OPEN EUROPEAN DIALOGUE

Highlights

The Open European Dialogue commits itself to strengthening dialogue between policymakers across Europe by providing a neutral, informal, and accessible space for discussion. Our monthly MP Open Calls grew out of this mission and are a space for parliamentarians to set the agenda, discuss pressing national and European issues, and support each other by sharing best practices and concerns.

On 2 December 2020, parliamentarians from France, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Sweden joined the monthly MP Open Call. The topics discussed reflected the unique environment in which policymakers currently operate: the Hungarian-Polish veto against the EU budget casts uncertainty over national budgets and the future of the Union, the forced move to e-parliament has far-reaching consequences for parliamentary processes, and a growing "Zoom fatigue" is spreading among politicians who often spend their entire days in video conferences.

Conversation highlights

- **There is more to the Hungarian and Polish veto to the EU-budget than meets the eye.** Most participants see the veto as a political bluff but indicative of growing domestic and European divisions.

    o "Parliament is there so we don't kill each other in the street. Now we do not have parliamentary sessions…"
    o "It will be necessary to rethink Europe and the kind of Union we want. The Europe that we joined and wanted was very democratic."

- **Moving the work of parliaments online spurs concerns at structural inequality.** Concerns that the digitalization of parliamentary processes may result in structural disadvantages for the opposition to express their opinions and scrutinize the ruling coalition effectively.

- **Zoom fatigue is developing among those currently relying on it.** Despite an appreciation for the potential of videoconferencing, there are growing doubts about its effectiveness for, e.g., inquiries into government work or for discussing the bigger picture in conversations.

Reading recommendations by policymakers on the call

Jerome Fourquet, L'archipel français
Only available in French.

Within a few decades, everything has changed. France in the time of the yellow vest movement, no longer has anything to do with the nation bonded by common values of the one and indivisible republic. And when the analyst tries to account for the dynamics of this metamorphosis, it is an archipelago of islands ignoring each other that emerges before the fascinated eyes of the reader.

Frédéric Petit, Report on Rule of Law in the European Union: A First Step Towards a Shared European Public Space

Should the financial resources of the European Recovery Plan be given only to those who abide by the rule of law? Frédéric Petit argues that the Polish and Hungarian veto of 16 November has caused a typical Brussels-style crisis in the European Union.

Resources and further information

- Board of the Seimas endorsed the working group's proposals on remote work of the Seimas, December 2020
- The Psychology Behind Video Calls – And Why They Mess With Our Minds, May 2020

What more can we do to drive the conversation forward?

The Open European Dialogue is a network driven by MPs. We look forward to hearing from you and helping you as best we can to connect and work with your colleagues from across Europe in these challenging times.

If you have any suggestions on how to take the conversation to the next level or to continue digging deeper into the urgent systemic challenges posed by COVID-19, feel free to reach out to us.

Keep in contact with your colleagues! Please know that you can always find contact details of all **OED members** on the **members-only area of the website**. Members are linked to all activities they participate in and are organized by member states, making it easier for you to find your colleagues. Should you have issues logging in, you can contact rschalast@gmfus.org.

OUR NEXT MP OPEN CALL WILL TAKE PLACE

MONDAY, 11 JANUARY 2021
FROM 08:00 – 09:00 A.M. (CET)