

## Divers search lake where newborn baby was found dead across Belgian border

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Credit: Belga

The Dutch police are organising a search operation in a lake near the park just across the Belgian border where the body of a newborn baby was found earlier this week.

According to the police, there is a good chance that the mother of the baby - who was **found** in Wernhout in the Netherlands - lives just across the border in one of the Belgian municipalities of Wuustwezel or Hoogstraten.

By having divers search the water, the Dutch investigators hope to find something that could possibly lead to the mother or parents of the baby. "We still have many questions in the investigation into the baby found in Wernhout," **the police say**. "We are also very concerned about the well-being of the girl's mother."

Whether the child was still alive when she was left in the park will become clear after an autopsy by the Dutch Forensic Institute (NFI), which should be able to provide more information about the cause and exact time of death.

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Additionally, the police are still asking for more information from possible witnesses who saw something in or near the park that they think might be suspicious.

"Something that did not seem worth reporting at first can be valuable information for the police," they added. "Do you know more about the possible parents and their whereabouts? If so, please let us know."

According to Kerstin van Tiggelen, the chair of the Dutch Institute for the Documentation of Anonymous Renunciation (NIDAA), who investigated the origins of children in solved foundling cases, it is very likely the mother comes from Belgium.

"The analysis of [previous] cases shows that in 99% of the cases in which the child is laid down near the border, the child either comes from a nearby village or town or from abroad. In this case, Belgium," she told **local media**.

"It almost never happens that such a child comes from elsewhere in the Netherlands, Van Tiggelen added. "The chance is therefore great that this is also the case here."

The police on the Belgian side have not been called in yet.