

INVITATION

BÖLL LUNCH DEBATE

The Second World War in European Memory and its Significance for European Identity

75 years ago, on 1 September 1939, German troops invaded Poland without a declaration of war, on the pretext that the Poles had conducted a series of sabotage acts against German targets. Two days later Britain and France declared war on Germany. The Second World War, in which 70 Million people would lose their lives, had started. When it ended five years later, Europe lay in ruins for the second time within one generation. Germany was destroyed and morally bankrupt; Europe was divided; and within a few years the Cold War started. In the west, a generation of European statesmen such as Robert Schuman, Alcide De Gasperi and Jean Monnet developed the revolutionary idea of a community of states (and values) establishing a political system based on sharing sovereignty. This historically unprecedented system, which safely integrated (West) Germany, succeeded in keeping the peace on its territory and has brought numerous benefits to Europeans in the west and – after the collapse of communism – also in the east of Europe. But only ten years after this 'unification of Europe', the raison d'être of the EU is under attack by the rise of Euroscepticism, populism and nationalism. As the (individual) memories of WWII, of the two totalitarian regimes, fascism and communism, and of the exigencies of the Cold War are fading, the major driving force behind the European project is weakening. Despite (or maybe rather because) of its unique achievements, the very essence of a European Union is being undermined by populist, revisionist and nationalist forces, including the dismissal of notions such as a 'European identity', and a 'collective European memory'. Yet the commonality of experience, past and present, is at the very core of the European project. How can we restore European memory and can it still be a driving force behind the European Union?

Date **Wednesday, 24 September 2014, 13.00 – 14.30**
(sandwich lunch 12.30-13.00)

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

Speakers **Edouard Gaudot**, historian and political scientist, adviser for the Green group in the European Parliament.
Dr Susanne Popp, professor didactics of history, Augsburg University
Dr Karolina Wigura, head Political Section of the Polish political and cultural weekly *Kultura Liberalna*

Moderator **Dr Ilana Bet-El**, historian, writer and political analyst

**No admittance without confirmed registration. E-Mail registration only. Please send the attached reply form to: marianne.ebertowski@eu.boell.org
Conference language English – no translation.**



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