

Christian Louboutin wins case against shoe use by Flemish far-right

French shoe brand Christian Louboutin has won a case against a Flemish far-right group which used its red-soled shoes without permission in its campaign imagery.

BY Philip Blenkinsop/ Reuters | 15 October 2013



Christian Louboutin at his Paris HQ. The shoes are from his new Roller-Boat Spikes and Louis Trash collections
Photo: Coco Amardeil/Pocko

Belgian anti-Islam campaigners must remove all posters featuring the stilettos of luxury French footwear designer Christian Louboutin after a court ruled in the company's favour on Monday.

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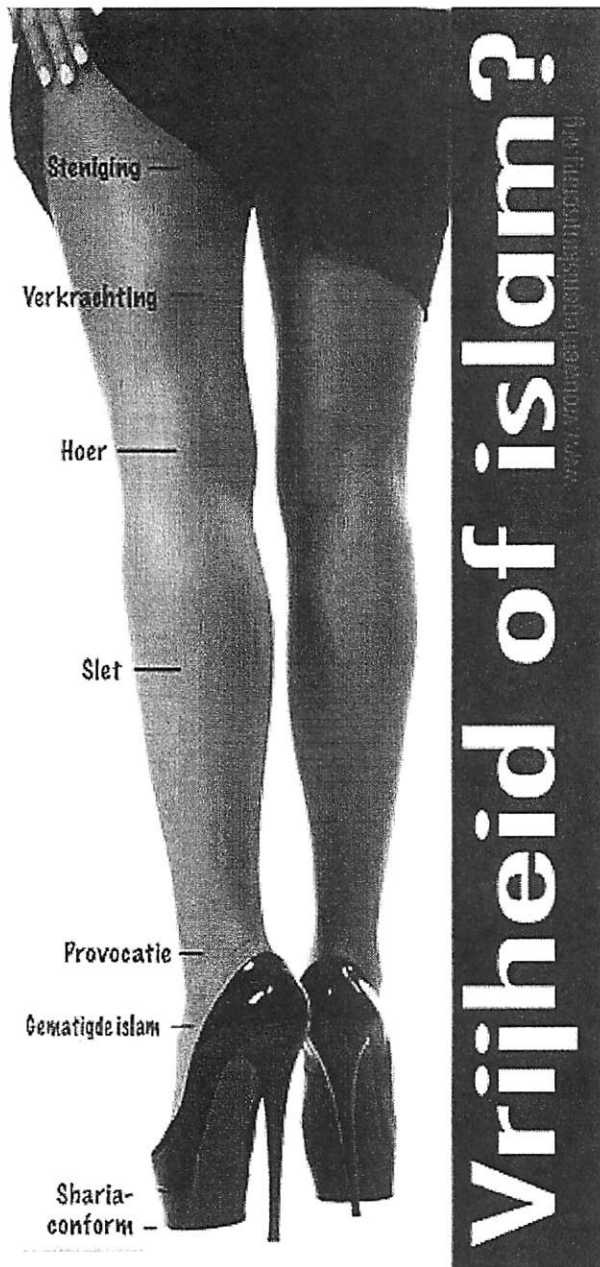
The poster promoted by the campaign group "Women against Islamisation" showed the legs of Anke Van dermeersch, a former Miss Belgium and now a lawmaker for the far-right Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest).

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Beside the image of her wearing the shoes, a key showed what it said was Islam's view of a woman, according to the length of her skirt, from "sharia conform" at floor level to "whore" just above the knee and "stoning" at the top of the thigh.

Louboutin said it had not authorised the use of its shoes in the campaign (pictured below) and that their inclusion damaged its image.

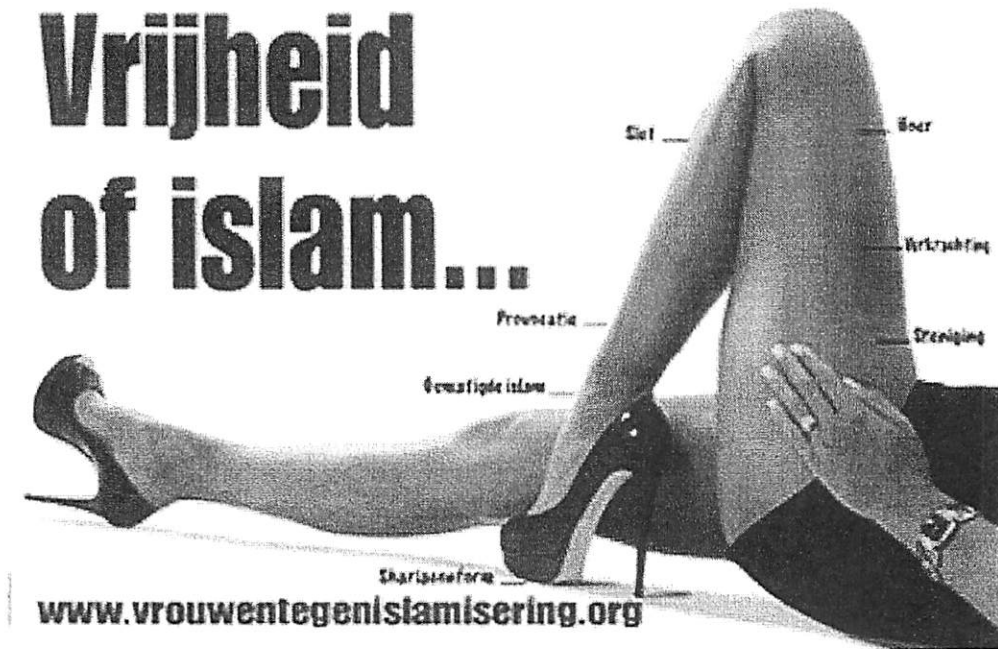
The group must remove all its posters within 24 hours, the court in Antwerp ruled.



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Vlaams Belang's parliamentary leader Filip De Winter promptly tweeted a revised poster showing the same woman lying down, with seemingly identical shoes, except now with yellow soles rather than Louboutin's famous red (picture below).

Yellow is the colour of Dutch-speaking Flanders, which Vlaams Belang wants to split from Belgium.



Vlaams Belang has lost support since winning the votes of a third of the electorate in Antwerp in municipal elections in 2006, partly due to the subsequent rise of the separatist but not xenophobic N-VA.

In polls released on Friday, Vlaams Belang was backed by around 10 per cent of Flemish voters.

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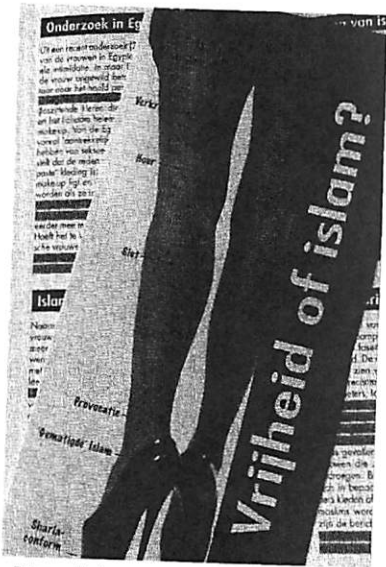
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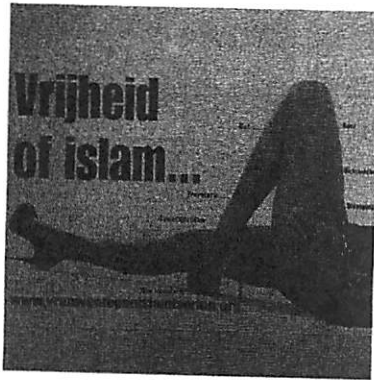


Picture credit: Getty
CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN has won an injunction in Antwerp against an anti-Islamic group that used one of its famous red-soled shoes in its advertising images without permission. The Flemish group Women Against Islamisation featured a picture of a woman's legs wearing Louboutin heels, with the distinctive red sole visible, to illustrate what they claim is Islam's view of women who wear skirts shorter than ankle-length.
Louboutin insisted that the campaign "tarnished its image." BBC News reports, and the court agreed, ruling that all posters should be removed within 24 hours. The posters showed the legs of Anke Vandermeersch - a former Miss Belgium and now a senator for the far-right Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest) party - and she was defiant in the face of legal action in September, when the shoe company warned that it would be the next step.
"Are politicians still allowed to dress the way they want?" she said at the time. "It seems that not only Islam is intolerant... A legal judgment on a dress code for politicians would be a surreal precedent. Apart from the absurd argument concerning reputational damage, there is no legal basis for such a dress code."
A member of the group *vrijzinnig* tweeted a revised poster featuring a yellow sole rather than a red sole on the Louboutin shoe. Yellow is the colour used to represent Dutch-speaking Flanders, which Vlaams Belang wants to split from Belgium.

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Picture credit: Filip Dewinter/Twitter/Women Against Islamisation

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