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## **COVID-19 Coronavirus: Daems (Council of Europe); “no reason to suspend democracy”. The case of Hungary**

There are very clear “red lines” in the European Convention on Human Rights and its case-law, which is why “some rights - such as the right to life and the prohibition of torture and slavery - cannot be suspended in any circumstances, and the fundamental guarantees of the rule of law must be upheld, whatever the situation”. The Council of Europe strongly reaffirms that “exceptional times call for exceptional measures”, but the declaration of the “state of emergency” must be “proportional to the threat, strictly time-limited, and in any case subject to regular scrutiny”. It goes without saying that “the fundamental building blocks of democracy - parliament, the judiciary and the media - must continue to perform their functions as effectively as possible”. Rik Daems, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, said without hesitation today: “as we slowly begin to see an end to the paralysis, my greatest fear is that these unprecedented measures may become the new norm and continue even after the crisis is over”. And he mentioned Hungary (“it took advantage of the situation and introduced measures which, in my opinion, are grossly disproportionate”) and “other countries which took measures that might hinder the work of journalists”. Fear and insecurity, and a need for “assertive leadership” and even despotism, on the one hand, and self-reliance and pursuit of one’s own interests, on the other, are looming in times of crisis like this. And the EU’s “disunity” is also a “reason for concern”, Mr Daems said.

Valentina Bombelli