RECONNECT: Reconciling Europe with its Citizens through Democracy and the Rule of Law

On 1 May 2018, the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies (KU Leuven) and 17 partner institutions launched RECONNECT, a four-year Horizon2020 multidisciplinary research project on 'Reconciling Europe with its Citizens through Democracy and the Rule of Law'. With a focus on strengthening the EU's legitimacy through democracy and the rule of law, RECONNECT seeks to build a new narrative for Europe, enabling the EU to become more attuned to the expectations of its citizens.

RECONNECT's goals are more timely than ever. The EU is facing unprecedented challenges, with several recent crises revealing a disconnect between the concerns and expectations of European citizens and EU governance and policies. Distrust towards institutions has created a deepening divide between the Union and its citizens. Addressing this divide calls for a fundamental rethinking of the current democratic architecture of the EU and for a deeper commitment to the rule of law.

On **5 July 2018**, RECONNECT will convene its academic partners with policy makers, civil society leaders and scholars at a **Kick-off Conference in Brussels**. The high-level event will feature keynote addresses by **Dr. Adam Bodnar, Ombudsman of the Republic of Poland** and **H.E. Didier Reynders, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belgium**, as well as key messages from **Emily O'Reilly, European Ombudsman**, and **Sophie in 't Veld, MEP**.

Conference attendees will participate in discussions during two policy roundtables with leading experts on the rule of law and democracy in the EU. Panelists include Julie Smith, Baroness of Newnham (Cambridge University; House of Lords); Alberto Alemanno (HEC Paris; Co-founder of 'The Good Lobby'); Richard Youngs (Carnegie Europe); Vivien Schmidt (Boston University); Carlos Closa Montero (Institute of Public Goods and Policies; Spanish National Research Council); Laurent Pech (Middlesex University London); Emmanuel Crabit (DG Justice and Consumers); Lotte Leicht (Human Rights Watch); Tamas Lukacsi (European Parliament); Petra Bárd (Central European University); Dimitry Kochenov (University of Groningen).

The event will be held at the Royal Flemish Academy for Science and the Arts from 12:30 to 19:00, and includes lunch and a closing reception. **Those interested in attending should complete the complimentary registration on RECONNECT's website (www.reconnect-europe.eu) by 2 July.**

RECONNECT is led by the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies at KU Leuven (https://ghum.kuleuven.be/ggs). It is joined by 17 academic partners from 14 countries: Åbo Akademi University (Turku), Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law (London), Lille Catholic University, Central European University (Budapest), Charles University (Prague), Institute of Public Goods and Policies (Spanish National Research Council, Madrid), LUISS Guido Carli (Rome), Middlesex University London, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Trondheim), University of Cambridge, University of Gdańsk, University of Groningen, University of Helsinki, Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, University of Münster, University of Vienna and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

For further information visit www.reconnect-europe.eu

Should you have any further questions, please contact Prof. Dr. Jan Wouters, Jean Monnet Chair at KU Leuven and Coordinator of RECONNECT, at jan.wouters@ggs.kuleuven.be.