

Het Overleg - The Dutch Foundation of Law Firm Librarians

This article in the From Our Own Correspondent series comes from the Netherlands and features the Dutch Foundation of Law Firm Librarians, with information supplied by Paul Bartelings, who is its current chairman.

The Dutch Foundation of Law Firm Librarians (Het Overleg) was founded in 2000 by Jeannete Soeters, Mieke Steinberg, Eric vd Klugt, Mario Ubbink and Elizabeth Bok, who all work at large Dutch law firms and are responsible for their firm's knowledge management or information centres. The participants have either an academic background (law or information science) or a general secondary professional education (information and documentation). A Dutch foundation cannot legally have members. Het Overleg does have so called participants. The number of participants is 200 who regularly attend the meetings and discussion workshops. Het Overleg is funded by contributions from participants and we charge for attendance at events.

However there are no committees and every board member focusses on specific areas of interest: finance, education/events, marketing/communication. The terms of office of the main office holders are four years.

Het Overleg aims to promote and support the professional competence and the quality standards of law librarians, information professionals and know how professionals who work at law firms. This is achieved by the establishment of a discussion and information exchange platform and the organisation of conferences, workshops and training.

Our website can be found at www.hetoverleg.org

Het Overleg has run many successful conferences, workshops and training sessions including the following:-

- Designing a quality handbook for law firms
- Overview of legal sources
- Personal effectiveness for librarians
- Knowledge management in law firms
- Accessibility of online legal sources, recent developments
- Selection criteria for the purchase of legal sources
- Round tables on specific topics such as the education of librarians
- The information specialist and power
- Workshops: Civil and Tax law essentials for librarians

Het Overleg does not have any links with other organisations. Besides the organisation of events Het Overleg also provides useful information such as job descriptions for information professionals and an overview of training institutes that offer special courses and education for (future) librarians. On the website you will find an interactive public bulletin board with messages and alerts.