

INVITATION**BÖLL LUNCH DEBATE****Beyond the 2018 Presidential Election: Is Russia Preparing for Life after Putin?**

On 18 March, the Russians will vote for a new president, and there is no doubt about Putin's re-election. After the elimination of the only real oppositional candidate Alexei Navalny, none of the (often controversial) oppositional candidates are strong enough to compete, neither will the opposition be able to convince enough people to boycott the election in order to, at least, discredit Putin's victory. In the military half of his recent state of the nation address, Putin praised (and demonstrated) new Russian weaponry, including nuclear-powered cruise missiles, trying to show to his own people that he still is the strongman Russia needs in difficult times and at the same time pointing out to the West, especially the US, that Russia will not be curbed in its foreign policy ambitions and wants to be taken seriously. But whilst Putin is settling in for another six years, the question emerges what will happen in 2024? By then Putin will be 72 years old. And even if age shouldn't bring Putin to step down; the Russian constitution does not permit the president to serve more than two consecutive terms. Putin already circumvented this obstacle once, when he traded places with Medvedev in 2012, but can or will he do it again? Or will he, as is often suggested, handpick his successor? And what will happen in between and after? Can Putin deliver the change a majority of Russians long for after years of economic depression and a diminishing quality of life? Are the Russian elites concerned about their future and will there be new chances for civil society and political opposition? Will Russia's youth rise again after the clampdown in 2011-2012? In short, is Russian society preparing for life after Putin?

Date **Wednesday, 21 March 2018, 12:30 – 14:00**
(light lunch 12:00-12:30)

Location **Hotel Leopold**
Rue du Luxembourg 35,
1050 Brussels

Speakers **Nikolay Petrov**, Professor and Head of the Laboratory of Methodology of Regional Development Evaluation at the Higher School of Economics, Moscow
Tamás Meszerics, Member of the European Parliament (Greens/EFA)
Tania Marocchi, Policy Analyst and Programme Executive of FutureLab, European Policy Centre (EPC) Europe

Moderator **Johannes Voswinkel**, Director Moscow office Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

No admittance without confirmed registration. E-Mail registration only. Please send the attached reply form to: marianne.ebertowski@eu.boell.org
The Chatham House Rule applies. Working language English.