

Jean Monnet Lecture on Differentiated European Integration 2020

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*Democratic Backsliding in Europe – An East-West Divide or a Fundamental Challenge for the EU?*

**Ingrid Schulerud**

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Tuesday, 13 October 2020, 16.00 – 17.30 CET via [Zoom](#)



There are considerable worries about the state of rule of law and democracy within European Union member states. Since he became Prime Minister of Hungary for the second time in 2010, Victor Orbán has undermined free media, the electoral system and independence of the courts. Political opposition is harassed. Key examples include firing the Editor in Chief of the independent news platform Index in July 2020. As a result of constant harassment that made normal operation impossible, the Central European University decided to relocate from Budapest to Vienna. The renowned V-Dem institute in Göteborg argues Hungary can no longer be considered a democracy, in its most recent 2020 annual report. In Poland, similar dismantling of key institutions of democracy have happened since the Law and Justice party won the presidential elections of 2015. Judges from all over Europe marched in the streets of Warsaw in January 2020 in the so-called “1000 Robes March” to protest against infringements on rule of law and independence of the judiciary.

At EU level, these developments have not gone unnoticed. The European Commission has started infringement procedures against both Hungary and Poland, as the EU Treaties stipulate democracy and rule of law are key founding principles of the Union. The center right European People’s Party faces considerable criticism from other European party groups for shielding Victor Orbán from EU sanctions. French President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Mark Rutte of The Netherlands are actively campaigning to make EU funds dependent on the state of rule of law. They want to make it possible to stop the flow of EU money to Hungary and Poland should the governments there continue their path toward dictatorship. Most recently, Dutch Prime Minister Rutte threatens to recreate the EU without Poland and Hungary if need be ( <https://euobserver.com/opinion/149470>).

In light of negative trends, Norwegian Foreign Ministry has tasked Ingrid Schulerud to investigate the state of play with democracy and Rule of Law in Europa and inventorize the options on the table. Through the EEA and Norway grants, Norway makes considerable funds

available to promote democracy, the Rule of Law and fundamental values through different programs, including support to civil society organizations in more than 15 EU member states. Her work has led Schulerud to interview more than 80 persons working on these issues around Europe, including experts in the Council of Europe, the EU and the OSCE, relevant NGOs and academics. She will share some key findings and insights from her work in this lecture.

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## Speakers

Ingrid Schulerud is a Norwegian diplomat. She has been Norwegian ambassador to Belgium and Deputy at the Norwegian Mission to the EU and Deputy Director General for Central Europe and EEA and Norway grants in the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Pieter de Wilde is professor in political science at NTNU. He is a principal investigator in the Horizon2020 project “Reconciling Europe with its Citizens Through Democracy and Rule of Law (RECONNECT)” and co-teaches the course *Differentiated Integration: The Norwegian Case in Perspective in European Studies* at NTNU.

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## Information on joining the Jean Monnet Lecture via Zoom:

**Topic: NTNU | Jean Monnet Lecture | 2020 | Democratic Backsliding in Europe**

Time: Oct 13, 2020 03:45 PM Amsterdam, Berlin, Rome, Stockholm, Vienna

### Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://NTNU.zoom.us/j/99242330958?pwd=N0QrU29nN2tEc0RWaTQ0RzZxajBCdz09>

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115.114.131.7 (India Mumbai)

115.114.115.7 (India Hyderabad)

213.19.144.110 (Amsterdam Netherlands)

213.244.140.110 (Germany)

103.122.166.55 (Australia)

149.137.40.110 (Singapore)

64.211.144.160 (Brazil)

69.174.57.160 (Canada)

207.226.132.110 (Japan)

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