



Liberties in Lockdown

In sickness and in health – will democracy outlive the coronavirus?

Zoom Webinar

29 April 2020, 09h30 – 10h30 (CEST)

ABOUT THE EVENT

The corona crisis has so far led to rising approval ratings for governments, regardless of their track record in the fight against the virus. Executive emergency powers have been used to impose lockdowns, restore border controls and limit business activity. All of this has happened in order to prevent the spread of the virus, following expert advice from epidemiologists. The next instalment of the “Liberties in Lockdown” series will examine whether / how governments can be held to account in the current emergency.

Many corona-related decisions, often portrayed as “without alternative”, entered into force almost immediately after being announced – without sufficient time for consultation or weighing up alternative paths of action. Restrictions make it impossible for parliaments to properly debate the measures and to question their government. But how are these decisions scrutinised? Who holds governments to account? How can governments manage expectations regarding the accountability of their decisions during a crisis?

These questions, and many more, will be tackled by our distinguished speakers during the fourth online event of ELF’s new series – *Liberties in Lockdown*.

Further reading / More information

1. ELF Publication – [European Atlas of Democratic Deficit](#)
2. Council of Europe – [COVID-19: Joint statement on the role of Parliaments in a time of pandemic](#)
3. Institute for Advanced Studies – [European Governance and Public Finance](#)
4. European Parliament (Press Release) – [The pandemic is no excuse to weaken democracy and the rule of law](#)
5. European Ombudsman – [Ombudsman asks EU institutions to ensure transparency of EU COVID-19 response](#)
6. ELF Publication – [A Toolbox against Populism](#)



EVENT SCHEDULE

- 09h25** Participants connect to the Zoom Webinar
- 09h30** Opening remarks
Daniel Kaddik, Executive Director, European Liberal Forum
- 09h32** Introduction of the Topic by the Moderator
Lauren Mason, Project Officer, European Liberal Forum
- 09h35** First intervention
Rik Daems, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe
- 09h45** Second intervention
Abir Al-Sahlani, Member of the European Parliament, Renew Europe Group
- 09h50** Third intervention
Dr Katrin Auel, Head of the Research Group 'European Governance and Public Finance', Institute for Advanced Studies (Austria)
- 09h55** Moderated debate
- 10h25** Closing remarks by the Moderator
- 10h30** End of event

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Speakers' Bios



Rik Daems, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe

Rik Daems is the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and co-opted Senator in Belgium. In October 2017, he was designated leader of the ALDE Group in the PACE and held this position until his election as President of the PACE in January 2020. Between 2014 and 2019, he was a member of the Flemish Parliament, delegated to the Belgian Senate. During this time, he has also been Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee and of the Committee on Alternative Financing of Public Investment. Prior to 2014, as a Senator, he was Speaker (in 2010) and Group's leader of Open Vld (ALDE) both in the Senate and in the Chamber of Representatives. Rik Daems has also been Belgian Minister between 1999 and 2003 holding a number of portfolios: Member of the Core Government (Kern), State Owned Enterprises, Public Holdings, Telecommunications and SME. He was the Mayor of the City of Aarschot between 1989 and 1995. Rik Daems has been a member of Parliament, without discontinuity, since 1987. [Photo Source – Council of Europe]

Abir Al-Sahlani, Member of the European Parliament, Renew Europe Group

Abir Al-Sahlani was elected to represent the Swedish Centre Party in the European Parliament in the EU elections 2019. Abir's core passions are all connected to issues of rights and liberties for all. In the EP she has seats on the committee for Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL), the committee on Civil Liberties and Justice (LIBE) and the committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM). Apart from her duties in the European Parliament, Abir is Vice President of Liberal International, where she also has a seat on the Human Rights Committee. Abir Al-Sahlani was previously an MP in the Swedish Parliament.



Dr. Katrin Auel, Head of the Research Group 'European Governance and Public Finance', Institute of Advanced Studies (Vienna, Austria)

Dr. Katrin Auel is Associate Professor and Head of the Research Group 'European Governance and Public Finance' at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Vienna, Austria. Her research focuses on Europeanisation, EU multilevel governance and legislative studies with a specific interest in parliamentary communication and the role of national parliaments in the EU.

Lauren Mason, Project Officer, European Liberal Forum (Moderator)

Lauren Mason is Project Officer at the European Liberal Forum, working on research and capacity-building projects with ELF's members across Europe. She holds a BA in Modern Languages from the University of Cambridge and an MA in European Studies from the Universities of Göttingen and Strasbourg. Before joining the European Liberal Forum, she worked at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on a programme promoting democratic leadership, and at the European Policy Centre on active citizenship projects.

