

INVITATION**BÖLL LUNCH DEBATE****Reconnecting Europe IV****The Scottish Parliament Election and the Brexit Referendum: Are the UK and the EU Heading Towards Disintegration?**

When in 1975 the United Kingdom held a referendum on whether the UK should remain in the EEC, membership was supported by all major political parties, though it split the Labour Party whose membership had voted 2:1 in favour of a withdrawal. The 'yes' vote was convincing: 67.2% against 32.8% with a turnout of 64.5%. 40 years later, the situation is different. With changing small majorities for both camps – depending on time and opinion poll – and a Tory party split down the middle, the outcome is, with just 7 weeks to go to 23 June, hard to predict. Much is at stake, for the UK and for the European Union. But first, on 5 May, there will be the Scottish Parliament election. In September 2014 the referendum on Scotland's independence led to a surprisingly clear rejection (55.3% against, 44.7% for with a turnout of 84.6%), however, as the majority of the Scottish, including the leading Scottish National Party (SNP), back EU membership, what will happen, when the majority in the UK wants to leave the EU, whereas the Scottish wish to remain? How will this outlook influence the upcoming Scottish parliamentary election and, whatever the results will be, how will they feed back into the Brexit campaign? But Scotland is not the only part of the UK which 'Leave' proponents should be worried about. What would a Brexit do to Anglo-Irish relations? Nobody can possibly have forgotten how many years and human lives it took to establish peace in Northern Ireland? A 'Leave' vote majority could blow the UK to smithereens and at the same time cause a cascade effect in the EU: with Eurosceptic forces already in power or at the threshold of taking over, Europe seems to be backsliding into its dark past. Jean Monnet famously said that 'Europe will be forged in crises', but what if there are too many crises and too few European leaders with the will and strength to overcome them?

Date **Wednesday, 25 May 2016, 12.30 – 14.00**
(light sandwich lunch 12.00-12.30)

Venue Hotel Leopold
Rue du Luxembourg 35
1050 Brussels

Speakers **Paul Adamson**, founder and editor of E!Sharp online
Nicola McEwen, Professor of Territorial Politics; Associate Director,
Centre on Constitutional Change, University of Edinburgh
Molly Scott Cato, Member of European Parliament (The Greens-EFA)
Stefani Weiss, Director Programme Europe's Future, Bertelsmann
Stiftung, 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
The meeting is held under Chatham House Rule. Conference language English – no translation.



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