



## On the Agenda

### Rule of Law: at what cost?

10 December 2020, 09h30 – 10h30 (CET)

Zoom Webinar

#### ABOUT THE EVENT

As the end of the year 2020 is upon us, it seems that the EU has one more crisis to handle before it sets off on a winter holiday. Everyone was waiting for the new long-term EU budget (MFF) and COVID-19 rescue plan to be approved before Christmas, but two member states have vetoed the budget within the Council of the EU.

Poland and Hungary vetoed the approval of these 2 financial instruments, which together are worth approx. 1.8 trillion EUR, because they oppose and feel threatened by the EU's plan to tie funding to the respect of the Rule of Law. Hungary has also received indirect support from Slovenia, whose Prime Minister is a close ally of Viktor Orbán.

These two member states were also the first ones against whom the Council was forced to trigger Article 7 proceedings, but it is clear now that these were ignored by the leaders in Budapest and Warsaw. It is very curious how member states of the EU, which have signed all the Treaties, can now be so openly against the correct and unrestrained application of the Rule of Law. However, this turns into worry when we look at what is happening in the Council and how these illiberal regimes can use their Veto power to stop an entire Union in its tracks. Danger does not always come from the outside.

How can the EU, in particular, the European Council and the Council of the EU solve this crisis? What will citizens in hard-hit countries (i.e. Italy, Spain) do in January if the EU budget and recovery package is not approved? Should the Veto structure in the two Councils be changed so that no member state can hold the rest of the European Union hostage?



## EVENT SCHEDULE

**09h25** Participants connect to the Zoom event

**09h30** Opening Remarks

**Daniel Kaddik**, Executive Director, European Liberal Forum

**09h33** Introduction by the Moderator

**Beatriz Ríos**, EU Affairs reporter

**09h35** First intervention

**Richard Youngs**, PhD, Senior Fellow, Carnegie Europe & Professor of International Relations, University of Warwick

**09h41** Second intervention

**Andrea Virág**, Director of Strategy, Republikon Institute (Hungary)

**09h47** Third intervention

**Błażej Lenkowski**, President, Fundacja Liberté! & Publisher of *Liberté!* (Poland)

**09h53** Moderated debate

**10h27** Conclusions

**10h30** End of event

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