

INVITATION**BÖLL LUNCH DEBATE****The Humanitarian Crisis in the Mediterranean: How to Fix the EU's Failed Approach to Irregular Migration?**

Since the beginning of 2015, more than 1,700 people lost their lives trying to reach the southern shores of Europe. The new Mediterranean boat tragedy in the weekend of 18-19 April, which left more than 700 migrants dead, finally created enough political pressure on the Council and the Commission to rethink how to cope with the growing influx of migrants using the central Mediterranean passage to reach Europe. On 21 April Commissioner Avramopoulos presented a [ten-point action plan on migration](#), which, in addition to the Agenda on Migration to be adopted later this month, is meant to lead to immediate actions to be taken in response to the ongoing crisis. Even though this action plan features several good points, it can be doubted that it is an adequate response to the complex challenges. The same can be said about the [European Council's Conclusions](#). The most controversial of the Commission's proposals is that of a systematic effort to capture and destroy smuggling vessels (as is done in the anti-piracy operation Atalanta) as it does not take into account the larger problem of failed States in Africa and the Middle East which leaves many people with no other option but to flee. Critics claim that such action will not stop migrant flow; it will only increase the price a migrant has to pay to a smuggler. Another main criticism is related to the fact that the three fold increase of the budget to run Operation Triton is not more than what Italy was allocating alone to Mare Nostrum (which had no effect on the decrease of migration). The rest of the list includes activities that are already ongoing and until now did not show a palpable impact on the unfolding crisis. The European Council's conclusions are just as disappointing. They focus on four priorities, namely to strengthen the EU's presence at sea, to fight the traffickers, to prevent illegal migration flows and to reinforce internal solidarity and responsibility. These are exactly the same priorities that were already addressed after the tragedy of Lampedusa in 2013 with the Task Force for the Mediterranean. So far Europe has not acted in unity to find a solution for what has to be considered a humanitarian crisis and rather than on the safeguard of the rights of migrants the focus has mainly been on security. How will Member States now practically commit to the action plan and conclusions? Will the European Agenda on Migration tackle new territory and what else is needed to solve the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean?

Date **Wednesday, 27 May 2015, 12:30 – 14:00**
(light lunch 12:00-12:30)

Venue **STANHOPE HOTEL**
Rue du Commerce 9,
B-1000 Brussels

Speakers **Maria Ancona**, President of Associazione Sud and Member of Rosa Bianca National Committee
Costanza Hermanin, Senior Policy Analyst, Equality and Migration; Advocacy Manager, Italy, Open Society European Policy Institute, Brussels
Stephen Ryan, Deputy Head of Unit, Asylum, DG Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

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

The meeting is held under Chatham House Rule. Conference language English – no translation.



"This project has been funded with support from the European Commission."