

## PROTESTS IN EUROPE



### Issue

Over the weekend, protests against Covid-19 lockdowns rocked the Netherlands, Denmark and Spain.

### Background

A new set of lockdowns were introduced to tackle the spread of more contagious and dangerous variety of UK strain of SARS CoV virus.

### Details

- Netherlands began its first night-time curfew of the pandemic, which is said to be the country's first since World War II.
- Bars and restaurants have remained closed since October, and schools and non-essential shops closed in December.
- Under the curfew rules, which are scheduled to continue till at least February 9, no one is allowed to leave home between 9 PM to 4:30 AM, with violators risking a fine of 95 Euros.
- Some agitators smashed windows, threw fireworks, set ablaze cars and robbed supermarkets, and the police resorted to using tear gas and water cannons to disperse the protests.
- Protests against Denmark's lockdown restrictions turned violent, and an effigy of Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen was set on fire.
- Protest was organised by a group calling itself "Men in Black". "Freedom for Denmark" and "we have had enough" were some of the slogans chanted.

- In Spain, protests were organised by a group called “Conscious and Free Humans Collective” and took place even as cases in the Madrid region have tripled in the last 30 days.

### Interpretation of protests

- The first are libertarian “pro-citizen” movements which have occurred primarily in developed countries of the West, where participants have taken issue with governments restricting their personal freedoms.
- The second type is seen taking place in developing economies with large informal sectors, where agitators target the impact of lockdowns on their livelihoods.
- Such protests were seen in Mexico, South Africa and Belgium, where hospitality and retail workers protested against limitations on in-person activities.
- The third kinds of protests are those objecting to how the lockdown restrictions are being enforced, accusing authorities of acting arbitrarily or of using excessive force.



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