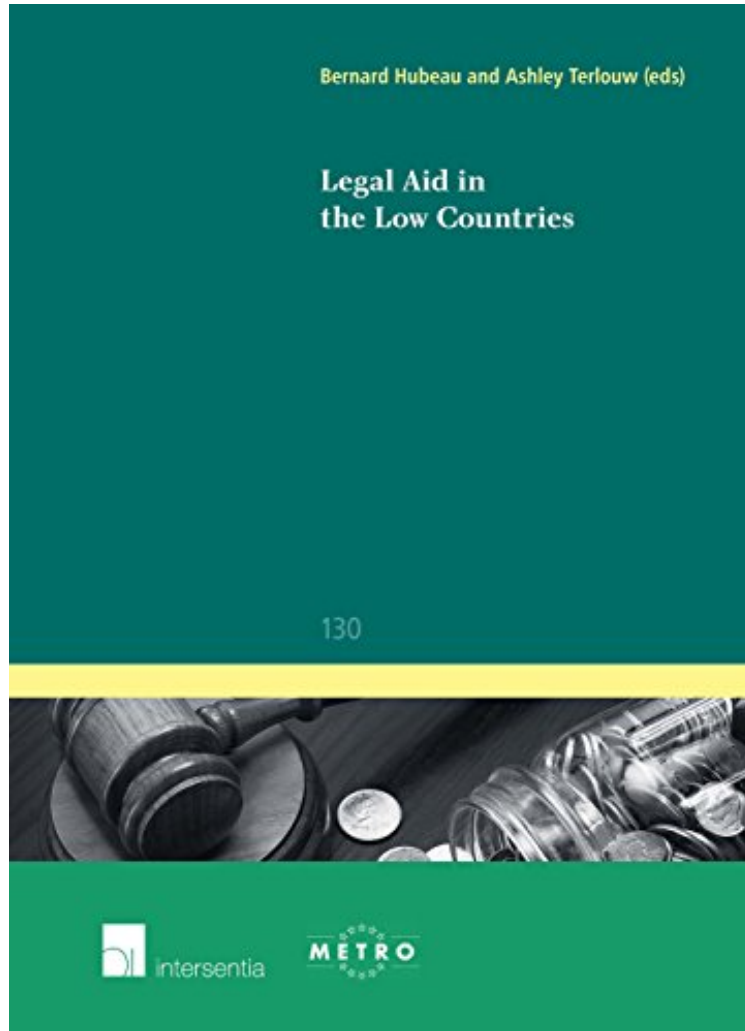


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## Legal Aid in the Low Countries (Ius Commune Europaeum)

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Access to justice is a fundamental democratic right for all citizens. In order to exercise this right, people need lawyers or other legal professionals to translate their everyday problems and conflicts to the distant legal world, and to translate legal language into the ordinary language of the average (potential) litigant. In Belgium and the Netherlands, the legal aid system is under pressure partly due to the economic crisis, partly because of the increasing demand for

and use of legal aid. These Low Countries live in times of austerity and the legal aid system is considered to be too expensive. Both countries have seen cutbacks and proposals to reform the legal aid system. This book deals with the system of legal aid in Belgium and the Netherlands. The central questions are whether the conditions for a sound legal aid system are met, especially in the fields of law that mainly concern the 'have nots'; the main ethical considerations that legal aid providers have to take into account; and the alternatives for legal aid and complementary solutions to enhance access to justice. The approaches to legal aid are quite varied: the socio-legal approach, the policy approach, the critical approach, the legal approach, etc. The book is unique in how it brings these disciplines together. It broadens the debate on legal aid and sheds light on these questions from the perspectives of all these disciplines. (Series: Ius Commune: European and Comparative Law - Vol. 130)