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## AVOCATS



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### The scammers failed to get us

We had recently a run-in with scammers and we consider us as lucky not to have been trapped.

Although we scrutinize our emails very closely and we have an important experience in recognizing spams, we recently received a message from a certain "English Company" asking for our legal assistance in collecting the balance due on an agreement allegedly concluded with a Lausanne based company.

This message looked serious. The "Lausanne Company" was existing and even well-known. The explanations were logical. We therefore decided to initiate our normal procedure for opening a relationship with a new client: signing an Engagement Letter and asking for a retainer based on what we thought the case would need in terms of work.

But to our great surprise, even before the "English Company" returned these documents signed, we received by normal mail a cheque from the "Lausanne Company" amounting to about one half of the claim, asking us to cash it and consider it as an advance payment for the total to come. This surprised us as it would have been much easier and safer for this company to pay directly our so-called "New Client" without using our services to do so. Nevertheless, this "New Client" came to the opinion that this way of doing was a very good idea...

In order to be allowed to execute the wish of our "New Client", we had to open what is called under Swiss laws as an "Anti-Money Laundering File", i.e. asking the "English Company/the so-called New Client" to fill in a special form providing explanations regarding its legal existence (extract of the company register), its business, its directors and the circumstances of the case. We also asked our bank to double-check the cheque. To our surprise, the bank very swiftly confirmed that the cheque was not counterfeit.

After some days, the "English company" replied that no company register exists under English laws (which we knew is wrong) and that it was "very difficult" to sign these documents for obscure internal administrative reasons. This further raised our suspicion and we asked our correspondents in England to provide us with their opinion as to this reaction. They disclosed us that they thought all this was a scam.

In these circumstances, as registered financial intermediary in Switzerland, we had no other option than alerting the Swiss Money Laundering Reporting Office (MROS) (see: <https://www.fedpol.admin.ch/fedpol/en/home/kriminalitaet/geldwaescherei.html>).

In the meantime, we were put under the pressure of the "English company" which sent us numerous emails to ask the reasons why the cheque was not cashed in already. We replied that we could not do so until we received the Anti Money Laundering forms duly filled in and signed, which until now we never received... The cheque is still uncashed and has been destroyed. We terminated all relationships with this "English Company" and they disappeared in the net.... These scammers failed to get us...

This shows that working with an experienced law firm duly registered as financial intermediary as Wilhelm Avocats provides a high level of quality and assurances to clients. We are not willing to enter or advise into doubtful transactions and we won't hesitate to refuse clients if they cannot cope with the high level of our internal standards. This also shows that the Swiss internal regulations are efficient to protect business men in Switzerland to get trapped by scammers.

**Source : <https://www.wg-avocats.ch/en/news/financial-law/the-scammers-failed-to-get-us/>**