

**INVITATION****BÖLL LUNCH DEBATE****Reconnecting Europe II****The New German Government: Curse or Blessing for the European Union?**

*The grand coalition which had governed Germany for four years suffered serious losses in the parliamentary election of 13 October 2017. Now, four long months later, a new grand coalition seems to be in the making though its fate still depends on the result of an SPD membership ballot on 20 February. This is an outcome nobody really wanted, neither the voters nor either of the coalition partners. Yet, after the formation of a 'Jamaica Coalition' with Christian Democrats, Greens and Liberals failed, the only other option were new elections, something even less wanted by anyone, apart from the new, flourishing right-wing Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and possibly the regenerated liberal Party FDP who blew up the Jamaica formation. While for Germany a new edition of the grand coalition, i.e. a coalition of the losers of the 2017 election, might mean more of the same and could lead to more frustration among the voters and a growth of right-wing populism, what does it mean for a European Union which is badly in need of strong courageous leadership and a clear vision? Is the achieved coalition agreement really good news for Europe, as many opinion leaders seem to think? Will Merkel whose prestige has been seriously weakened be able and willing to support French president Emmanuel Macron in his intention to re-launch the European project? Can the 'French-German motor, a driving force behind European progress in former times, be revived? Is that what other Member States want? Or is it rather what they fear? How strong will be the federalist' influence of the designated German Minister of Foreign Affairs, former president of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, who announced a 'new dawn for Europe' and wants a 'United States of Europe'? Will France and Germany lead the European Union into a better future or will they tear it apart?*

**Date**      **Wednesday, 28 February 2018, 12:30 – 14:00**  
(light lunch 12:00-12:30)

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

**Speakers**

**Adam Balcer**, Foreign Policy Project Manager WiseEurope, Warsaw  
**Reinhard Bütkofer**, Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance  
**Judy Dempsey**, nonresident senior fellow at Carnegie Europe and editor in chief of the Strategic Europe blog  
**Anne Gellinek**, Head ZDF Studio Brussels  
**Moderator Klaus Linsenmeier**, Director Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung European Union

**No admittance without confirmed registration. E-Mail registration only. Please send the attached reply form to:** [marianne.ebertowski@eu.boell.org](mailto:marianne.ebertowski@eu.boell.org)  
**Working language English.**