

# Invitation to a Webinar

## “Federalism and the Corona-Crisis – International Experiences”

*Moderated by: Christoph Nguyen, Chair of German Politics at the Freie Universität Berlin*

### **WEDNESDAY MAY 27<sup>th</sup> AT:**

Canada 10:00 – 11:30 AM (EST)

Germany 16:00 – 17:30 (CET)

India 7:30 – 9:00 PM (IST)

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## FEATURING

### **Introduction**

Rupak Chattopadhyay, President and CEO, Forum of Federations

### **Canada**

Greg Marchildon, Professor at the Institute of Health, Policy and Evaluation at the University of Toronto and former Secretary to the Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada

Enid Slack, Director and Professor, Institute of Municipal Finance and Governance at the University of Toronto

### **India**

Sanjeev Gupta, Secretary Interstate Council Secretariat, Government of India

Rekha Saxena, Professor, Delhi University Department of Political Science

### **Germany**

Sabine Kopp, Chair of German Politics at Free University of Berlin

Georg Milbradt, Vice-Chairman Advisory Committee of the German Stability Council, former Prime Minister of the state of Saxony, Chairman of the Forum of Federations

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Governments around the world are currently grappling with one of the greatest social and economic challenges to be faced by humanity in a century: Coronavirus. Since the first cases were identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, it has spread around the globe. In response, unprecedented measures have been introduced by governments to protect people and health systems, with significant restrictions imposed on travel, economic activity, and personal social contact.

As people adjust to the “new normal” of life under the pandemic, governments around the world are assessing the impact of their actions, and planning the next phases of their response. In federal countries, multiple levels of government are involved in the efforts to control the spread of COVID-19. As a threat which cuts across a wide range of areas of government activity - from health care to border control, transportation and essential infrastructure, and trade and business to name just a few - the pandemic presents a challenge to federal systems where responsibility for these areas is found at different levels of government.

Of course, the ways in which federal countries respond to this kind of crisis depends on the structure of their systems. Health care is often the responsibility of subnational government, but even in these countries, the scale of the pandemic and the need for a holistic response means that national and local level governments are also involved in developing and implementing measures to control the spread. A health emergency as severe as the Coronavirus pandemic raises key questions about the functioning of federal systems during times of crisis:

- What are the roles and responsibilities of the various orders of government in response to public health issues?
- Does the current crisis affect roles and responsibilities? In some cases, the effect of a major crisis appears to be centralizing. (See the response and aftermath to the 2008-09 financial and economic crisis)
- Is the current arrangement effective?
- How does the current crisis affect vertical checks and balances?
- Does the current distribution of roles reflect anything governments have learned or should have learned from previous public health crises?
- What preliminary lessons could be drawn about what went well, what could have been done better?
- What further research could be conducted?