



Liberties in Lockdown

Back to what future – Work and COVID-19

Zoom Webinar

03 June 2020, 14h00 – 15h00 (CEST)

ABOUT THE EVENT

We are all hoping that the worst of this crisis is now over. From an employment perspective, the unpredictability created by the coronavirus pandemic has deeply shaken the certainties of workers and enterprises across the globe, many of whom have had to face serious financial consequences.

As the European institutions strive to develop systemic tools to boost economic resilience across member states, many workers are finding themselves in precarious situations, none more so than seasonal workers, small entrepreneurs, professionals from the world of sport and culture, and those working in tourism.

For some, it is not difficult to imagine what the future of work will be like. Many companies have already begun to avail of digital systems and smart-working tools during this period of heightened technological dependency and they may continue with these practices going forward. Concerns have been raised, however, that the introduction of more digitally focused systems could threaten the job stability of some groups.

On the contrary, others have argued that the experience of COVID-19 could also act as a catalyst for embracing new ‘work-from-home’ models and more sophisticated teleworking software. How will this experience affect traditional views of work? Will national governments protect the working population? When faced with the costs/benefits dilemma, what can be said of safeguarding people’s fundamental right to work while at the same time protecting the health of the community?

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

Further reading / More information

1. ELF Publication – [You had One Job – Transforming Social Security Systems into the Digital Working Age](#)
2. European Parliament – [COVID-19: No free movement of critical workers without adequate protection](#)
3. ETUC – [COVID-19 Watch – ETUC Briefing notes](#)
4. The Guardian – [Coronavirus is giving us a glimpse of the future of work – and it’s a nightmare](#)



EVENT SCHEDULE

- 13h55** Participants connect to the Zoom Webinar
- 14h00** Opening remarks
Daniel Kaddik, Executive Director, European Liberal Forum
- 14h02** Introduction of the Topic by the Moderator
Mathias Wouters, PhD Researcher, Institute for Labour Law, KU Leuven
- 14h05** First intervention
Martina Dlabajová, Member of the European Parliament, Renew Europe Group
- 14h10** Second intervention
Esther Lynch, Deputy General Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation
- 14h15** Third intervention
Sandra Parthie, Head of Brussels Office / Head of European Affairs, German Economic Institute (IW Köln)
- 14h20** Moderated debate
- 14h58** Closing remarks
Daniel Kaddik, Executive Director, European Liberal Forum
- 15h00** End of event

An online event organised by the European Liberal Forum asbl (ELF). Co-funded by the European Parliament. Neither the European Parliament nor the European Liberal Forum are responsible for the content of the programme, or for any use that may be made of it. The views expressed herein are those of the speaker(s) alone. These views do not necessarily reflect those of the European Parliament and/or the European Liberal Forum asbl.

Speakers' Bios



Martina Dlabajová, Member of the European Parliament, Renew Europe Group

Martina Dlabajová is a Member of the European Parliament coming from the Czech Republic and she is part of the Renew Europe Group. She is Vice-Chair of the Committee on Budgetary Control and coordinator in the Industry, Research and Energy Committee. She is also a member of the SME Intergroup and AI Intergroup. In her previous term in the European Parliament she initiated the Intergroup for Creative Industries and was appointed its Vice-President. Since 2016, Martina is the First Vice-President of the

Board of Directors of the European Liberal Forum, and since 2017 she is also a member of the Board of the Institute for Politics and Society.

Prior to coming to Brussels, Martina was the President and Chairwoman of the Board of the Chamber of Commerce of the Zlin Region in the Czech Republic. She represented the Regional Chamber towards the public authorities from that regions, as well as providing services to local entrepreneurs. She was also CEO and owner of many companies in Czech Republic, Slovakia and Italy.

Esther Lynch, Deputy General Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation

Esther Lynch was elected ETUC Deputy General Secretary at the Vienna Congress in May 2019, after four years as Confederal Secretary. She has extensive trade union experience at Irish, European and international levels, starting with her election as a shop steward in the 1980s. Before coming to the ETUC, she was the Legislation and Social Affairs Officer with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), where she took part in negotiations on Ireland's National Social Partner Agreements.



Esther's responsibilities as Deputy General Secretary, include social dialogue, collective bargaining and wage policy, trade union rights, gender equality and Brexit.

As Confederal Secretary she ran a successful EU-wide online campaign 'Social Rights First' that mobilised support for the European Pillar of Social Rights, led ETUC lobbying actions aimed at improving workers' rights in legislative initiatives such as the Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Directive and the Whistleblowing Directive, she spearheaded the ETUC's 'Europe Needs a Pay Rise' campaign and helped secure the EU's adoption of legally binding occupational exposure limits to protect workers from exposure to carcinogens, as well as a social partners' agreement on reprotoxins.



Sandra Parthie, Head of Brussels Office / Head of European Affairs, German Economic Institute (IW Köln)

Sandra studied political sciences and economics at the Freie Universität in Berlin, Germany and the Université de Montréal, Canada.

From 2006-2011 she was the head of office and political advisor to a German Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the Environment Committee. Her work focus was on environment, climate and energy policy. In 2011 she joined French-multinational company Alstom as the Director for EU Regulatory Affairs, with a focus on renewable energies and grid technology.

Since March 2015 she is running the Brussels Liaison office for private German economic think tank 'IW' (Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft / German Economic Institute), presenting economic research by the Institute to stakeholders in Brussels, often in cooperation with industry associations. The main focus area of the institute and the liaison office in Brussels are topics such as EMU, trade policy, structural and digital change, financial and energy policy.

Mathias Wouters, PhD Researcher, Institute for Labour Law, KU Leuven (Moderator)

Since 2017, Mathias Wouters has worked full time at the Institute for Labour Law (KU Leuven). In addition to the educational tasks and duties, such as coordinating seminars, supervising master's theses and contributing to the Institute's newsletters on labour law, he is mainly preoccupied with new forms of work and the integration of the platform economy into labour law.

His PhD research focuses on the similarities or differences between 'gig-economy' platforms and labour relations outside the gig-economy, with all relevant implications for labour law. To this end, he has spent six months at the International Labour Organization in Geneva to conduct comparative research on telework and home-based workers.

