

Security or Rights Does it Have to Be an Either-or Question?

13 Jan 2016 | 6.30pm
Residence Palace, Rue de la Loi 155, Brussels

(followed by a cocktail reception)

Event hashtag: **#SecurityOrRights**

AGENDA

Welcome address by

Assya Kavrakova, Executive Director of the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)

[Video Broadcast – ‘The Voices of the Street’ by Offenes Mikro]

Panel discussion with

Timothy Kirkhope, MEP, Rapporteur for the PNR Directive

Jarosław Lotarski, Police Co-operation Unit, DG Migration and Home Affairs

Joe McNamee, Executive Director of European Digital Rights (EDRi)

Camino Mortera, Research Fellow, Centre for European Reform (CER)

Moderator: **Niklaus Nuspliger**, Brussels Correspondent, Swiss Journal NZZ

Closing remarks by

Petros Fassoulas, Secretary General of the European Movement International (EMI)

Background:

Against the background of the recent terrorist attacks in Europe, the security-rights dilemma is now more heated than ever. The European project, long praised for its four fundamental freedoms, is evolving towards an increasingly protective system where borders, fences and security checks are being reintroduced across the EU on security grounds.

The **EU Passenger Name Record Directive** (PNR), which will be subject to final approval by the European Parliament Plenary in 2016, will oblige airlines to hand EU countries their passengers' data in order to help the authorities fight terrorism and serious crime. This will have an impact on citizens' rights to privacy and data protection, and potentially also on free movement in the EU.

In addition, the Commission's recent proposal for a **review of the Schengen Borders Code** to include systematic checks of incoming and outgoing EU citizens at the external borders against relevant databases and to reinforce the verification of biometric identifiers will have strong implications for free movement and privacy rights under EU Law, as will the newly adopted package of measures to step up the fight against terrorism and the illegal trafficking of firearms and explosives.

While President Juncker has claimed that such security measures are 'the costs of living in a riskier world' and that we cannot avoid them, the extent to which they are proportionate to the safety goals being pursued by European leaders is unclear, and their implications for the rights of EU citizens have not been sufficiently measured.

In this debate, the panelists will address these questions and discuss the extent to which rights and freedoms should be sacrificed for the sake of security, and whether a Europe with fewer rights and freedoms could put the whole European project at risk.