

Belgium Must Lift ‘All COVID-19 Measures’ within 30 Days, Brussels Court Rules

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Global Research, April 02, 2021

[The Brussels Times](#) 31 March 2021

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Science and Medicine](#)

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The Belgian State has been ordered to lift “all coronavirus measures” within 30 days, as the legal basis for them is insufficient, a Brussels court ruled on Wednesday.

The League for Human Rights had filed the lawsuit several weeks ago and challenged Belgium’s system of implementing the measures using Ministerial Decrees, which means it is done without any input from parliament.

The judge gave the Belgian State 30 days to provide a sound legal basis, or face a penalty of €5,000 per day that this period is exceeded, with a maximum limit of €200,000, reports [Le Soir](#).

The current coronavirus measures are based on the Civil Safety Act of 2007, which enable the State to react quickly in “exceptional circumstances,” but the judge has now ruled that these laws cannot serve as a basis for the Ministerial Decrees.

“The judge ruled that the principle of legality has been violated because the current way of working is not foreseeable enough,” Kati Verstrepen of the Human Rights League confirmed to [VRT](#), adding the consequences are “not so dramatic” that from one day to the next, the measures would no longer be valid.

For the time being, the current coronavirus measures will not change, and the verdict is currently being studied by the office of Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden, reports [De Standaard](#).

Appealing against the court ruling is still possible, but as it concerns a summary judgment, an appeal would not suspend the execution of the judgment.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Chamber will debate [Belgium’s upcoming pandemic law](#), which is supposed to provide “a permanent legal basis, for taking this kind of restrictive measures during a pandemic.”

Several legal [experts](#) already pressed the Belgian State to bring forward the law as soon as possible to avoid judges cancelling fines written out for violations of the measures, and this

ruling only increases the pressure to quickly adopt it.

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