



COUNTRY GUIDE
EA INTERNATIONAL - AMSTERDAM

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THE LEGAL MARKET

Lying in the heart of Northern Europe and a mere 75 minutes from London, Amsterdam offers an enticing combination of professional development and cultural allure for the ambitious lawyer. The city is described as both quaint and cutting-edge, as history and tradition give way to a modern, avant-garde culture. Close by is Rotterdam, the largest port in Europe, and The Hague, home to both the Supreme Court and the International Criminal Court. The legal market in Amsterdam remains relatively small, with much of the international work being conducted in English by Magic Circle firms. In banking & finance, Allen & Overy are considered preeminent, closely followed by Clifford Chance, Freshfields and Linklaters. While top tier local law firms do exist, the majority of the international work is funnelled directly towards the UK magic circle. Whilst being small Amsterdam is still major European financial centre that offers high quality and very internationally focussed work.

SALARIES AND TAXES

Although salaries in Amsterdam are comparatively lower than those in London or Paris, average workers in Amsterdam have greater purchasing power than their English counterparts. While top tier international firms try to remunerate on a comparable basis with London, this has been difficult to sustain of late with recent salary increases in the UK. Still, lawyers in Amsterdam have an enviable quality of life, given that they can usually commute to work by foot, bike or canal boat. As a guide leading UK firms pay the following range of salaries:

Newly Qualified - €80,000

1 PQE - €90,000

2 PQE - €100,000

3 PQE - €110,000

4 PQE - €115,000

COST OF LIVING

Overall, living costs in Amsterdam are lower than those in London, although rent can be expensive. A studio apartment in the city centre ranges between €800 and €1,250 per month, excluding water, gas and electricity. Generally, you will be expected to pay a deposit equivalent to two months of rent, in addition to the first two months of rent up front, and agent fees equivalent to one month of rent. On top of rental expenses, you will be responsible for city taxes covering sewage treatment and rubbish collection. As a rough guide, you could expect to incur the following costs in Amsterdam:

Six pack of beer (off licence) €3.50

Loaf of bread €2.00

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Milk (1L) €0.95

Petrol (1L) €1.55

Potatoes (per kg) €1.50

Fresh fish (per kg) €18

Large take-away pizza €15

Dozen eggs €3.00

New release DVD €24

Second-hand bicycle €100-250

VISAS AND WORK PERMITS

Unless you are a returning Dutch national, your employer will apply for a work permit on your behalf. This will be arranged prior to arrival, but we suggest you allow 10 weeks to see the process through.

LIFESTYLE AND CULTURE

Amsterdam is a historic city which embraces modernity while retaining its old world charm. Cobble streets and beautiful canals create a relaxed ambience, while the use of bicycles as a primary mode of transport ensures that the city is relatively free of traffic. Amsterdam has something of an infamous wild side, but to see the city through this lens alone hardly does it justice. With picturesque scenery, attractive parks and cozy canal-side cafes, there is no better way to while away an afternoon than with a local beer, some “bitterbalan” (a Dutch delicacy) or a delicious pancake. For the culturally aware, Amsterdam is home to fine music halls, world famous museums, world-class restaurants and sleek, modern bars. For the active, Amsterdam is a willing host to such sports as soccer, cycling, swimming, windsurfing, hockey and rugby. Needless to say, the city offers a rich cultural experience, as well as serving as an ideal launch pad for your European adventures.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND USEFUL LINKS:

http://www.iamsterdam.com/introducing/government_politics

<http://www.expatsblog.com/en/destination/europe/netherlands/amsterdam/>

<http://www.amsterdam.info/>

For more information on living and working in Brussels contact one of our international experts on +61 2 9266 2900 or Email at ea@ea-int.com or visit our website: www.ea-int.com.