



## Liberties in Lockdown

Policing the pandemic: Freedom of assembly and COVID-19

Zoom Webinar, 17 June 2020, 09h30 – 10h30 (CEST)

### ABOUT THE EVENT

In normal times, our freedom of association and assembly are guaranteed in article 12 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. At the same time, according to John Stuart Mill's *Principle of Harm*, individuals should be free to do as they wish as long as their actions do not harm others, and if they do then society should be able to stop them. The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown up huge dilemmas for democratic leaders, especially in cities, faced with protecting and preserving these freedoms where possible, and at the same time ensuring all citizens live up to their responsibilities towards the health of others. But how to police the pandemic in a fair and proportionate way when scientific advice is evolving day by day and at times is contradictory?

On the other hand, what happens if a government tries to use this crisis to push toxic laws, that will affect the actual fabric of society? Shouldn't citizens still have the right to peacefully protest these political moves, even with the risk of spreading the virus? As we are all vulnerable against COVID-19, citizens have accepted, to a certain degree, the emergency legislation used to stop its spread. However, we might encounter a democratic flaw if governments do not understand that these are only temporary measures, which must be proportionate to the threat, and should not be maintained longer than required. Without freedom of assembly and association, the democratic vibrancy of our cities and countries will be under attack, and this time it will not be from the coronavirus.

What lessons can be learned from this experience so far? Have cities policed the pandemic fairly? How will our freedoms be guaranteed during future crises? How will our responsibility to avoid endangering the health of others change relations between citizens? Can we be sure that if the people agree to a temporary restriction of their rights and freedoms, they will see them returned in full after the crisis? Should these rights become untouchable regardless of the crisis?

These questions, and many more, will be tackled by our distinguished speakers during the eleventh and final event of ELF's online series – Liberties in Lockdown. This event is organised with the support of the [Renew Europe Group](#) in the [European Committee of the Regions](#).

### Further reading / More information

1. ELF Publication – [European Atlas of Democratic Deficit](#)
2. Renew Europe CoR – [COVID-19 Interactive Map of lockdown measures](#)
3. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights – [Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Fundamental Rights Implications](#)
4. EDRi – [Ban biometric mass surveillance!](#)



## 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  
**Giada Negri**, Research and Advocacy Officer, European Civic Forum
- 09h35** First intervention  
**Jean-Luc Vanraes**, Citizenship and Governance Coordinator, Renew Europe Group, European Committee of the Regions
- 09h40** Second intervention  
**Milosz Hodun**, PhD, Member of Board of Directors, European Liberal Forum & President, Projekt: Polska Association
- 09h45** Third intervention  
**Ella Jakubowska**, Policy and Campaigns Officer, European Digital Rights (EDRi)
- 09h50** Moderated debate
- 10h28** Closing remarks  
**Daniel Kaddik**, Executive Director, European Liberal Forum
- 10h30** End of event

With the support of:



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## Speakers' Bios



**Jean-Luc Vanraes**, Citizenship and Governance Coordinator, Renew Europe Group, European Committee of the Regions

Jean-Luc Vanraes is a lawyer and Belgian politician for OpenVLD. He is a Councillor in the municipality of Uccle and a member of the European Committee of the Regions since 2010. He is the Renew Europe's Coordinator in the CIVEX Commission, which is

responsible for Fundamental Rights and Security and is a member of the Subsidiarity Steering Group of the CoR.

As the Chairperson of the Executive Board of the Brussel University Hospitals, he played a key role during the COVID-19 pandemic in Brussels and as a member of the executive board of the Uccle municipality, he is active in managing, providing aid to vulnerable people and coordinating police actions to ensure that the pandemic is under control. For 15 years, he was a member of the Brussels Police Council.

He was previously Brussels Minister of Finance and Budget, member of the Brussels Parliament and President of the Flemish Brussels Parliament. He was formerly President and is still a member of the Brussels University Association.

**Milosz Hodun**, PhD, Member of Board of Directors, European Liberal Forum & President, Projekt: Polska Association



Milosz Hodun is a lawyer and activist in Poland. He is President of Projekt: Polska Foundation, a Warsaw based liberal think tank, where he focuses on the rule of law and human rights, in particular minority rights. He is author of various publications and articles on hate speech, including “Liberal Agenda against Online Hate Speech” and “European Atlas of Democratic Deficit”. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the European Liberal Forum, the political foundation of the ALDE Party, and he represents ELF in the Climate Justice Committee of the Liberal International.

He works as an international advisor for Nowoczesna, Polish liberal party. Until September 2015, he worked as an expert within the "Presidential Experts' Programme" at the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland. He holds a PhD degree and is a part-time teacher at Reykjavik University School of Law, where he focuses on comparative law.



**Ella Jakubowska**, Policy and Campaigns Officer, European Digital Rights (EDRi)

Ella Jakubowska is the Policy and Campaigns Officer for biometrics with the civil society coalition for fundamental rights in the online environment, EDRi. She leads EDRi's pan-European work on facial recognition and other biometric technologies, and the many ways in which their use can impact societies.

Prior to joining EDRi, she worked as a digital transformation manager at an engineering company, and obtained her Master's in Human Rights, with a focus on technology, from the London School of

Economics (LSE).

**Giada Negri**, Research and Advocacy Officer, European Civic Forum (Moderator)

Giada Negri is a Research and Advocacy officer at the European Civic Forum. She coordinates the Civic Space Watch, an online tool for monitoring civic space in Europe. She holds a Bachelor's degree in International Studies from the University of Trento and a Master's degree in Eurasian political economy and energy from King's College London.



She coordinated the Activizenship #3 which puts into a global and historical perspective the pressure that civil society is facing today and the Civic Space Watch report 2019 which analyses the trends of shrinking civic space observed between 2018 and 2019. She also contributed to the drafting of Civil Society Europe 2017 survey on civic space in the European Union.