

## WHAT ROLE FOR FRANCO–GERMAN COOPERATION IN A CHANGING EU ?

Wednesday 8 May 2019, at 10:00–12:00

Auditorium of the Annex Building of the Parliament, Arkadiankatu 3, Helsinki

Cooperation between France and Germany is often seen as one of the pillars of European integration. Recent years of several severe European crises, as well as Brexit, have further underlined the importance of this relationship. Compromises between Paris and Berlin have been important in tackling the crises and reforming the EU. High hopes (and some fears) about the strengthening of this relationship after the French presidential and German federal elections in 2017 have not, however, fully materialized, partly due to domestic political developments in Germany and France. How strong is the current Franco–German relationship? What kind of compromises might emerge in light of the EU reforms?

### Speakers:



**Sibylle Sorg**, Ambassador, Director for Relations with European Union Member States, Cross-Border and Regional Cooperation, Federal Foreign Office of Germany

Sibylle Sorg is Ambassador, and Director for Relations with European Union Member States, Cross-Border and Regional Cooperation at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany. Previously, she has been Deputy Chief of Staff and Deputy Head of Minister's Office for Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (2014–2017), Head of Political Department at the German Embassy in London (2011–2014), and Deputy Head of Middle East Division at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin (2007–2011). She has also served as Head of Cultural Department at the German Embassy in Tel Aviv (2004–2007), as Deputy Consul General at the German Consulate General in Sydney (2001–2004), and as Spokesperson for Minister Joschka Fischer on EU and Western Europe (1999–2000). Ms Sorg holds an M.A. degree in History, Political Sciences and Journalism from Justus-Liebig-University Giessen.



**Eric Maurice**, Manager of the Brussels Office, Robert Schuman Foundation

Eric Maurice joined the Robert Schuman Foundation, a French think-tank on EU affairs, in 2018 after a career in journalism. He was editor in chief of the Brussels-based website EUobserver from 2015 to 2018. He was previously editor in chief of the multilingual pan-European news website Presseurop, from 2009 to 2014. He started his career at the French weekly magazine *Courrier international*, first at the France and North America desk, then as head of the Western Europe desk. He holds a master of Contemporary History of International Relations from the Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne University and graduated from the Paris Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme. He is also an alumni from the Executive Course in European Studies of France's Ecole Nationale d'Administration. He has published two studies for the Schuman Foundation: "*Brexit, lessons in negotiations for the European Union*" and "*Review of the 8th Legislature of the European Parliament*".

### Chair:



**Teija Tiilikainen**, Director, Finnish Institute of International Affairs

Teija Tiilikainen is the Director of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) since 2010. She is also Editor-in-Chief of *Ulkopolitiikka* – the Finnish Journal of Foreign Affairs. Dr Tiilikainen is a part-time professor at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy and Vice-Chair of the Board of the University of Helsinki. Previously, Dr Tiilikainen was the Director of the Network of European Studies at the University of Helsinki (2003–2009). She has also served as Secretary of State at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland from 2007 to 2008. Dr Tiilikainen was the Special Representative of the Prime Minister of Finland in the Convention on the Future of Europe in 2003.