

# ANNELIES VERLINDEN

Annelies Verlinden (1978) studied Latin and sciences at the Vita et Pax college in Schoten and obtained a bachelor in law at the the University of Antwerp in 1998. She continued her studies at the Catholic University of Leuven, where she obtained her Master of Laws in 2001. In 2002 she completed a Diplôme d'Etudes Spécialisées (DES) in European Law at the Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve. In 2002 she started at the law firm DLA Piper where she became a partner in 2011 and co-chaired the Belgian office as from 2014.



On the 1st of October 2020, she was appointed Minister of Home Affairs, Institutional Reform and Democratic Renewal in the De Croo government.

While respecting the prerogatives of the competent authorities, she is responsible for the coordination of the general police policy and the coordination of the management of the federal police and the local police. She is also in charge in times of major national incidents, like during the floods in the South of Belgium in the summer of 2021.

Her policymaking in Home Affairs includes civil security, the support of the prevention and security policy of municipalities, private security, registration and updating of the national register of intelligence regarding Belgian nationals.

In her capacity as minister, Ms. Verlinden was competent for adopting the *ministerial* (and, later on, under the so-called Pandemic Law, *royal*) decrees containing measures to limit the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public health. She drafted and proposed a specific law, as a permanent legal basis, for taking this kind of restrictive measures during a pandemic. That 'Pandemic Law' was adopted by parliament in 2021.

Ms. Verlinden is also working on the legal framework to enhance the competencies of the local authorities to take action against undermining crime. This will allow local authorities to close rogue businesses after thorough integrity investigations. The legal framework for administrative sanctions has also been amended to enable local authorities to take better action against local nuisance.

Verlinden's jurisdiction includes the organization of the European, federal and regional elections in Belgium. For European elections, she lowered the voting age to 16 years.

The Council of State, the highest national administrative court, has been drastically reformed and modernised under her legislation. At the request of Minister Verlinden, the Council of State's staff has been substantially increased and the institution has been provided with the necessary resources.

Together with Minister Clarinval, Minister Verlinden is in charge of Institutional Reform and Democratic Renewal. Under the latter authority, she organized a process of citizen participation on state structure and democracy.