

INVITATION**BÖLL LUNCH DEBATE****European Elections 2014: the Populist Challenge**

Populist forces on the right and the left are on the rise in almost all Member States of the European Union. It is feared that populist parties could make significant gains at the 2014 European elections, with some polls suggesting they could win up to 25% or even 30% of seats in the next European Parliament. According to a Gallup Poll in the autumn of 2013 only 30% percent of EU citizens have a positive view of the EU compared to 70% 20 years ago. This is a historical low. The ongoing economic and financial crisis and the measures taken to solve it have contributed a great deal to the loss of confidence in the European project. But there are other root causes for the rise of populists throughout the EU. It needs to be asked whether the mainstream and pro-European parties did enough to explain the European project to the citizens and whether they did enough to defend and improve it. Is it still possible to debunk the populist myths and mend the anti-European sentiments before the elections and how? If populist forces will, indeed, take 25-30% and right wing populist parties are able to generate a serious parliamentary caucus, what would be the consequences for European political decision making in the years to come? On the other hand, if populist forces can be contained, the risk is great that the other political parties return to 'business as usual'. Is the European political class able and willing to question itself and its previous approach to Europe?

Date **Wednesday, 19 March 2014, 13.00 – 14.30**
(sandwich lunch 12.30-13.00)

Venue **SOFITEL BRUSSELS EUROPE**
Place Jourdan, 1
1040 BRUSSELS

Speakers **Claudia Chwalisz**, Policy Researcher Policy Network, London
Jan Philipp Albrecht, Member of European Parliament
(Greens/EFA)
Péter Krekó, Director of the Political Capital Institute, Budapest

Moderator **Bastian Hermisson**, 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.



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