



# RED SPINEL

2025 Annual Conference

Respond to Emerging Dissensus:  
SuPranational Instruments and  
Norms of European Liberal  
Democracy

**17-19 March 2025**

***Institut d'études européennes  
de l'Université libre de Bruxelles***

39 Avenue Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1050 - Brussels

## Monday, 17th March - PM

### Rule of law, liberal democracy, & economic governance in the EU

#### 14:00- 15:30 A Practitioner's Perspective

Chair: Ramona Coman (IEE-ULB)  
~Spaak Room~

Daniel  
Freund  
(European  
Parliament)

Emanuele  
Rebasti  
(European  
Council)

Celine  
Gauer  
(European  
Commission)

Annemie  
Turtelboom  
(European  
Court of Auditors)

15:30- 16:00 Coffee break  
~Foyer~

#### 16:00- 17:30 An Academic's perspective

Chair: László Andor (FEPS)  
~Spaak Room~

Paul  
Stephenson  
(Maastricht  
University)

Maria-Luisa  
Sánchez  
Barrueco  
(Deusto Law  
School)

Amandine Crespy  
(ULB)  
&  
Dimitrios  
Argyroulis (ULB)

Paul  
Dermine  
(ULB)

17:30- 18:00 Coffee break  
~Foyer~

#### 18:00- 19:30 Keynote Address

Chair: Ramona Coman (IEE-ULB)  
~Spaak Room~

*Illiberalism within the EU:  
How to Solve the Value Crisis?*

By Gábor Halmai (EUI)

# RULE OF LAW, LIBERAL DEMOCRACY, AND ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE IN THE EU

Time: Monday, 17 March 2025 : 14:00 - 17:30

Location: Spaak Room - Institut d'études européennes (ULB)

## Steering Committee

Ramona Coman (IEE-ULB), Paul Dermine (IEE-ULB),  
& Andrew Bradley (IEE-ULB)

## Objective

The crises that have confronted the European Union (EU) over the past decade have reshaped its modes of governance and policies (Fabbrini 2015; Schmidt 2022) as well as the preferences of political, social, and legal actors at both the national and the supranational levels. Not only the responses to the Eurozone, migration or the rule of law crises, but also the methods by which decisions are taken, have been contested. Amid the Eurozone crisis, the consensus over the values on which the EU is founded – the respect for human rights and human dignity, personal freedoms, democracy, equality, the rule of law, minority rights as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) – has eroded. Pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, solidarity, and equality have been under strain. As Ferrara and Kriesi (2022) argue, while EU integration has advanced at an unprecedented rate (Ladi and Wolff 2020), this evolution has often been associated with a heightened degree of political fragmentation inside the EU.

Against this backdrop, liberal democracy has found itself at the centre of increased contestation. Both the practice and the ideal of liberal democracy have faced significant challenges from actors across the ideological spectrum. Liberal democracy has become a polarizing issue and a matter of political competition and dissensus. While some actors aim to preserve or reconfigure liberal democracy, others seek to replace it with non-democratic political regimes. Some of the actors target the democratic tradition and the forms of expression of the popular will, others the liberal tradition, meaning rights, the rule of law and the separation of powers (Coman and Brack, forthcoming).

In response to the rule of law crisis in Hungary and in Poland and to safeguard the EU's common values within its borders, hard and soft instruments have been established. New forms of conditionality emerged, allowing the suspension of EU funds when breaches to the rule of law affecting the EU budget are observed (Regulation 2020/2092) or when the Charter of Fundamental Rights is not respected (Regulation 2021/1060 laying down common provisions for EU funding programs). The conditionality regime born from different crises has resulted in a complex legal regulatory device (Vita 2020; Fasone and Simoncini 2023; Dermine 2024) where conditions are interdependent, and each type of conditionality reinforces the others (Coman and Puleo 2024) and brings together the rule of law, liberal democracy and economic governance.

# RULE OF LAW, LIBERAL DEMOCRACY, AND ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE IN THE EU (CONT.)

*Time: Monday, 17 March 2025 : 14:00 - 17:30*

*Location: Spaak Room - Institut d'études européennes (ULB)*

## Core Questions

The questions at the core of the two panels outlined below are as follows:

- How have EU institutions responded over the past decades to increased dissensus over liberal democracy and its core values, as well as the rule of law and respect for human rights including the rights of persons belonging to minorities?
- How does dissensus reshape EU's internal policies and instruments such as the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the European Semester, the Regulation on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the EU budget or Cohesion Policy? What is the impact?
- What are the implications of dissensus for the EU's capacity to act?

## Format

The half-a-day conference includes two panels. Panelists will initially be given 15 minutes to share some of their insights on the transversal questions of their choosing. Each panel is to conclude with a 30-minute Q&A shepherded by the session chair

- The first panel brings together practitioners from across four main EU institutions - i.e. the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council, and the European Court of Auditors. Panelists are invited to share their views on the aforementioned transversal questions.
- The second panel features several academics from within and beyond the RED-SPINEL project. They will present and discuss their research findings on the different issues raised by the aforementioned transversal questions.



## PRACTIONERS' PERSPECTIVE

14:00 - 15:30

~Spaak Room~

Chair:



**Ramona Coman** (IEE-ULB)  
*RED-SPINEL Principal Investigator*



**Daniel Freund**

*Member of the European Parliament  
Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance*



**Emanuele Rebasti**

*Head of Unit - Legal Service - Directorate for Justice and Home Affairs  
Council of the European Union*



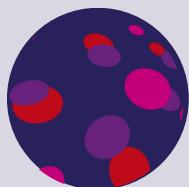
**Celine Gauer**

*Director General of the Recovery and Resilience Task Force  
European Commission*



**Annemie Turtelboom**

*Member of the European Court of Auditors  
Dean of Chamber II*



## ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE

16:00 - 17:30

~Spaak Room~

Chair:



László Andor (FEPS)  
FEPS Secretary-General  
Former European Commissioner



Paul Stephenson  
*Professor - Maastricht University*



Maria-Luisa Sánchez Barrueco  
*Professor - Duesto Law School*



Amandine Crespy  
*Professor - IEE-ULB / RED-SPINEL*



Dimitrios Argyroulis  
*Post-Doctoral Researcher - IEE-ULB / RED-SPINEL*



Paul Dermine  
*Professor - IEE-ULB*

