

Article – Covid-19: fundamental rights must be upheld, warn MEPs



Crisis situations call for crisis measures and emergency measures have been put in place in member states to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has often resulted in restrictions on people's rights, including for example the right of assembly and freedom of movement, and increased authority for the executive branches of government.

While recognising the need for special measures, Parliament said in a resolution adopted on 17 April that they must be in line with the rule of law, proportional and clearly related to the health crisis. MEPs also stressed that the measures must be time-limited and subject to regular scrutiny.

MEPs call for concrete actions to preserve the rule of law

During the [plenary session on 17 April](#), MEPs expressed concerns about the emergency measures in Hungary and Poland. These relate most notably to the

indefinite state of emergency and the new power of the government to rule by decree in Hungary, and the decision by Poland to hold presidential elections during the pandemic, despite worries about how fair these elections can be due to new participation mechanisms and campaigning issues.

MEPs called on the European Commission and the Council to make sure that all actions taken by member states are in line with EU values and treaties.

During a [civil liberties committee meeting on 23 April](#), MEPs underlined the need to respect all fundamental rights, including data protection and privacy, across all member states, and called on the Commission to come up with guidelines.

The committee's [Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights Monitoring Group](#) is closely monitoring the impact of emergency measures taken by member states.

Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders promised MEPs that the Commission will continue to closely monitor the situation regarding the rule of law in member states.

MEPs called for decisive action by the Council and the Commission to tackle the most severe violations in Poland and Hungary and criticised them for the lack of progress in ongoing [Article 7\(1\) procedures](#), which could result in sanctions including the loss of voting rights in the Council, if a clear risk of a serious breach of EU values is established.

Find out which [10 things the EU is doing](#) to fight the coronavirus.