a secretariat function
are advice and assistant centres in cases of child abuse
provide information about child abuse and assistance free of charge
can be involved in any situation of a child being a victim of physical, psychological, or sexual violence, in a passive or an active way
are reporting stations for any incident of child abuse
CONTACTS:
Website: http://www.kindinnood.org/
For the contact details of the other Child Trust Centres click here.

Federation of SOS Children's Services

The Federation of SOS Children's Services is operating in the French-speaking part of the country and provides assistance for victims of child abuse.
The Federation of SOS Children's Services teams
ensure the prevention and treatment of individual cases of abuse
establish a multidisciplinary assessment of the situation of the child and their environment
provide medical, psychiatric, psychological and social help to the child and their family
are willing to advance knowledge in the field of treatment and prevention of situations of abuse
CONTACTS:
Website: http://www.federationsosenfants.be/

Jugendhilfedienst (JHD)

The JHD are operating in the German-speaking part of Belgium and they provide specialised assistance for minor victims of crime.
The Jugendhilfedienst (JHD)
are advice and assistant centres in cases of child abuse
offer assistance to children, adolescents and their parents in the German speaking part of Belgium
forward, if necessary, the situation to the public prosecutor or the juvenile court
CONTACTS:

Website: https://ostbelgienlive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-6204/10670_read-3830/

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1 - My rights as a victim of crime

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2 - Reporting a crime and my rights during the investigation or trial

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3 - My rights after trial

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4 - Compensation

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5 - My rights to support and assistance

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