

INVITATION**BÖLL LUNCH DEBATE****Forty Years after the Fall of the Dictatorships: Why Greece and Portugal Matter to the European Union**

When talking about Greece and Portugal these days, the probability is high that the conversation will revolve around the euro crisis with Greece often depicted as the source of all evil. What is frequently overlooked by fellow-Europeans is the long and difficult way these countries had to travel from dictatorships and backward economies towards democracy and industrial development. It is forty years ago now that, on 25 April 1974, the Carnation Revolution in Portugal made an end to a 48-year long dictatorship, the 'Estado Novo'. And it is also 40 years ago that, on 24 July, the Greek military regime that had ruled the country since the military coup of 21 April 1967 ended. This should be reason for celebration, but the mood in both countries is rather gloomy, if not angry. What was once won seems to be threatened. Anger and disappointment are directed against the political establishment, but also often enough against the European Union and its policy of austerity. When Greece joined the European Community in 1981, followed by Portugal (and Spain) in 1986, their accession was not embraced wholeheartedly. Especially French president François Mitterand, who had opposed it initially, was afraid that the countries were not ready for membership and, also, that their accession would reduce the community to a free trade area. But then, for a while, everything seemed to go well on all sides and both countries seemed to prosper. Until the global financial crisis struck Greece in 2009, Portugal a year later and we started speaking of the 'eurozone crisis'. The year 2014 provides a good opportunity to look back on the history of Greece and Portugal from a European perspective and to look forward to both countries' future. Both countries matter to the European Union because with their (and Spain's) accession came an end to right wing dictatorships in Europe, turning the European Community/Union into the 'flagship of democracy', which inspired people in central and eastern Europe to finally shake off their dictatorships.

Date **Wednesday, 9 April 2014, 13.00 – 14.30**
(sandwich lunch 12.30-13.00)

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

Speakers **Ricardo Cabral**, Vice-President (Vice Reitor) and
Assistant Professor in Economics, University of Madeira, Portugal
Iannis Konstantinidis, Assistant Professor in Politics at the Department of
International and European Studies, University of Macedonia, Greece

Moderator **Marianne Ebertowski**, Director European Policy Programme
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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.



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