




**FREE LEGAL ADVICE AND STRATEGIC  
LITIGATION SUPPORT FOR NGOS**

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### **IN THIS NEWSLETTER**

- A word from Pro Bono Connect
- Recap: Netherlands Pro Bono Week 2022
- Research: Impact of de-risking strategies on NGOs
- Success Story: Yazidi Legal Network Podcast x AKD
- Deloitte x PBC
- Call for all lawyers!
- **Upcoming events**

### **A word from Pro Bono Connect**

Dear friends,

First of all we wish you a happy new year!

We would like to take some time to evaluate 2022, as well as look ahead to what the future will offer us.

This year has brought us a lot. We have grown and learned from everyone that has crossed our paths. We started the year by organising **six law clinics** with our affiliated law firms, as well as the second edition of "**The Incubator**". On this day, multiple start-ups and social enterprises had the opportunity to connect with lawyers from our network, and discuss legal issues they encountered.

In May, Pro Bono Connect participated in a **regional clearinghouse workshop** in Budapest with the European Pro Bono Alliance. In October, we attended the **PILnet Global Forum** in Dublin, where we met up with fellow colleagues and followed seminars by other professionals working in the pro bono field. In November, Pro

Bono Connect organised several events with our affiliated law firms during **The Netherlands Pro Bono Week 2022**.

Pro Bono Connect has also expanded the past year by welcoming a new partner law firm **Bird & Bird, Netherlands**, as well as another partner, **Stichting Allemansrecht**, who kindly financially supports us throughout the third phase (2022-2024).

In this newsletter, we highlight success stories of matched requests but we would also like to share with everybody that we have a record-breaking amount of 232 incoming requests, of which we are very proud! Of these incoming requests, 87% was matched to our affiliated law firms. Thankfully **Deloitte** granted us over 200 pro bono hours to support us in improving our administration process to **professionalise and digitalise** so we can keep up with the incoming requests.

We look back on a very successful year and we are excited about what's next!

Best,  
Hope Rikkelman, Loïs Vaars

## Recap

### Netherlands Pro Bono Week 2022

From **21 to 25 November**, the **European Pro Bono Week** took place across the continent, featuring events in over ten different countries. Here in the Netherlands, five different events were organised, focusing on pro bono culture.

Pro Bono Connect co-organised a number of events, including a **seminar on the ethnic profiling case** against the Dutch military police with **Houthoff**. We also set up a **Round Table for NGOs** in cooperation with **PILP** and **Bird & Bird, De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek, Dentons, NautaDutilh** and **Stibbe**. We elaborated on the variety of legal assistance Pro Bono Connect and its affiliated law firms can provide to NGOs, such as human rights (research) projects, multi-jurisdictional requests and strategic litigation advice. On Thursday, we set up a **Workshop on Intellectual Property Law** for NGOs and social enterprises, organised by **Simmons & Simmons** in cooperation with the **Amsterdam Law Hub**. The week concluded by a **seminar on discrimination in immigration law** held by the **Dutch Section of the International Commission of Jurists (NJCM)**.

We look back on a successful week and would like to thank our partners for organising and hosting these events with us. Hopefully, we have managed to share our mission with more people about access to justice, and inspire and motivate people to do more pro bono work.

We hope to welcome even more participants during next year's edition of The Netherlands Pro Bono Week 2023! So if you are interested in participating in **The Netherlands Pro Bono Week 2023**, please send an email to [info@probonoconnect.nl](mailto:info@probonoconnect.nl).



*Left: Loïs Vaars (Project Coordinator PBC), Mpanzu Bamenga (Human Rights Man of the Year), Franka Olujic (Executive Director NJCM), Hope Rikkelman (Head PBC) and Thijs van Aerde (Lawyer Houthoff) at the seminar on the ethnic profiling case at Houthoff. Right: Loïs Vaars (Project Coordinator PBC) and Hope Rikkelman (Head PBC) at The Round Table for NGOs at De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek.*

## Research

### Impact of de-risking strategies on NGOs

One of the issues that non-profit organisations working in the Netherlands face, is **struggling to open a bank account**. This is especially the case for organisations operating at a transnational level, due to de-risking strategies implemented by the European Union (EU). In an attempt to **counter money laundering and terrorist fundings**, the EU drew up a directive in 2015, including a so-called **money laundering list** that ranks **high-risk countries**. Clients and financial institutions based in these countries need to **undergo extra checks** by the authorities. As a result, banks often choose to **reject requests to open a bank account** from these clients, since they are perceived as **high-risk clients**, or simply because they create too much extra work.

Research by the [European Public Interest Law Clinic](#) has shown that non-profit organisations have suffered **disproportionate restrictions on access to financial services** in comparison to other business enterprises due to European de-risking strategies. **Pro Bono Connect** and **Partin** have also signalled these issues. In this context, we have been in contact with **De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB)**, sharing these issues and discussing alternative methods for de-risking strategies that counter the negative side effects of the current approach.

DNB published its report "**Van herstel naar balans**", presenting the outcomes of

research into a **more balanced approach to de-risking strategies**. The report offers a preview into alternative methods to counter money laundering and terrorist financing, whilst promoting the interests of private and non-profit initiatives. We hope that this report constitutes a first step towards achieving a more adequate legal framework for countering money laundering and terrorist financing. The full report can be accessed through [this link](#).

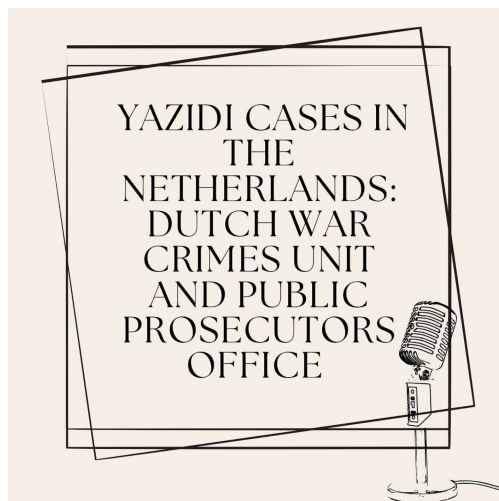
### **Success Story** **Yazidi Legal Network x AKD**

**Stichting Yazidi Legal Network (YLN)** with support of **AKD** has broadcast two new podcast episodes in the podcast series "**Yazidi Voices**". In this two-part series, YLN interviews the **Dutch war crimes unit (TIM)** and the **Dutch national public prosecutor's office** on their experience with prosecution and investigation of international crimes. Together with the podcast guests Mirjam Blom (Dutch national public prosecutor's office) and Vincent Cillessen (Dutch war crimes unit (TIM)), YLN discusses the challenges they and **that Yazidi face in fighting for justice and accountability** for the crimes committed against them.

In order to successfully bring a case to court, **information and evidence of witnesses and survivors** is crucial. The Dutch government therefore encourages the **Yazidi community** to reach out to them to tell their stories.

We would like to extend our gratitude to **AKD** for recording and editing these podcast sessions. The podcast episodes can be accessed through [this link](#).

**akd** benelux  
lawyers



## Deloitte x PBC

Behind the scenes, we have been working hard on **improving our administration process**. Deloitte has granted us over 200 pro bono hours to support us in this process. After months of running tests, scripts, trials and errors, we are excited to announce that our dashboard is completely renewed and up and running! A special shout-out to Emma, Jit and Maarten from Deloitte for their amazing help in this process: **thank you for your continuous support!**

Improving our technology is crucial to keep up with the growth of Pro Bono Connect. **Digitalisation and professionalisation** of our administration process through Airtable will save us much time handling the incoming requests, giving us more time to focus on other future endeavours.



*PBC and Deloitte team working together on the Airtable system specially designed for PBC in the Amsterdam Law Hub.*

## Call for all lawyers!

**UA.SUPPORT** is an organisation operating as an **international legal platform** that facilitates **pro bono legal assistance** for Ukrainian refugees. The platform connects **volunteer lawyers** across the world with **Ukrainian refugees requesting legal assistance**. UA.SUPPORT is officially recognised and supported by multiple European bar associations and other legal institutions. Since its foundation, the organisation has supported over **2100 cases**, partnered with over **280 volunteer lawyers**, and receives over **100 weekly requests** by Ukrainian refugees.

The number of requests in **the Netherlands** is increasing. UA.SUPPORT has approached Pro Bono Connect to assist them in **reaching out to Dutch**

**lawyers.** We would therefore like to encourage lawyers to join UA.SUPPORT in order to offer **pro bono legal assistance** to Ukrainian refugees.


Please find more details about the organisation and how to sign up [here](#).



### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **January - April 2023:** coffee with our affiliated law firms
- **January - July 2023:** monthly law clinics
- **April 2023:** launch new PBC website

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