



Liberties in Lockdown

Is the coronavirus infecting free speech?

Zoom Webinar

22 April 2020, 09h30 – 10h30 (CEST)

ABOUT THE EVENT

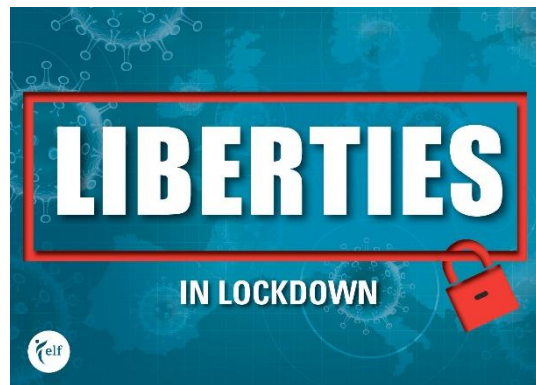
It is no surprise that in times of crisis, people are more susceptible to disinformation. As we rely increasingly on the news for trustworthy updates on a rapidly evolving situation, we can often find ourselves victim to false narratives and manipulated truths. The media's relationship to truth has time and again been plagued with difficulties, but when urgent updates about healthcare are at stake, people are especially vulnerable. Governments have a responsibility to ensure a minimum level of transparency so that journalists can do their jobs without fear of imprisonment. Freedom of the media should not be put in lockdown.

How can we immunise ourselves against the virus of disinformation? What actions can be taken by the European Union and national governments to ensure that proper defence mechanisms are in place to protect citizens from disinformation, while at the same time safeguarding the right to freedom of expression? What more could journalists do to help the fight against the coronavirus? Do our societies have enough freedom of expression antibodies to be able to fight the virus of disinformation?

These questions, and many more, will be tackled by our distinguished speakers during the third online event of ELF's new series – *Liberties in Lockdown*. This event is organised with the support of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF).

Further reading / More information

1. ELF Publication – [Fake News: Manual Countering Disinformation and Protecting Cyberspace](#)
2. EUvsDisinfo – [Coronavirus Archives](#)
3. European Federation of Journalists – [ARTICLE 19 briefing: How to tackle misinformation about COVID-19](#)
4. GMF Report – [European Policy Blueprint for Countering Authoritarian Interference in Democracies](#)
5. Politico – [Navigating the 'Infodemic': How People in Six Countries Access and Rate News and Information about Coronavirus](#)



EVENT SCHEDULE

09h25 Participants connect to the Zoom Webinar

09h30 Opening remarks
Daniel Kaddik, Executive Director, ELF

09h32 Introduction of the Topic by the Moderator
Anneli Ahonen, Head of East Stratcom Task Force, EEAS

09h35 First intervention
Ramona Strugariu, Member of the European Parliament, Renew Europe Group

09h40 Second intervention
Scott Griffen, Deputy Director, International Press Institute (IPI)

09h45 Third intervention
Nad'a Kovalcikova, PhD, Programme Manager & ASD Fellow, GMF (Brussels)

09h50 Moderated debate

10h25 Closing remarks by the Moderator

10h30 End of event

With the support of:



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Speakers' Bios

Ramona Strugariu, Member of the European Parliament, Renew Europe Group

Ramona Strugariu is a Member of the European Parliament elected in Romania in 2019 and is affiliated to the Renew Europe Group. She is a member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home affairs and a substitute in the Committee on Budgetary Control, as well as a Vice-chair of the Delegation to the EU-Moldova Association Parliamentary Committee.



She studied Law at the University 'Al. I. Cuza' from Iași, Romania, where she also obtained her Master degree in European Law. After working as a legal adviser and playing an active role in civil society organisations, she came to Brussels where she worked as an adviser in the European Parliament for several years.



Scott Griffen, Deputy Director, International Press Institute (IPI)

Scott Griffen is Deputy Director at the International Press Institute (IPI), a global network of editors, publishers and journalists defending press freedom since 1950.

He is the author of numerous IPI reports on diverse topics related to press freedom and independent journalism and has led or participated in dozens of IPI press freedom missions around the world, mostly recently in Mexico, Hungary and Tanzania. Griffen comments regularly on press freedom issues in international media. He holds degrees from Yale University and King's College London.

Nad'a Kovalcikova, Programme Manager & Fellow, Alliance for Securing Democracy (ASD), German Marshal Fund (GMF), Brussels

Dr. Nad'a Kovalcikova is a Program Manager and Fellow at the Alliance for Securing Democracy (ASD) in the German Marshal Fund's Brussels office. She analyses foreign interference, efforts to counter disinformation and other threats to democracy. While working on ASD's European outreach, she also focuses on transatlantic cooperation, NATO and emerging security challenges.



She has developed her expertise through working at the European Parliament, NATO, French and Canadian embassies and several NGOs and think tank projects

in Belgium, Canada, France and Slovakia. Dr. Kovalcikova obtained her PhD in International Relations with a focus on security threats, and Master Degrees in Politics and Government, European Affairs and International Economic Relations.

Anneli Ahonen, Head of East Stratcom Task Force, European External Action Service (EEAS) (Moderator)



Anneli Ahonen is the Head of the East Stratcom Task Force, a team in the EEAS that addresses Russia's disinformation through proactive communication and media support in the Eastern Partnership countries, and exposes disinformation on EUvsDisinfo.eu.

Before joining the East Stratcom Task Force in 2017, Ahonen was working as a foreign reporter in St. Petersburg for eight years and covered, among other topics, St. Petersburg troll factory's activities at its early stages.