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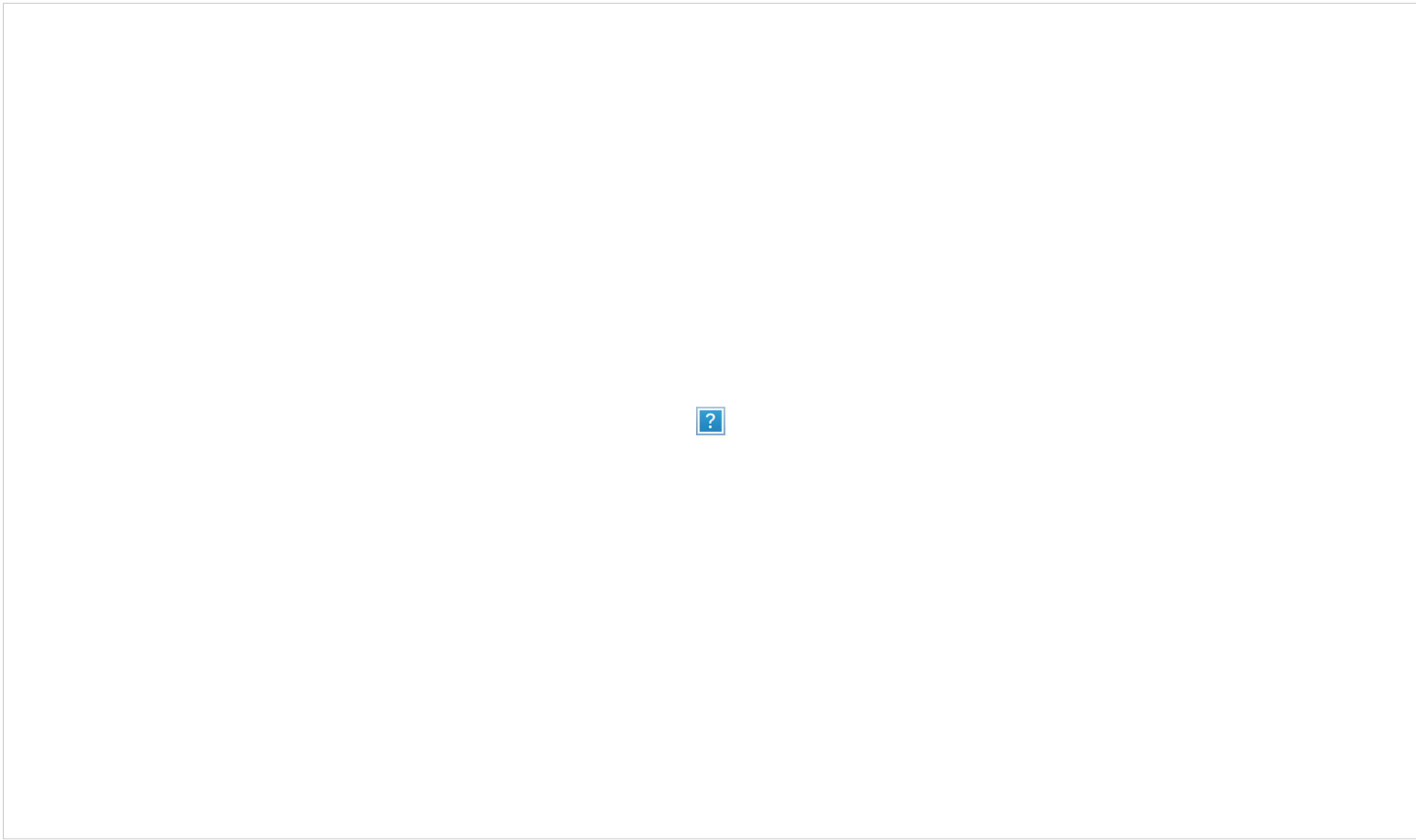
A federation is better at fighting pandemics than a treaty

🕒 18 April 2021 - 💬 0 Comments

Federal Alliance of European Federalists |

A federation allows for situational measures

The WHO Vaccination Dashboard indicates that by 1 April 2021, 46.8% of the population of the 50 states of the federal United States of America have already received one or more vaccinations, compared to 17.0% of the population of the 27 states within the intergovernmental European Union¹. Despite former President Donald Trump's dysfunctional approach to testing and vaccination on the one hand, and despite the attempts of EU and national political leaders to jointly design a strong testing and vaccination strategy on the other, it appears that America's federal system is such that it wins by a large margin over the European Union's treaty-based operating system². This article is about the weakness of treaty-based cooperation between states versus the strength of a federal state.



1. The clash between general measures versus situational necessity

The pandemic is worldwide. It is a common problem of the whole world. This supports the logic of tackling it with top-down global measures. However, the effects of the pandemic – infection, illness, and death – occur at the grassroots level of society. In individual people in their own small circle: the family, the school, the care home, the church, the doctor's surgery, the market, the choir and sports club, the restaurant and terrace, the event, the cinema, the theatre, the shop, the bus, the train, the plane, the boat. That means a great diversity of situations at the basis of society. This supports the logic of organising the fight with situational measures from the bottom up. Implementing authorities such as education, care, police, municipal authorities, but also companies can meet safety conditions at the base of society with situational measures. Persisting with only taking general measures causes misunderstanding and unwillingness to comply with them.

In addition to taking general measures top-down – with their inherent infringement of freedoms – and situational measures bottom-up – with their inherent alleviation of those unfreedoms – one can switch between the general and situational measures with procedural provisions to significantly increase security.

However, the lack of coordination between the two logics – in a situation of lack of sufficient (and uncertain effects of) testing and vaccination – led to serious and sometimes unmanageable problems in hospitals, tensions between politics and science, conflicts between governments, tensions between citizens and governments, hasty development of testing materials and vaccines without respecting the usual development timelines, chaotic production, procurement, distribution and administration of vaccines. Leading to unequal, unfair conditions for peoples and individual citizens. The effect of this – by April 2021 – was a growing lack of understanding about the correctness of measures and an unwillingness to follow them up. An atmosphere of 'own country first and every citizen for himself' emerged.

Here is a very small selection of issues that fostered misunderstanding and unwillingness. [...]

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