

What kind of assistance can embassies and consulates provide?

This list is not exhaustive since each case is particular, but an embassy or a consulate can:

- Issue a (temporary) identification document in case your identity card or passport has been lost or stolen. Simply present your statement confirming the loss or the theft to the local police office and three recent identity photos. The procedure could be accelerated if you have another identification document (for example, your driver's licence), a photocopy of your lost or stolen documents (always note the numbers of your documents on a separate sheet of paper) or your national register number (indicated on your identity card).
- Intervene in order to facilitate contact with someone in Belgium who can provide you the required assistance.
- Provide assistance in the search for missing persons. However, this is the responsibility of the local authorities. They may sometimes claim very high costs for the research carried out.
- Provide you with a list of addresses of local lawyers, doctors and translators.
- Provide you assistance in case you are arrested. In case of arrest or detention, you can notify your embassy or consulate. Within the limits of their authorities, they provide assistance to Belgian prisoners, mainly on a humanitarian level. See the brochure « 'L'assistance aux Belges détenus à l'étranger ».

What an embassy or consulate cannot do for you

Under no circumstances can an embassy or consulate:

- Intervene in private matters (for example, payment of hotel bills, medical expenses, customs transactions, fines or legal fees).
- Intervene in hotel bookings, finding accommodation or storing your luggage, providing you with a work permit or employment.
- Ensure that you benefit from preferential treatment in hospitals, at a doctor's office, in the case of imprisonment, for excursions or visits, or even ensuring your release from prison or intervening in legal proceedings.
- Obtain an extension of your visa, your resident's permit or your work permit.
- Intervene for dual nationality holders when they are in the country of their other nationality.