

Tax-law firm Tiberghien strengthens its Estate Planning team with the appointment of Professor Dr Walter Pintens and Professor Dr Charlotte Declerck.

Tiberghien is pleased to announce that Prof Dr Walter Pintens has joined the firm as a part-time scientific advisor and Prof Dr Charlotte Declerck as an Associate in the Estate Planning team. Tiberghien's Estate Planning team specialises in advising clients about the the structuring and fiscal optimisation of family and other estates, gifts, donations and Wills.

Prof Dr Pintens and Prof Dr Declerck are co-authors of the recently published second edition of the textbook "*Familiaal Vermogensrecht*", the standard reference work on Belgian family property law, which provides an overview of matrimonial and cohabitation property law, gift tax law and inheritance law.

Prof Dr Walter Pintens is Professor in Family Property Law and Comparative Law at the Catholic University of Leuven since 1985. He is also Honorary Professor of European Private Law at the Europa-Institut at the University of Saarland in Saarbrücken (Germany). He was previously Visiting Professor at the Humboldt University in Berlin (Germany), the University of Freiburg (Germany), and the University of Pretoria (South Africa). More recently, he was a Visiting Professorial Fellow at Gonville & Caius College at the University of Cambridge.

Prof Dr Pintens is currently a member of the Organising Committee of the Commission on European Family Law and an Associate Member of the International Academy of Comparative Law in Paris. He is on the editorial board of law journals such as "*Rechtskundig Weekblad*", "*Zeitschrift für das gesamte Familienrecht*" and "*Zeitschrift für Europäisches Privatrecht*". In addition to his academic career, he also serves as a deputy Justice of the Peace.

"Family property law is characterised by a increasingly complex regulatory framework, especially at the European and international levels. Combined with rapidly evolving cohabitation patterns (e.g. cohabitants, reconstituted families, marriages between partners of different nationalities, etc.), this framework often leads to complex legal issues, including drawing up marriage or cohabitation contracts and Wills and effecting a controlled transfer of the (family) estate to the surviving partner, children or grand-children, for example.

Prof Dr Pintens' long experience will bring unrivalled expertise to our Estate Management practice, which is known for offering pragmatic and client-oriented solutions", said Alain Van Geel, Partner at Tiberghien.

Charlotte Declerck obtained her Doctorate in Law from the Catholic University of Leuven in 2008 with her thesis entitled "*Litteraire en artistieke eigendom in het familiaal vermogensrecht*" ("Literary and artistic property in family property law"). She has been an assistant at the Institute for Family Property Law from 2003 to 2010. In 2009-2010 she was a Deputy Lecturer in Family Mediation Law at the Catholic University of Leuven. On September 1, 2010, Dr Declerck has taken up her appointment as Lecturer in Family and Succession Law at the University of Hasselt. In addition to her academic career, Dr Declerck has been a practising lawyer since 2007. Her caseload to date has mainly involved probate disputes and the liquidation and distribution of estates following divorce.

"Negotiation and mediation are truly important instruments that we use in managing and avoiding family conflicts over divorces, probate and the transfer of family estates. If there is no prospect of a settlement, we obviously then act in the ensuing litigation. Charlotte Declerck's academic knowledge and specialised practical experience in this area clearly constitute added value for our Estate Planning litigation practice", said Alain Van Geel.