



RED SPINEL

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For more information about the RED-SPINEL Project, please

visit:

<https://redspinel.iee-ulb.eu/>

We are pleased to share with our readers the 6th edition of the RED-SPINEL Newsletter. This edition provides snapshots of:

-Three key book projects, which includes information on the main output of the RED-SPINEL research - a **Palgrave Handbook on Dissensus over Liberal Democracy in Europe**, edited by Ramona Coman (ULB), Claudia Badulescu (ULB), Thomas Christiansen (Luiss University), and Marta Simoncini (Luiss University); and

-The planned programme and proceedings of the **RED-SPINEL 2025 Annual Conference**, which is scheduled to take place at the IEE-ULB in Brussels during the period 17-19 March 2025.

In addition to the aforementioned snapshots, we have included brief overviews of some of the project's past, ongoing and future activities, and captured the staff changes that occurred since the last edition of the Newsletter in October 2024. As usual, this edition of the Newsletter also includes a catalog of all available RED-SPINEL research and data.

As the year 2024 is drawing to a close, we are observing developments that bring challenges to democracy. Ongoing wars are interconnected with the involvement of multiple role-players, the outcome of elections is contested or influenced by external forces, difficulties with forming governing coalitions, and stable governments are weakened by an onslaught from the right of the political spectrum.

Within this context, the US (re)-elected Donald Trump as its 47th President, and a new European Union (EU) Institutional leadership took office recently. How will this impact the continued support for liberal democracy globally, and will it contribute to increased dissensus over liberal democracy? Only time will tell, and we, as citizens, must be at the forefront to defend liberal democracy, to guard against norms and values being disregarded, and to fight against democratic backsliding. In doing so, we hold our leaders accountable and simultaneously empower them to take the difficult decisions that will contribute to the upholding of democratic values and norms.

Afar from Europe, on the African continent, exemplary elections and a swift, orderly and peaceful transition of power took place in Botswana, while in Ghana, the Presidential election was won, without any contestation, by the candidate of the opposition. These examples should motivate and bolster our resolve to continue to believe in, and fight for democracy despite the many challenges. It is possible for democracy to deliver!

RED-SPINEL will continue to observe, study and analyse the impact of dissensus about liberal democracy on instruments and policies of the EU - from an internal and external perspective - as our world becomes more interconnected, interlinked and globalised.

We wish all our readers a peaceful Festive Season and a successful 2025. Thank you for all the support and collaboration during a successful RED-SPINEL 2024!

Ramona Coman and Andrew Bradley (Member of the RED-SPINEL Project Management)



Ramona COMAN
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Academic coordinator: Horizon Europe RED-SPINEL project (2022-2025)
Academic coordinator: Joint Doctorate Network Marie Skłodowska-Curie GEM-DIAMOND (2022-2025)

The RED-SPINEL consortium consists of 11 partners (7 academic institutions and 4 non-academic organisations), and the project is coordinated by the Institut d'études européennes (IEE) of the University Libre de Bruxelles (ULB).

The governance structure of the RED-SPINEL project comprises a Supervisory Board, an International Advisory Board, and the IEE-ULB central Project Management Office.

Partners



Institut d'études européennes - Université libre de Bruxelles



Università Luiss Guido Carli



Universiteit van Amsterdam



Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai



HEC Paris



University of Warwick



Nicolaus Copernicus University

Academic Partners

Non-Academic Partners

MILIEU



Clingendael



Magyar Helsinki Bizottság



PATRIR



RED-SPINEL Supervisory Board: Representational Change

Kai Brand Jacobsen represented the Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR) in the RED-SPINEL Supervisory Board until October 2024. Following his departure to take up a position at the Norwegian Government, Dana Dolghin joined the Supervisory Board as the representative of PATRIR.

Short biography:

Dana Dolghin is a historian specialising in narratives and histories of liberal thought in Central and Eastern Europe. Her dissertation, defended at the University of Amsterdam (UvA), examined the role of memories of political violence in defining liberalism in the region. She has published on the mobilisations of '1989' at different junctures in European politics over the past three decades, on narratives of human rights, and visions of the state in collective memory narratives in Europe. For PATRIR, Dana has conducted research on the mainstreaming of extremism and radicalisation in several large-scale research initiatives.



Dana Dolghin



RED-SPINEL Post-Doctoral Researchers: Changes

Besides the involvement of academics and experts from across RED-SPINEL's partner institutions, the project's work plan also includes the involvement of several early-stage researchers - both Post-Doc and Ph.D. - whose assistance is invaluable when it comes to the implementation of the scheduled research and training.

The following colleagues completed their respective RED-SPINEL assignments during the course of 2024:

- Ioanna Christodoulaki (ULB - WP 1); and
- Irthe De Jong (UvA/ULB - WP 4).

Post-Doctoral researchers who joined RED-SPINEL partner institutions during the second half of 2024, are:

- Piotr Krajewski (UvA); and
- Andrea Capati (LUISS).

Short biographies:

Piotr Krajewski was a PhD candidate at the Amsterdam Centre for European Law and Governance between September 2020 and February 2024, working within the SepaRope project ("Separation of Powers for 21st-Century Europe). His thesis, entitled "Democracy, Control, Legitimacy: Separation of Powers and EU trade and Investment Policy" investigates the balance of power and democratic credentials of EU trade policy, combining doctrinal research with empirical methods. The thesis will be defended in the first half of 2025. Piotr's academic interests include EU constitutional law as well as EU trade, climate and industrial policies. In November 2024, Piotr joined the RED-SPINEL project to examine the tensions between democratic aspirations of the EU and the institutional protection of values that can be threatened by unconstrained democratic majorities (fundamental rights, but also climate protection and economic competitiveness).

Piotr completed a number of traineeships, notably at the European Commission (Directorate-General for Trade), Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department of International Law) and in the private sector. He studied Law (Master's Degree) and Philosophy (BA) at the University of Warsaw and obtained an LL.M. in EU law from the College of Europe in Bruges enabled by a full-ride scholarship granted by the Polish government.

Andrea Capati is a post-doctoral researcher and adjunct professor in the Department of Political Science at LUISS Guido Carli University, Rome. His research focuses on the institutions and policies of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), with a focus on financial assistance and fiscal integration. He obtained his PhD from LUISS in 2023, with a doctoral thesis titled 'European Integration in the Pandemic Era: A "Critical Junctures" Analysis of EU Financial Crisis Management following the Outbreak of COVID-19'.

Some of his recent publications have been featured in *Comparative European Politics*, *Journal of European Integration*, *Politics and Governance* and *European Politics and Society*.



Piotr Krajewski



Andrea Capati

RED-SPINEL 2025 Annual Conference

The **RED-SPINEL 2025 Annual Conference** will take place at the Institut d'études européennes (IEE) – ULB during the period 17-19 March 2025.

The Conference will, inter alia, provide all consortium partners with an opportunity to provide updates on ongoing project research and activities, reflect on content of policy proposals, and determine a roadmap of activities for the remaining twelve month of the RED-SPINEL project.

Monday, 17 March 2025

Proceedings of the Conference will kick off during the afternoon of Monday, 17 March 2025 with a Roundtable on the **“Rule of law, liberal democracy, and economic governance in the EU”**. The Roundtable will have two distinct segments, providing respectively a practitioner's and academic's perspective on the topic.

The Roundtable will be followed by a public event during which **Professor Gabor Halmai** (European University Institute (EUI) and Member of the RED-SPINEL International Advisory Board) will deliver the keynote address with title, **“Resilience and resistance to illiberal autocratization”**.



Professor Gabor Halmai

RED-SPINEL 2025 Annual Conference (Cont.)

Tuesday, 18 March 2025

On Tuesday, 18 March 2025, proceedings will be dedicated to discussions on the RED-SPINEL **Palgrave Handbook on Dissensus over Liberal Democracy in Europe**, edited by Ramona Coman (ULB), Claudia Badulescu (ULB), Thomas Christiansen (Luiss University), and Marta Simoncini (Luiss University) [See also following section of the Newsletter for details on the Handbook]. The Palgrave Handbook, consisting of more than 60 substantive chapters, will be submitted for publication in September 2025. Authors of Handbook chapters will make short introductory presentations on their respective chapters, which will be followed by an exchange of views in consecutive sessions. The following sessions, which are broadly planned in accordance with the structure of the Handbook, will take place:

- Dissensus over Liberal Democracy in Europe;
- EU Institutions and Dissensus over Liberal Democracy;
- The EU's Internal Policies and Dissensus over Liberal Democracy;
- Dissensus over Liberal Democracy in the EU's Member States; and
- External Influences on Dissensus over Liberal Democracy in Europe.

The day's proceedings will conclude with a meeting of the **RED-SPINEL International Advisory Board (IAB)**. The Board will examine and validate ongoing research and provide advice on continuing and future RED-SPINEL research and activities.

Wednesday, 19 March 2025

The last day of the Conference, Wednesday, 19 March 2025, will convene two **Policy Dialogues** covering the past, on-going and future work of the following RED-SPINEL Work Packages:

- Work Package 1:** Conceptualising changes to EU policy instruments in the face of dissensus;
- Work Package 2:** EU instruments defending the rule of law within the EU;
- Work Package 3:** EU instruments and the autocratisation challenge in a dissensus-stricken neighbourhood;
- Work Package 4:** The protection of fundamental rights within the EU through expert knowledge, citizen participation and judicial instruments; and
- Work Package 5:** EU economic governance instruments and the rule of law

The Conference will be concluded with a meeting of the **RED-SPINEL Supervisory Board**, which includes representation of all the RED-SPINEL partners.

The draft programme of the Conference will be posted on the RED-SPINEL website in January 2025. The website can be found at: <https://redspinel.iee-ulb.eu>

Publications

Palgrave Handbook on Dissensus over Liberal Democracy in Europe

The main deliverable of the RED-SPINEL project will be the **Palgrave Handbook on Dissensus over Liberal Democracy in Europe**, edited by Ramona Coman (ULB), Claudia Badulescu (ULB), Thomas Christiansen (Luiss University), and Marta Simoncini (Luiss University), and due for publication during the first quarter of 2026.

Description of the Handbook Project

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 level. Not only the responses to these crises, but also the methods by which decisions are taken, have been contested. Over the same period, the previously broad 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 and become a matter of debate. 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, this evolution has often been associated with a heightened degree of political fragmentation inside the EU.

While EU integration has traditionally opposed federalists vs. intergovernmentalists, in recent years, liberal democracy has emerged as a new line of conflict and political competition (Engler et al. 2023). Whether there ever was a consensus over liberal democracy, a value taken for granted, or merely an illusion (Barthels et al. 2023), it seems to have been shattered. The current stage of European integration has reached a point where liberal democracy is not only a politicised but also a polarising issue. While the contestation of liberal democracy and the expression of forms of opposition have always existed, what is new is that this phenomenon is no longer confined to the margins of the political spectrum: it has moved to the core. On the one hand, in Europe and beyond, populist radical right parties rise against the core pillars of liberal democracy, fuelling discontent and polarisation. On the other hand, as Weinman and Vormann (2021) put it, there is also a crisis of conviction at the centre and a mainstreaming of the critique towards liberal democracy, with a more diverse group of political, social, and even legal actors claiming that democracy needs to be reinvented (Coman and Brack 2024). Within many EU member states, the ability of liberal democracy to satisfy the needs of citizens (Berman 2019) has been increasingly questioned in various member states.



Publications (Cont.)

Palgrave Handbook on Dissensus over Liberal Democracy in Europe (Cont.)

At the supranational level too, the authority of the liberal international order has been increasingly contested (Börzel and Zürn 2021), giving rise to international competition among various states and within International Organisations (IOs). New actors in Russia, China, and even the United States – which typically epitomises the ideal liberal democracy, contest the liberal world order and seek to set up mechanisms to counter Western dominance (Zürn 2018). The world is experiencing yet another “wave of autocratization” (Lührmann and Lindberg 2019; Coppedge et al. 2022: 1; Croissant and Tomini 2024) with people in various countries enduring severe deterioration of civil liberties and political rights. In this context, liberal democracy appears to be under growing threat around the world, raising further the stakes for defence of liberal democracy in Europe.

In response to these challenges, the EU has not only reaffirmed its commitment to support democracy within its borders but has also intensified efforts to promote democratic values beyond its frontiers. To safeguard its common values within its borders, a series of instruments have been put in place over the past decade in response to the rule of law crises in Hungary and in Poland. In addition to Article 7 TEU, which allows the suspension of the voting rights in the European Council of a country that does not respect these values, hard and soft instruments have been established allowing the suspension of EU funds when breaches to the rule of law are observed or the Charter of Fundamental Rights is not respected. To maintain the EU's political identity, new forms of conditionality have emerged. Outside its borders, the EU's commitment is becoming increasingly challenging given the global context of rising authoritarianism and the erosion of democratic norms and institutions.

The EU's strategies to support democracy externally include diplomatic efforts, economic incentives, and conditionalities tied to aid and trade agreements aimed at fostering democratic reforms in neighbouring countries and other regions. However, these efforts are often met with resistance from authoritarian regimes and competing global powers, making the promotion of democracy a complex and contentious endeavour. The EU's role as a promoter of democracy is crucial in a time when liberal democratic values are under severe threat both domestically and internationally. The success of these efforts will significantly impact the EU's ability to maintain its identity as a bastion of liberal democracy in an increasingly autocratic world.

Against this backdrop, the aim of this Handbook is to address the following questions:

-What forms does dissensus over liberal democracy take in the European Union, in different institutional arenas both at the national and supranational levels?

-How have EU institutions responded over the past decades to increased dissensus over liberal democracy and its core values, including the rule of law and respect for human rights including the rights of persons belonging to minorities?

-How does dissensus reshape the EU's internal policies and their main policy instruments?

-What are the implications of dissensus over liberal democracy for the EU's capacity to act beyond its borders through its external policies and instruments?

-How do external actors (including states and non-state actors) influence dissensus over liberal democracy in the EU and in its neighbourhood?

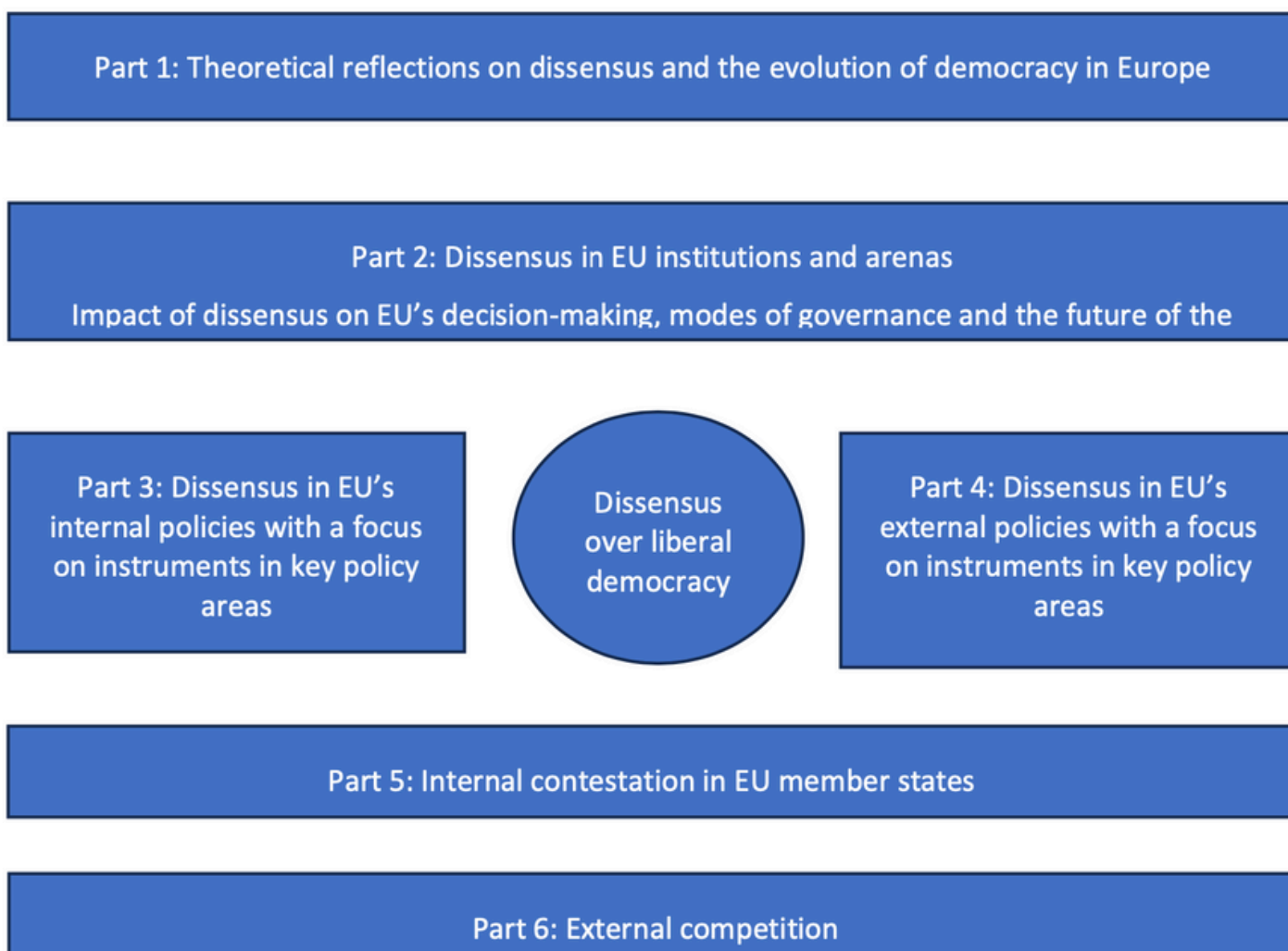
Publications (Cont.)

Palgrave Handbook on Dissensus over Liberal Democracy in Europe (Cont.)

In the Handbook, dissensus over liberal democracy is defined as a conflict between different types of actors, either about the key principles of liberal democracy (its institutions or polity), their implementation through specific policies, or both. Dissensus encapsulates a conflict which drives actors "apart" (dis-) about the sense (-sensus) of liberal democracy (Coman and Brack, forthcoming). Put differently, dissensus can pertain to the ideal of liberal democracy or its practice. The structure of this handbook is designed to provide a comprehensive examination of dissensus over liberal democracy in Europe.

Structure of Handbook

The figure below illustrates the thematic organisation of the handbook into six distinct parts, each addressing the dissensus from a different angle, whether from a theoretical point of view (Part 1), from an institutional perspective (Part 2), in internal EU policies (Part 3), in external policies (Part 4), in member states (Part 5), or by examining the influence of external actors and their capacity to trigger dissensus over liberal democracy inside Europe (Part 6).



Publications (Cont.)

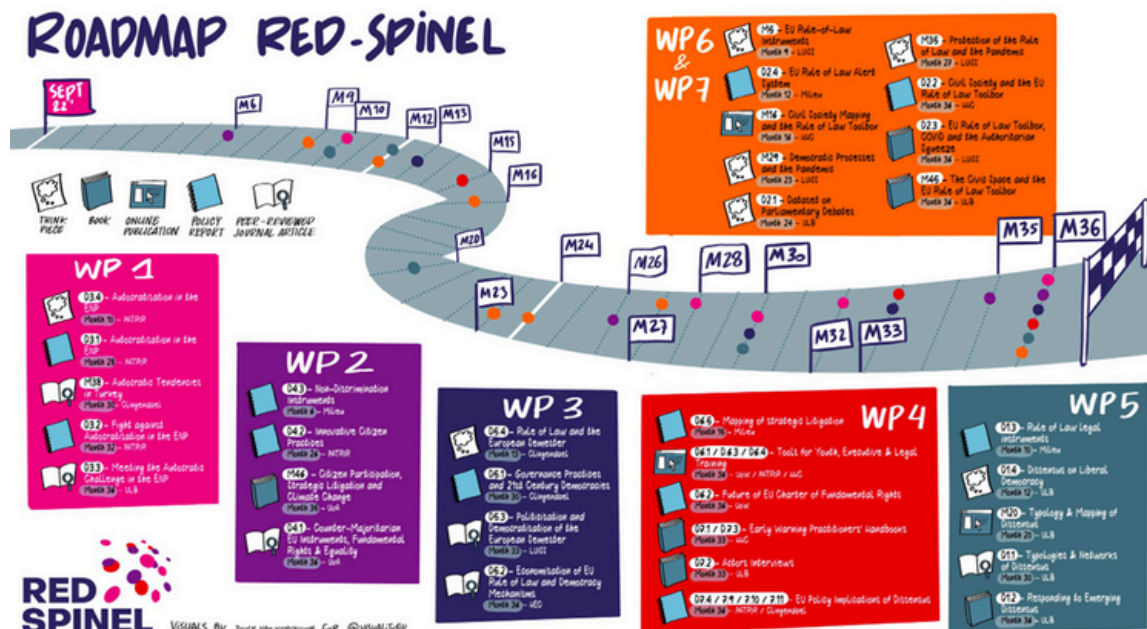
Book on Dissensus over liberal democracy. Insights from European judges

One of the deliverables of the RED-Spindel project is the publishing of a book on **Dissensus over liberal democracy. Insights from European judges**, edited by Ramona Coman (ULB), Viktor Kazai (ULB), Leonardo Puleo (ULB), and Andrew Bradley (ULB). The book proposal was accepted for publication by Hart Publishing, and it is expected to be published mid-2025.

Description of Book Project

Democracy is challenged in various parts of the world, and the European Union is no longer an exception. A vast literature has emerged in recent years explaining how democracy is being eroded or even dying not by coups d'état, but by electoral ballot, whether free or not. Judges and judicial institutions are at the centre of this wider phenomenon. In some countries, governments have captured and assaulted judicial institutions, undermining their independence, prestige and authority, while in others, the issue of the independence of judges is the subject of intense political and social debate. European and international institutions and organisations have reported and documented various forms through which state institutions and actors sanction judges, harass individuals or interfere within the legitimate exercise of judging (United Nations General Assembly, Report by D. Garcia-Sayan, 2022).

The cases of Poland and Hungary have been the most debated in the public and political arenas in Europe and received international attention. In these two cases, governments transformed judicial institutions from the top. They limited the power of courts and in many ways the independence of judges, despite domestic and European contestation. Not only institutional but also personal independence have been undermined. In addition to institutional and even constitutional change, campaigns were launched in the media to denounce judges, accusing them of being communists or corrupt. Hundreds of judges had been dismissed. Others have faced disciplinary sanctions for action taken in the exercise of their duties or for voicing their dissent. In some cases, judges have mobilised collectively to denounce these political intrusions into the organisation of a power whose independence is essential for democracy and if it is to fulfil its missions. Judges demonstrated in the streets and put in place a wide range of collective mobilisation strategies. In others, the judges remained rather passive, despite the rapid and brutal decline of their independence.



Publications (Cont.)

Book on Dissensus over liberal democracy. Insights from European judges (Cont.)

Poland and Hungary are not isolated cases, even if in these contexts the transformations have been the most radical. The organization and functioning of the justice system are the subject of debate in many European countries. The politicisation of the judicial selection process, especially regarding the highest courts, is a long-standing and widespread defect of the justice system in many Member States. In previous years the European Commission detected in its annual rule of law reports worrying issues, most notably, in Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia and Spain. In some cases, the aim is to introduce reforms to improve efficiency. In others, major political tensions persist over the judicial appointment process. Political actors have interfered through more subtle means in the exercise of fundamental freedoms of judges and prosecutors, including freedom of expression, freedom of association or “the ability to make comments in defence of fundamental rights and the rule of law” (United Nations General Assembly, Report by D. Garcia-Sayan, 2022). Ministers have verbally attacked judges over decisions taken which have challenged governmental policies. Illustrative is the case of Prime Minister Boris Johnson who - in the context of the deportation of those who did not have the right to remain in the UK - stated that the criminal justice system was “being hamstrung by lefty human rights lawyers and other do-gooders” (The Guardian, 6 October 2020). In response, more than 800 legal professionals signed a letter inviting the Prime Minister to “refrain from such attacks in the future” (Giannouloupoulos and McDermott 2022: 11). The forms of interference or attacks are diverse.

Growing concerns over the politicisation of the judicial system and the integrity of the European legal space prompted the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights to strengthen their case law on judicial independence. The progressive jurisprudence of these two courts was nothing short of a judicial revolution.

The examples mentioned offer a kaleidoscopic view of a judiciary whose independence is under strain. While the power of judges is contested in different contexts and for various reasons, their role remains little known, apart from cases that receive media coverage or are politicized. While the role of courts in safeguarding democracy and the role of judges in polities beyond the state such as the EU have been examined (see Sweet Stone 2000; Saurugger and Terpan 2017), little is known about how judges think (Posner 2008), except for work on constitutional judges in the United States. In the American context, attention has been devoted to judicial decisions explained either by institutional factors or by the behaviour of judges (attitudinal, sociological, legalistic, strategic, etc). Two perspectives have been put forward: legalistic and attitudinal. The former see judges applying the law, the latter emphasises the political role of judges. If these attitudes both have strengths and weaknesses in explaining the judges' decisions, judges have few opportunities to explain their role or they are reticent to talk about judging (Posner 2008: 6).

This book is not about how judges think, in the sense of how they decide cases and what explains their decisions. It is about what judges do and/or what they think about their role in a context of growing dissensus over liberal democracy. In other words, how do judges perceive their role in a context in which their independence is either under attack or eroded through more subtle mechanisms?

Publications (Cont.)

Book on Dissensus over liberal democracy. Insights from European judges (Cont.)

To address these questions, this book project proposes a novel format: it brings together 17 interviews with judges from several European states and different courts. Some of them served at the European Court of Human Rights or at the Court of Justice of the EU. Others had been national constitutional judges, and others are lower courts judges who have been actively involved in defending the rule of law and their independence in their country. Some of the judges have been active leaders of their professional associations, either at the national level or at the international and European levels. Some are known for their commitment or their public statements. Others for their institutional positions and the reports they have produced on the independence of judges. While the stories do not cover all the European States, a gender representation was assured. A few national representative contexts were chosen ranging from Turkey, where judges have been imprisoned and others have gone into exile, to Hungary, Romania and Poland, where the work of judges has been at the centre of political attacks in recent years. It was also important to look at the case of Italy, the country where the independence of the judiciary became an institutional model in the 1990s, but where tensions between politics and the judiciary remained high. As the independence of the judiciary is not only under threat in recent democracies, the editors thought it would also be useful to look at national contexts in which populist parties are gaining in popularity and are also seeking changes to the way judicial institutions operate, such as in Germany or Italy.

It is acknowledged that the volume might appear biased due to a focus solely on judges' perspectives regarding the erosion of judicial independence and the rule of law. However, the argument is that much of the renewed academic interest in democratic backsliding blatantly neglects the perspective of judges as key actors in resisting, supporting, or simply ignoring and underestimating the challenges against liberal democracy.

Structure of Interviews

The interviews present various realities reflecting judges' personal opinions. Yet, they are unified by a set of common questions proposed for discussion. The interviews have been organised in the following three parts.

-The first part covers background questions (the professional, academic, and personal trajectory of judges) and their motivation to pursue a career as a judge.

-The second part covers questions about the state of democracy in Europe and about judicial independence. Emphasis has been put on the primary threats to democracy, on the erosion of judicial independence and on the implications for judges and citizens alike.

-The third part is focused on the role of judges in protection democracy and judicial independence, as well as on the relationship between law and politics. Here attention has been devoted to the individual and collective actions taken by judges in defending their independence. The concluding questions concern the role of the EU in safeguarding the rule of law in general, and common values in particular.

Publications (Cont.)

Book on Key conversations: the challenges for liberal democracy in the 21st century (provisional title)

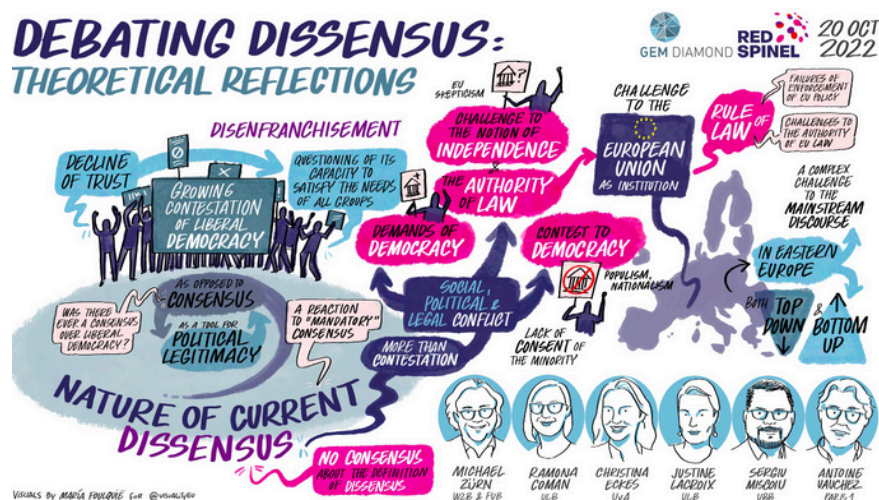
As part of the outputs of the RED-SPINEL and GEM-DIAMOND projects, a book, **Key conversations: the challenges for liberal democracy in the 21st century**, will be published during the 2nd half of 2025. The book is edited by Ramona Coman (ULB), Frederik Ponjaert (ULB), and Andrew Bradley (ULB) with the participation of RED-SPINEL Horizon Europe doctoral researchers and GEM-DIAMOND PhD fellows.

Description of the Book Project

Liberal democracy, as we have come to know it, is at stake. Its main institutions and values are being questioned in different political and regional contexts not only in the member states of the European Union (EU) but also in the neighbourhood countries that remain trapped in a grey zone of hybrid regimes. Current political and societal debates highlight the tensions surrounding rights and common values, which for long have been taken for granted. The rule of law, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and gender equality, are some of the areas in which political and civil society actors, as well as researchers are observing or experiencing first-hand the pressure exerted on these values, in a context of increased dissensus over liberal democracy. In the international arena, liberal democracy and the efforts invested in its promotion are challenged by an increasing number of authoritarian regimes that seem to oppose the core values of equality and freedom. This debate is important. The growing dissensus over liberal democracy has become a central theme for scholars (Berman 2019; Bluhm and Varga 2019; Bugaric and Ginsburg 2016; Carothers and O'Donahue 2019; Coppedge et al. 2022; Merkel 2004; Mounk 2018; Mudde 2004, 2012; Norris and Inglehart 2019; Plattner, 2021; Scheppele, 2018; Schmidt 2022; Vormann and Weinmann, 2021), and it also requires a broader discussion within society.

This book project steers away from the traditional academic format. It does not aim to discuss the causes and consequences of this phenomenon, as this topic is widely covered by academia. Beyond academia, actors are raising alerts and important questions about the global contestation of liberal democracy (Zurn 2022; Börzel et al. 2024).

The aim of this book is to understand concrete challenges to liberal democracy and the rule of law through a series of narratives provided by actors who experience the expression of dissensus over liberal democracy in their professional activity. In so doing, the book brings together contrasting understandings of democracy and different visions of its future.



Publications (Cont.)

Book on Key conversations: the challenges for liberal democracy in the 21st century (provisional title) (Cont.)

Through a series of interviews with academics, intellectuals, artists, human rights activists, journalists and representatives of international organisations, as well as political and social actors, the book aims to on the one hand discuss the current state of play and challenges for actors facing dissensus over liberal democracy in different policy domains and countries; and on the other hand present innovative proposals to reinvigorate liberal democracy for the 21st Century through a set of policy recommendations and citizen-focused solutions to questions about legitimacy challenges faced by liberal democracies.

The book brings together 30 interviews, most of which were conducted with journalists and civil society representatives at national or transnational levels, as well as dialogues with writers, academics engaged as public intellectuals in the public debate, filmmakers and political representatives. What unites these interviews is the contestation of the values central to their activities or the challenges faced in these fields, whether it concerns democracy and democratisation, the rule of law, transparency, education, sexual reproductive rights, animal rights, climate issues, or social and political rights in general. All these actors express current challenges in different ways: some by writing articles in the press, others by engaging in associative life, and others still through documentaries, investigations, photography, films, or novels. The challenges liberal democracy is facing are conveyed through various tools, whether through the use of words or other forms of artistic expression. While most of the accounts come from actors based in Europe, others offer a specific perspective on the Balkans, the Arab world, or Africa. These perspectives provide a better grasp of the challenges of the world and gain a deeper understanding of the concrete actions of the actors involved. Therefore, this book will present different, but complementary interpretations of the recent evolution and challenges that liberal democracy faces, as well as the increased social and political polarisation in society. The book will comprise different interpretations, approaches and contributions with the objective of building an improved understanding of the current challenges faced by liberal democracy. Conceived in this way, this book will be at the crossroads of academia and policy. It seeks to appeal to a wide audience, as it will draw from a narrative approach. It will discuss current challenges that liberal democracy faces, and present examples through the concrete experiences and lenses of interviewees, including perspectives on potential paths to follow in the future.

Structure of the Interviews

The different views of interviewees are unified by a set of common questions that we had proposed for discussion. The interviews have been organised in three parts:

- The first part covers background questions (the professional, academic, and personal trajectory of interviewees) and their first appreciation of democracy and the rule of law in Europe and beyond;
- The second part covers questions about the state of democracy and the rule of law in Europe and the world. Emphasis is put on the challenges to democracy and the rule of law, and the implications for citizens; and
- The third part focuses on the role of the EU in enhancing democracy and the rule of law, and how citizens, individually and collectively, can safeguard liberal democracy and common values.

Past RED-SPINEL Events

-Presentation of paper - The **“Legitimacy and Political Dissensus in the Implementation of the RRF: The Case of Italy”**, co-authored by Andrea Capati (Luiss University) and Thomas Christiansen (Luiss University) in the context of the Red-Spindel Special Issue on dissensus in EU economic governance guest-edited by Nathalie Brack and Ramona Coman for European Political Science – SISP Conference at the University of Trieste during the period 12-14 September 2024.

-Book Launch - ‘The **EU Rule of Law Procedures at the Test Bench: Managing Dissensus in the European Constitutional Landscape**, by editors Cristina Fasone (Luiss University), Adriano Dirri (Luiss University) & Ylenia Guerra (Luiss University) at the International Society of Public Law – Italian Chapter Conference, University of Trento on 19 October 2024.

Red-Spindel Innovation Lab - **“I diritti fondamentali nell’Unione Europea: confronto interdisciplinare per promuovere un capacity-building approach nelle scuole superiori”** at the Law Faculty Chamber, Campus Luiss di Via Parenzo 11, Rome on 22 November 2024.



ICON-S ITALIAN CHAPTER
V CONFERENZA ANNUALE
LO STATO DELLE TRANSIZIONI
Università di Trento, 18-19 Ottobre 2024

Sessione IV
12:00-13:30
19 Ottobre 2024

“The Rule of Law at the Test Bench. Managing Dissensus in the European Constitutional Landscape”
a cura di C. Fasone, A. Dirri e Y. Guerra



Introduce: Marta Simoncini
Modera: Corrado Caruso

Panelists: Simone Benvenuti, Daria De Pretis, Marco D’Alberti, Francesco Grisostolo
Saranno presenti i curatori

LUISS 

RED SPINEL 

 Funded by the European Union

RED-Spindel Innovation Lab

I diritti fondamentali nell’Unione Europea: confronto interdisciplinare per promuovere un capacity-building approach nelle scuole superiori

Nell’ambito del Progetto Horizon Europe “Respond to Emerging Dissensus: SuPranational Instruments and Norms of European democracy – RED SPINEL” finanziato dalla Commissione Europea, (Grant agreement n. 101061621 - CUP:183C22000980006), e incentrato sul dissenso verso la democrazia liberale nell’Unione Europea, si inserisce il Working Package 6, intitolato “Capacity-building promoting democratic deliberation and problem-solving”, che si propone l’obiettivo specifico di predisporre materiali didattici per le scuole superiori, sul tema della violazione dei diritti fondamentali nell’Unione Europea

22 novembre 2024, ore 11:00
Law Faculty Chamber, Campus Luiss di Via Parenzo 11, Roma

Introduce

Marta Simoncini
Coordinatrice del progetto RED-Spindel,
Università Luiss Guido Carli

Coordina

Giovanni Piccinilli
Membro del progetto RED-Spindel,
Università Luiss Guido Carli

Le nuove linee guida per l’insegnamento dell’educazione civica e la prospettiva europea

Mauro Antonelli
Capo Segreteria Tecnica, Ministero dell’Istruzione e del Merito

Il progetto Europa-Noi e l’importanza della diffusione, nelle scuole, dei valori europei

Laura Cavallo
Direttore Generale, Dipartimento degli Affari europei,
Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri

Le iniziative già esistenti sulla elaborazione e diffusione di materiali didattici sul tema

Ines Lazzarini
CEO, Civicamente (Piattaforma nazionale EducazioneDigitale.it)

I metodi di insegnamento per l’educazione alla cittadinanza

Silvia Zamperlin
Docente IIS “Umberto Masotto” (Noventa Vicentina, VI)

I materiali didattici per l’educazione alla cittadinanza

Chiara Bergonzini
Ricercatrice in Diritto costituzionale, Università di Macerata

Il ruolo del terzo settore

Davide Indino
Fondatore, Associazione di Promozione Sociale “Zona P.I.P.”

La prospettiva delle associazioni di studenti

Giuliano Pezzimenti
Rappresentante degli studenti di Giurisprudenza,
Università Luiss Guido Carli

La percezione e la promozione dei valori europei nel dibattito tra le generazioni più giovani

Federica Vinci
Co-presidente, VOLT Italia

Il mercato editoriale di settore e il ruolo delle nuove tecnologie

Giulia Giappichelli
General Manager, G. Giappichelli Editore

Registrazione per la partecipazione in presenza

Link per la partecipazione da remoto

Past RED-SPINEL Events (Cont.)

-Book Launch - The **"Parliamentary Law-Making in Front of Courts: A European Perspective"** discussion of the book, *The Equilibrium of Parliamentary Law-making: Comparative Perspectives on the Role of Courts in a Democracy* by Victor Kazai at the Law Faculty Chamber, Luiss Campus at Via Parenzo 11, Rome on 22 November 2024.

-Online workshop - Discussion of the Special Issue on **"Show Me The Money!: The Changing Dynamics of Economic Governance in the European Union"** by Thomas Christiansen and Lucia Quaglia for the *Journal of European Public Policy* on 27 November 2024.



LUISS 
University - Rome

Parliamentary Law-Making in Front of Courts: A European Perspective

Discussion of the book *The Equilibrium of Parliamentary Law-making. Comparative Perspectives on the Role of Courts in a Democracy* by V. Kazai, Routledge, 2024

22 November 2024, 2:30 pm
Law Faculty Chamber, Luiss Campus at Via Parenzo 11, Rome

Introduction
Viktor Kazai
ULB

Discussants
Marco Cerase
Italian Chamber of Deputies
Federica Fabrizzi
Sapienza University of Rome
Pietro Faraguna
University of Trieste
Nicola Lupo
Luiss University

Q&A with the Speakers

Moderator
Cristina Fasone
Luiss University

Registration
To participate online, please [register here](#)

Forthcoming RED-SPINEL Events

The following events are planned:

-Training sessions and Policy Innovation Lab on the **“EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights in Climate Litigation”** - ACELG - University of Amsterdam on 12 December 2024. See link here: <https://acelg.uva.nl/content/events/2024/12/workshop.html>

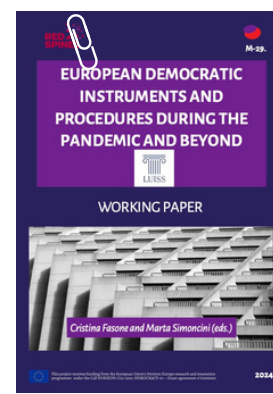
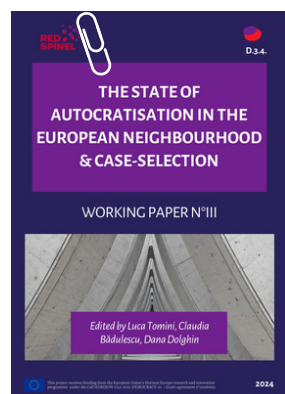
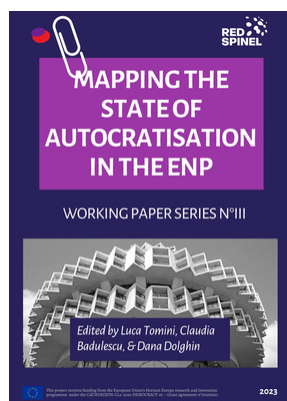
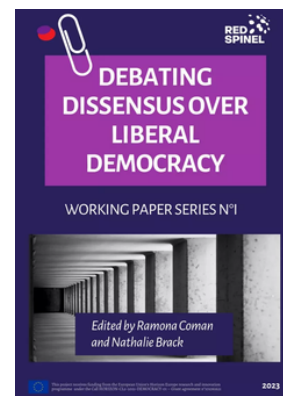
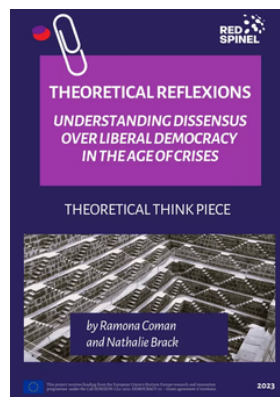
-Workshop on **“How to Challenge Insufficient EU Climate Action Before the European Court of Justice? Joint Creative Thinking on Overcoming the Well-known Obstacles”** - ACELG - University of Amsterdam on 13 December 2024. See link here: <https://acelg.uva.nl/content/events/2024/12/climate-action.html>

-Internal workshop on the RED-SPINEL WP 3 Special Issue with title, **“Dreams, deeds, and disenchantments: EU actors and instruments addressing the autocratisation challenge in the EU’s neighbourhood”**, scheduled to take place at the UL:B in Brussels during the period 23-24 January 2025. The Special Issue is to be published with the European Politics and Society (EPS) Journal.



RED-SPINEL Working Papers Series/Policy Briefs/Reports

Ongoing series of **Open Access publications** covering initial findings of research accessible via the project's website at <https://redspinel.iee-ulb.eu/>



RED-SPINEL Podcast



As part of RED-SPINEL's communication efforts, a [podcast series](#) covers the challenges liberal democracy is facing in the European Union. Season One of the series is completed, and the podcast episodes for Season Two will commence during the first half of 2025. To date, the following episodes are on the RED-SPINEL website:

- [Is liberal democracy in danger? A new EU research project looks for answers!](#)
- [Making sense of EU economic governance in a context of dissensus](#)
- [Making sense of dissensus over liberal democracy: Conceptualization in research](#)
- [Making sense of conditionality, EU governance, and dissensus](#)
- [Making sense of European storytelling in times of dissensus and disinformation](#)
- [Making sense of collective research on dissensus and democracies in the run-up to the European elections](#)
- [Making sense of the EU's supranational instruments](#)
- [Making sense of the Threats weighing on Academic Freedom in Hungary Today](#)

The RED-SPINEL Podcast series was awarded the [2023 ULB Scientific Dissemination Prize](#).

RED-SPINEL Blog

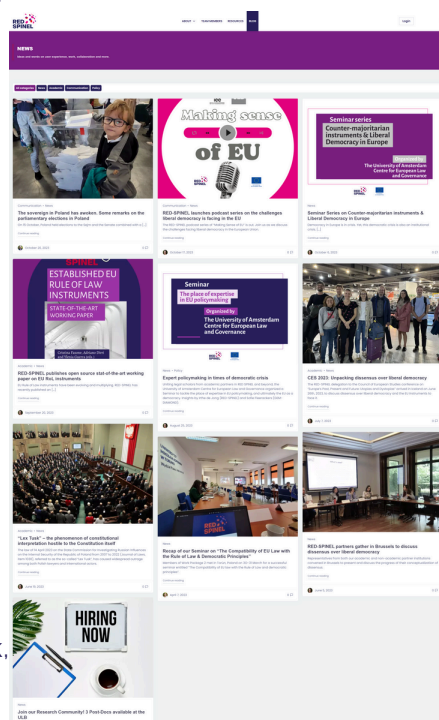
The Blog provides updates on the implementation of the project, activities of the partners, and any relevant news related to RED-SPINEL.

RED-SPINEL on Social Media

RED-SPINEL is active on social media via its' own X (Twitter) account. The project's handle is [@redspinel_EU](#)



The project also disseminates via the IEE-ULB webpage, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn accounts.



All Resources can be readily found on the RED-SPINEL website

<https://redspinel.iee-ulb.eu/>



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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