



## **The Netherlands**

**Towards the Future of Legal Aid and Legal Aid Professionals** 

Dr. Jin Ho Verdonschot
Chief Science Officer
Knowledge Centre Legal Aid System
Legal Aid Board Netherlands

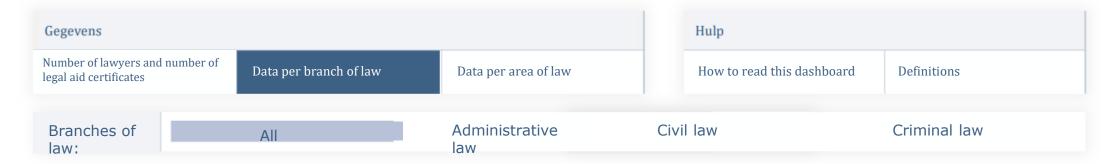
#### **Overview**

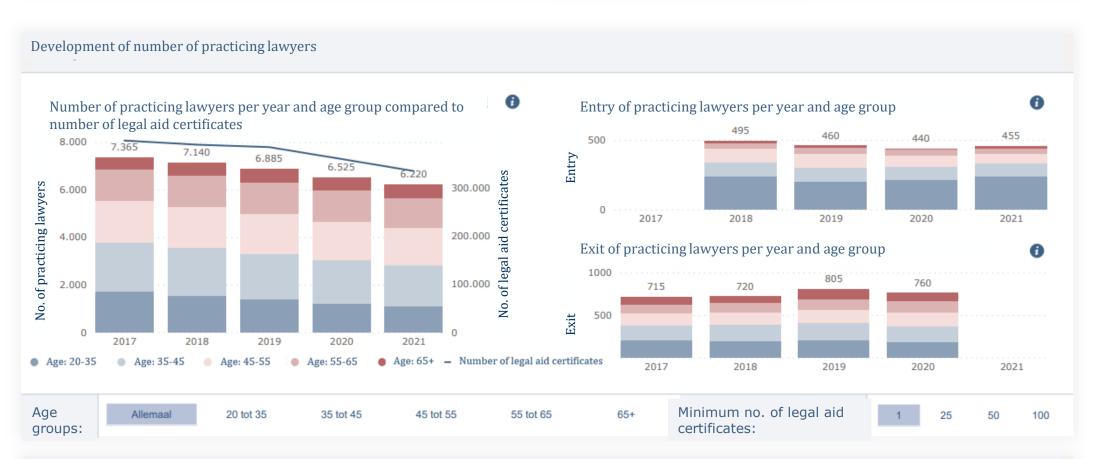
- 1. Decreasing supply legal aid lawyers
- 2. Drivers supply
- 3. Innovation is tough. Also for lawyers.
- 4. Legal aid law firms of the future



# Supply Legal Aid Lawyers

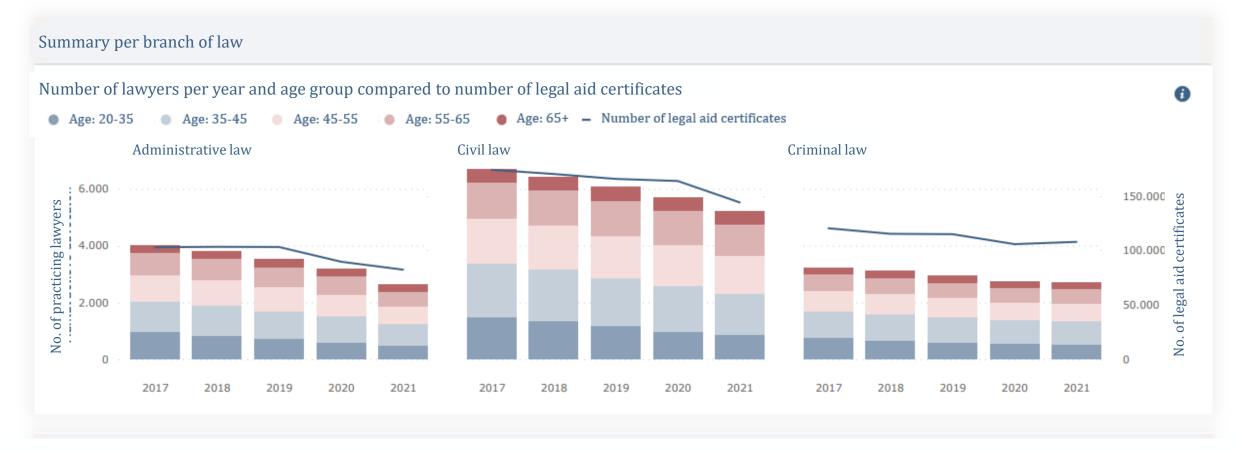
#### Raad voor Rechtsbijstand





#### Raad voor Rechtsbijstand





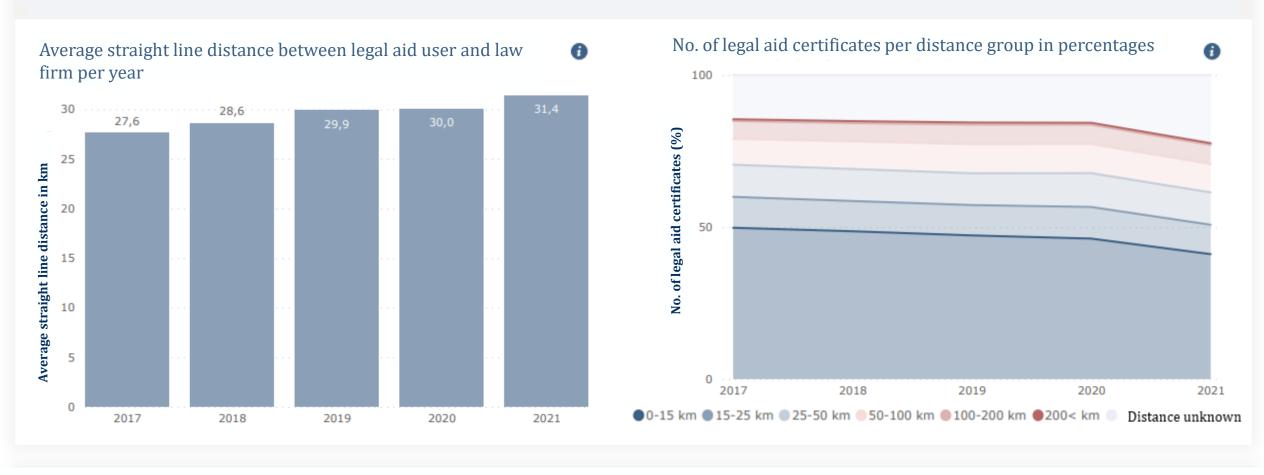
#### Summary per jurisdiction







Straight line distance per legal aid certifcate between legal aid user and lawyer



#### Law firms Number of offices with legal aid certificates per year Number of offices without legal aid certificates per Number of offices per year and number of legal aid year and number of employed lawyers and number of employed lawyers certificates 4.000 3.715 3.735 2.485 3.720 6.175 6.105 6.130 3.600 6.015 6.040 2.410 3.505 2.270 6.000 2.000 3.000 No. of law firms No. of law firms No. of law firms 4.000 1.000 2.000 0 0 2018 2018 2021 2017 2018 2019 2017 2019 2020 2021 2017 2019 2020 2020 2021 ●1 ● 2-5 ●. 5 - 10 0 10 - 25 ▶ Legal aid certificates ●0 ●1 tot 5 ●5 tot 15 ●15 tot 25 Lawyers 01 0 2-5 0 5-10 Lawyers 0 10 - 25 2 tot 5 Size of law firm: 5 tot 10 10 tot 25 25 tot 50 50 tot 100 100 or more



# **Drivers of downward trend**

## Research study

- Commissioned by Knowledge Centre, requested by Dutch Legal Aid Board in coordination with Dutch Bar Association
- Surveys among legal aid lawyers
- Surveys among law students
- Interviews with law firms
- Exit interviews with legal aid lawyers
- Desk research
- Expert interviews



#### **Main drivers**

- Compensation per case, costs for education
- Many one-lawyer law firms with limited cooperation
- Tough competition labour market
- Aging population
- Limited focus on innovation
- Social impact and purpose
- Limited familiarity among law students
- Not too positive reputation legal aid among law students
- Limited earning capacity
- High work pressure
- Lack of pension



#### Still several unknowns

- Systematic entry and exit research: why do lawyers join or leave the legal aid system?
- Current research: what is the actual earning capacity of a prototypical legal aid law firm?
- Ongoing data collection: time spent and activities undertaken.



#### Still several unknowns

- Systematic entry and exit research: why do lawyers join or leave the legal aid system?
- Current research: what is the actual earning capacity of a prototypical legal aid law firm?
- Ongoing data collection: time spent and activities undertaken.



## **Innovation is tough**

## Innovation is tough

- Where to find the time?
- Innovation is a risky and costly investment
- Limited experience with innovation
- Innovative tools too costly
- Legal aid lawyers are not an interested customer segment for companies
- Security and privacy concerns



Exploring legal aid law firms of the future

## Legal aid law firms of the future

- Legal Aid Board Netherlands, Dutch Bar Association, Knowledge Centre Legal Aid System
- Research and development program
- Scenario study
- Design study
- Interactive development



## **How to organise?**

- Salaried lawyers?
- Networked in the cloud?
- Risk sharing?



## How to organise serivce delivery?

- Virtual law firms?
- Case management tools as a public good?
- Automation and digitisation (intake, document collection, information provision)



## Legal aid law firms of the future

- Feedback loops?
- Peer review?
- Best practices and protocols?



### **Contact**

Jin Ho Verdonschot



