

INVITATION**BÖLL LUNCH DEBATE****What is Really Different this Time? The European Elections 2014 – Retrospection and Perspective**

From 22 to 25 May over 400 Million European citizens will have the possibility to vote for a new European Parliament. The interest in taking part in the European elections was --with a turnout of 43% in 2009-- dramatically low in the recent past and --with the wide-spread discontent about the European Union and its policies-- seemed to be decreasing rather than improving. However, the “This time it’s different” slogan of the official election campaign could turn out right, though not necessarily the way it was meant. What is different this time is not so much that voters, indirectly, can vote for the Commission President, but that they will --whether they vote or not-- decide on the future of the European project. An even lower turnout than four years ago would not only undermine the legitimacy of the European Parliament, but the credibility of the European Institutions and their policies in general. An increase of the Eurosceptic, nationalist and populist forces in the European Parliament is another factor that could undermine the future of the European project as they could use their position to sabotage it from the inside. What is different this time is that voters more than ever have a very direct responsibility for the future of the European Union. The problem is that most of them do not seem to be aware of it and that in their election campaign most political parties have failed to spell out what really is at stake. What will the European political landscape will look like after the election night and what are the perspectives for the European project?

Date **Wednesday, 4 June 2014, 13.00 – 14.30**
(sandwich lunch 12.30-13.00)

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

Speakers **Paul Adamson**, Founder and editor, E!Sharp; Senior European
Policy Advisor, Covington & Burling
Mana Livardjani, Director Union of European Federalists
Gregor Peter Schmitz, European Correspondent *Der Spiegel*

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.