

# Article – Democracy Week: how democracy is dealing with Covid-19



The spread of the coronavirus in 2020 has not only put people's lives in danger, but also transformed how they work, communicate and make political decisions.

On the occasion of the International Day of Democracy on 15 September, the European Parliament is organising, together with non-governmental organisations, a conference focusing on the repercussions of the crisis on democracy and fundamental freedoms.

MEPs, representatives from other EU institutions and NGOs will discuss how to counter restrictions to democratic checks and balances and civic participation and support the functioning of democratic systems.

## **Digital trends, virtual parliaments and Belarus**

A series of discussions will focus on the various ways Covid-19 affects democratic institutions.

A political discussion on Monday 14 September will consider the state of global democracy during the pandemic.

The following day various speakers will present their vision for the future of democracy after the pandemic: European Parliament President, David Sassoli; Vice-President Heidi Hautala; Commission vice-president Věra Jourová; UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet; as well as Kevin Casas-Zamora, the secretary-general of The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

The conference will host panel discussions on (all times are CET):

- How digital technologies are changing the political landscape (Tuesday, 18.00)
- The impact of Covid-19 on the media and the rise of disinformation (Wednesday, 15.00)
- How political parties are operating in the pandemic (Wednesday, 17.00)
- The protests in Belarus (Thursday, 10.30)
- How parliaments are going online to adapt to the challenges of the pandemic (Thursday, 15.00)