



## **EASRO Press Release / March 23, 2021**

**EASRO calls on European 2<sup>nd</sup> Residence Owners to issue the Belgian State notice of default because of the ban on movements to and from the 2<sup>nd</sup> residence by European 2<sup>nd</sup> Residence Owners and because of the disproportionate measures on arrival at or return from the 2<sup>nd</sup> residence. They demand € 75 per day and per 2<sup>nd</sup> residence as long as the border for moving to the 2<sup>nd</sup> residence remains closed, and this as of 3 April.**

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This ban violates fundamental rights (such as the free movement of persons and access to and use of property) and is not proportionate. This ban also has a direct impact on those concerned, including financial ones.

The poorer figures necessitate the strict application of measures such as keeping distance, hygiene, living and moving in bubbles. However, for movements across the border, these measures are insufficient according to the Belgian government. So someone from Eupen can go to his flat in Knokke (250km), but someone from Gent cannot go to their second residence in Breskens, which is not more than 20km far but just across the Dutch border. And what about Dutchmen and Germans who have their own place in the Ardennes or at the coast and have been looking forward to it for more than several months? A German citizen can drive from Berlin or Munich to the Belgian border (650 km) but not the last few kilometers to Eupen.

One does not become infected by travelling in one's own car. One does not become infected by staying in one's own home. Anyone who travels to their own home in their own car and respects all the measures in place does not have a greater chance of becoming infected because the border is crossed. After a year, this is clear, even with the British variant all around. Closing borders for E European 2<sup>nd</sup> Residence Owners is useless: closing borders for funshoppers certainly seems then appropriate.

Last year, Marc van Ranst<sup>1</sup> also clearly stated that the ban on going to the second residence is of no use: *"People who get into their car at home to drive to their second residence are not leaving their bubble. They are just moving around. It makes no sense from a virological point of view to ban that."*<sup>2</sup>

We understand that some people find this a luxury problem. But there are painful situations where, for example, a Dutch couple urgently want to go to their 2<sup>nd</sup> residence in the Ardennes because a terminally ill partner cannot stay any longer in their flat and they want to say goodbye in a peaceful context. Others have been working in care for months and are longing for a bit of peace and quiet. In yet another case, a high-risk patient wants to go to his second residence just across the border to be sure that no other family member will cause an infection.

Furthermore, there are other (financial) negative consequences at the expense of the 2<sup>nd</sup> residence owners, without any prospect of possible compensation, as they pay taxes on their 2<sup>nd</sup> residence as well as other ongoing costs.

With sufficient precautions, one can move safely to and from the 2<sup>nd</sup> residence and can also stay there without risk.

EASRO and its members are convinced that safe travel to and stay in your 2<sup>nd</sup> residence across the border is possible, as long as the measures (such as those for domestic travel and contacts) are respected. In addition, European 2<sup>nd</sup> Residence Owners have been forced to stay home for many months due to either bans or extended quarantines on arrival or return. Even minimal maintenance of their 2<sup>nd</sup> residence is not possible. They claim the right to sit out a lockdown in their 2<sup>nd</sup> Residence abroad and to move to it. There has been a lot of focus on domestic 2<sup>nd</sup> residence owners being able to move to their 2<sup>nd</sup> residence. EASRO members are now demanding that they be able to do this too (despite there is a border to cross).

**With the formal notice of default we demand that European 2nd Resident owners can travel to their 2<sup>nd</sup> residence and stay there if this can be done safely in a bubble (e.g. by travelling in a car and bringing their own belongings). We call on European 2nd Resident owners to sign this letter of formal notice of default en masse. We also count on the solidarity of the Belgian 2nd Resident owners by joining this appeal.**

**At the same time, we call on everyone to observe the necessary safety measures and to avoid all contact with third parties during travel and stay.**

*European Association of Second Residence Owners*

<https://easro.eu/>

For more information:

- [EASRO members issue the Belgian State notice of default](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Van Ranst is a professor at the K.U.Leuven and the Rega Institute for Medical Research. He is member both of the Belgian 'Risk Assessment Group' (RAG), which analyses the risks of coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 for public health, and of the 'Scientific committee Coronavirus' which advises Belgian health authorities on combatting the virus and which makes prognoses on its evolution and spread in Belgium.

<sup>2</sup> [https://m.gva.be/cnt/dmf20200513\\_04957297](https://m.gva.be/cnt/dmf20200513_04957297): Gazet van Antwerpe, May 13, 2020: 'More patience for second residence owners, but Van Ranst maintains: "Prohibition makes no virological sense".' (Dutch)