

What is a SLAPP ?

SLAPPs (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) are abusive legal actions intended to intimidate critical voices.

02

- *The principle*

An individual or organization files a lawsuit against a journalist, an NGO, or a citizen to exert financial and legal intimidation.

- *The objective*

Make the defense too costly and too lengthy.



They are not aimed at seeking justice but rather at silencing the defendant and stifling public debate.

swipe



03

Why a new law?

Currently, SLAPP victims are left to face long and costly legal proceedings on their own.



Even when they win, they still have to bear significant costs.



SLAPP initiators, on the other hand, face almost no consequences.

swipe



The result



Many prefer to withdraw an article or publication rather than face a legal battle.



Public debate suffers as the fear of lawsuits restricts freedom of expression.

This is why the Belgian Working Group has worked on the transposition of the Anti-SLAPP European Directive.

05 *The Solutions Proposed in the draft of Law*

The anti-SLAPP draft of law includes several strong measures:

- ✓ No limitations to international cases.
- ✓ Rapid dismissal of unfounded SLAPPs within a maximum of 30 days.
- ✓ Financial guarantee from the plaintiff (slapper).
- ✓ Clear criteria to identify a SLAPP and sanction the initiator.
- ✓ Financial penalties and full compensation for the defendant.
- ✓ Non-enforcement of foreign SLAPP rulings in Belgium.
- ✓ Awareness campaigns and training to better identify and combat SLAPPs.

What should Belgium do now?

The European anti-SLAPP directive must be transposed into Belgian law by May 2026.

With this draft of law, the government and parliament have everything they need to act quickly.

Freedom of expression is a pillar of democracy. Let's protect it !
