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Top Portugal court nixes euthanasia law, says it's imprecise

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Portugal's Constitutional Court on Monday blocked a law passed by parliament introducing euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide for terminally ill and gravely injured people.

The court said in a statement that the law is imprecise in identifying the circumstances under which those procedures can occur. The judges rejected the law in a 7-5 ruling.

Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa asked the Constitutional Court last month to evaluate the law, which parliament passed early this year. The law requires the president's approval to enter into force.

The governing center-left Socialist Party, which was the [driving force](#) behind the bill, said that if the head of state sends the bill back to parliament it will reword the legislation and pass it again.

The court agreed with Rebelo de Sousa, who said the legislation appeared to be insufficiently imprecise and apt to create [legal uncertainty](#).

The court said in its decision that the rules on when euthanasia can take must be "clear, precise, clearly envisioned and controllable." The law lacks the "indispensable rigor," the judges wrote.

Euthanasia is when a doctor directly administers fatal drugs to a patient, while medically-assisted suicide is when patients administer the lethal

drug themselves, under [medical supervision](#).

Several other European Union nations allow euthanasia and assisted suicide.

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