

**INVITATION****BÖLL LUNCH DEBATE****The Conflict in Syria and the Responsibility of the European Union**

*The sudden and unexpected rise and military success of ISIS in Iraq and Syria over the summer has led to a dramatic shift on the ground in the Middle East, in Western public opinion and subsequently in the involvement of the international community. A coalition of Arab and Western countries, led by the USA, has started a military campaign against ISIS in Iraq and since September in Syria. The coalition is supported by most EU Member States. But how does this affect the Syrian population? Syrians have been suffering violence and war crimes since the beginning of the popular uprising more than three years ago. With a death toll of around 250.000, over 3 million refugees and an even higher number of IDP's and large parts of the country in ruins, the Syrian civil war is the most violent and destructive conflict at the moment. The rise of ISIS is not so much the cause of the current crisis in Syria, but the result of the failure of the international community to find a solution to the conflict and to protect civilians in Syria. Now the response to the rise of ISIS is mainly a military one and lacks a clear political objective. However, any meaningful strategy against ISIS in Syria (as in Iraq) needs to address the root causes of the conflict and keep the protection of civilians against gross human rights violations and war crimes as its primary objective. What are the options in this labyrinth of violence? Does the new international attention for Syria bear a potential for a successful solution of the conflict? What is the strategy of the European Union and the US behind their war against ISIS? How can the EU and the international community play a more constructive role in Syria and Iraq?*

- Date** **Tuesday, 4 November 2014, 13:00 – 14:30**  
(sandwich lunch 12.30-13.00)
- Venue** The location will be communicated after registration.
- Speakers** **Haid Haid**, programme manager Middle East Office Beirut, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung  
**Marcell Shehwaro**, Syrian blogger  
**Pierre-Christophe Chatzisavvas**, Desk officer Syria, EEAS
- Moderators** **Jan Jaap van Oosterzee**, Senior advisor public affairs Middle East, PAX  
**Dr Bente Scheller**, Director Middle East Office Beirut, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

**Conference language English – no translation. The meeting is held under Chatham House Rule. No admittance without confirmed registration. E-Mail registration only. Please send the attached reply form to: [marianne.ebertowski@eu.boell.org](mailto:marianne.ebertowski@eu.boell.org)**