Programme

sef: Policy Lunch
The UN at 75:
Europe’s vision for the world organisation

03 March 2020, 12.00-13.45 hrs

Brussels
Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU
Rue Montoyer 47, Brussels

Conference language: English

Cooperating partner

FOGGS
Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability

Supported by

Minister for Federal, European and International Affairs
of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

#sefLunch
BACKGROUND

In 2020, the United Nations is celebrating its 75th anniversary. At a time when many of its achievements feel like things of the distant past, and multilateralism is retreating in the face of resurgent nationalism, Europe’s continued support for the UN seems to be more crucial than ever. Note for example the fact that collectively the EU provides some 35% of the funding for the UN system, while others are reducing or withholding their contributions.

At the same time, the European Union finds itself in a state of fragmentation; it often speaks with different voices and its ability to act decisively is questioned in practice. On paper, the EU remains a staunch supporter of a multilateral order with the UN at its core. In a recent statement, the representative of the EU at the UN confirmed that: “the EU is, and will continue to be, a guardian of multilateralism”. But the EU also recognizes that new challenges require new solutions, and that the multilateral system needs reform.

To mark its 75th anniversary, the UN is launching “the biggest-ever global conversation on the role of global cooperation in building the future we want”. With this Policy Lunch, we would like to join the conversation from Brussels, the “capital” of the EU, and address the following questions:

- How would a European vision for a multilateral system of the future look like? What would be the key differences to the multilateral system of the past decades? And what would the UN’s role be in such a vision?

- What are the actual interests of the EU in the UN context, in terms of peace and security, and development and human rights? What do European citizens, not only EU institutions and governments, expect from the UN?

- How is the EU’s role in the multilateral system perceived by other actors and what is expected from the EU by the UN itself?

- What can the EU do, in practice, to support a revival of multilateralism? How can it contribute to making the UN fit for purpose in the next decades? How far is its own ability/credibility to act hindered by its inner fragmentation?
12.00 HRS  REGISTRATION AND LIGHT LUNCH

12.30 HRS  WELCOME

Hans H. Stein  
Director  
Representation of the State of  
North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU, Brussels

Dr Gerd Harms  
Deputy Chairperson of the Executive Committee  
Development and Peace Foundation (sef.), Bonn

12.40 HRS  ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Anna-Luise Chané  
Research Fellow at the  
Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, KU Leuven

Hilde F. Johnson  
Former Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for UNMISS South Sudan  
Senior Advisor, European Institute of Peace, Brussels

Dr Georgios Kostakos  
Executive Director of the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS), Brussels

Ellis Mathews (tbc)  
Head of Division for Multilateral Relations  
European External Action Service (EEAS), Brussels

Chair  
Dr Silke Weinlich  
Senior Researcher  
DIE - German Development Institute, Bonn

Followed by discussion with the audience

13.45 HRS  END OF EVENT