

## *Council of Ministers adopts the Decree - Law on special measures in the judicial activity during the epidemic period caused by Covid-19.*

Considering the outbreak of the Covid-19, starting from 10th of March 2020, following a decision of the High Judicial Council, the activity and the services related to the judicial system have been suspended, aiming to mitigate the risk for the spread of the virus. The urgent court proceedings (i.e. injunctions, hearings related with the validity of the arrests etc.) were exempted by this principle and decided as such by the court, on case by case basis.

**The above decision was replaced by a Decree – Law adopted by the Council of Ministers on 25th of March, which determines provisional rules for the courts and prosecution activities during the epidemic period. More specifically by means of this Decree - Law it is decided that:**

- The court hearings for the criminal, administrative and civil cases shall be deferred up to the termination of the epidemic.
- The procedural deadlines for the filing of the lawsuits, appeals and other procedural actions are suspended for the whole duration of the epidemic.
- The urgent cases are exempted from the above provisions and include the examination of the injunctions, family related litigations (child support, domestic violence etc.), criminal proceedings for the validation of the arrests, urgent criminal cases and the criminal cases in which the defendant specifically requests the continuation of the trial.
- All the courts shall take the necessary measures for the continuation of the judicial activity by restricting the access of the public in the courts, organizing the urgent court hearings "in camera" and based on written submissions and evidence filed in the court.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Albanian Constitution, the Decree - Law shall be voted in the Parliament within 45 days from its entering into force, otherwise it ceases to produce any legal effect.