

6/04/2020

## Deeply saddened by the recent loss of Sir John Laws

The European Public Law Organization (EPLO) with deep sorrow announces the loss of its dear Colleague, Friend, brilliant High-Court Judge, Academic and long-standing Member of the European Group of Public Law, **Sir John Laws**.

Sir John Laws has died after contracting coronavirus, it has been reported.

Laws has been a great friend and supporter of the EPLO and has contributed and honored us with his presence and active participation in a great number of EPLO activities with the most recent the first "European legal dialogues" in Wolfson College, at which he presided.

He was one of the UK's leading authorities in public law and democracy, asserting the primacy of the constitution over parliament in the balance of power in Britain. He was educated at Durham Chorister School, and as a King's Scholar at Durham School. He studied at Exeter College, Oxford as a Senior Open Classical Scholar, receiving a First Class BA in 1967, and an MA in 1976. He became an Honorary Fellow of the College in 2000.

He was appointed a High Court Judge in 1992, serving in the Queen's Bench Division, and was knighted at this time. He served until 1998, and in 1999 was appointed to the Court of Appeal as a Lord Justice of Appeal and appointed to the Privy Council.

Sir John Laws is noted for his extrajudicial writings in the journal, Public Law. His most notable contribution, "Law and Democracy", asserts that the constitution would be undemocratic if it gave all the power under it to the elected government. Therefore, it is the constitution, and not Parliament, that should be sovereign in the British constitution. He posits that the constitution must create a "higher-order law" in which human rights and constitutional fundamentals in a democracy can be protected by the courts against the abuses of government.

The EPLO community deeply grieves his loss as he has always been a great support to the EPLO mandate and endeavors. Knowing the great admiration he had to Greece and its History, the EPLO will offer his name to the open air amphitheater of the EPLO in Sounion.

He will always be remembered.

### Attached:

- A short memoir for John Laws can be found here attached by Sir Stephen Sedley.
- A Times' Obituary to Sir John Laws