

Speaker and facilitator bios (in order of the programme)

Update 23 April 2025



Michael Komárek

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU)

Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences CZU Prague, Head of the Department of Geoenvironmental Sciences, Head of the profile team Environmental and Isotope Geochemistry Group. Excellent Editorial Board Member, Critical Reviews in Environmental Science and Technology. 121 IF publications. Among the 2% of the most cited scientists in the world, according to the Stanford University ranking.



Diego Canga

European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

Diego CANGA FANO is currently acting Deputy Director-General, Directorates F, H and I (Outreach, research and geographical indications / Assurance & Audit / Legal, procedural & inter-institutional affairs) in DG AGRI. He joined the EU in 1991 and DG AGRI in 2014. He has been following agricultural R&I since a couple of years. He is a Spanish national and has a Law Degree from the Universities of Oviedo and Université Libre de Bruxelles.



Ana Patricia Lopez Blanco

European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, F.2 Research and innovation

Ana Patricia Lopez is Research programme officer 'Research & Innovation' in DG AGRI, European Commission, where she is responsible for the coordination of Research and Innovation programming under EU research programmes and policy officer for agriculture and food projects. Previously, she was Senior Manager at FoodDrinkEurope, the European Federation of Food and Drink producers, where she was in charge with Circular Economy and Environmental dossiers. She studied Environmental Sciences and European policies in Alcala de Henares, Lyon and Brussels.





Joanna Kiszko
Policy officer

Policy officer in DG AGRI Unit D.1, dealing with EIP-AGRI and AKIS. Previously working with EU CAP Network Evaluation Helpdesk, dealing with evaluation and studies of the CAP.



Francesco Iadecola
European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, F.2 Research and innovation

As a Research Programme Officer at the European Commission, Francesco contributes to DG AGRI's Research and Innovation strategy on digital and data technologies for agriculture and rural areas and to the programming of Horizon Europe funding. Francesco has extensive work experience developed through EU-funded projects and studies implemented in EU and non-EU countries, during which he collaborated with key stakeholders providing evidence-based solutions for policy-makers and society. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and a Master's degree in Sustainable Rural Development from the University of Perugia (IT).



Paola Alejandra Eulalio
European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, F.2 Research and innovation

Paola Eulalio works at the European Commission, DG AGRI, F2 (Research & Innovation), managing the R&I portfolio on protein crops under Horizon Europe's Cluster 6. She is also part of the Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe', where she plays a key role contributing to the living labs and lighthouses building block and flagship of the Mission. Before joining the Commission in 2021, she spent 15 years in EU Regulatory Affairs for agrochemicals and plant biotech in three multinational firms. Paola studied agronomy and holds two master's degrees in water resources engineering and environmental sciences.



Susana Gaona Saez
European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, F.2 Research and innovation

Research programme officer at DG AGRI of the European Commission, responsible for the R&I portfolio on agroecology and organic farming.





Fanny Le Gloux

European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, F.2 Research and innovation

Fanny Le Gloux is an agroeconomist and Research Programme Officer at DG AGRI. She contributes to the programming of Horizon Europe Cluster 6 in the area of economic modelling and socio-economic performance of the agricultural sector to support evidence-based policies.



Benjamin Van Doorslaer

European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, F.2 Research and innovation

Benjamin Van Doorslaer has approximately 25 years of experience in various facets of the agricultural sector. Over the past 15 years, he has served the European Commission, focusing initially on agro-economic modeling and research at the Joint Research Centre (JRC). For 10 years, Benjamin has contributed his expertise at DG AGRI, recently stepping into the role of Research Programme Officer. His extensive background combines practical sector knowledge with deep institutional insight, making him a valuable asset to European agricultural policy and research initiatives.



Jelena Vidovic

European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, F.2 Research and innovation

Jelena Vidovic is Research Programme Officer at the European Commission, DG AGRI, working on the Horizon Europe Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe'. Before joining DG AGRI, she dealt with international cooperation in research and innovation at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre.

Jelena Vidovic received her PhD in the field of Geosciences from the University of Zagreb (Croatia), specializing in environmental impact assessments in marine environments, while at the University of Vienna (Austria) she studied historical ecology of the Northern Adriatic Sea. Jelena Vidovic also has an extensive experience in H2020 project management and stakeholder engagement, establishing an international network of experts - World Forum on Raw Materials.





Astrid Guiffart

European Research Executive Agency (REA), European Commission

Astrid Guiffart works as a project officer in the European Research Executive Agency on grant management in the area of Cluster 6 of the Horizon Europe R&I programme. She has been working with the multi-actor approach since its introduction in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme. She follows the PREMIERE project on proposal preparation using the multi-actor approach and the CARE4BIO one supporting Cluster 6 National Contact Points.



Sylvain Sturel

Chambres d'Agriculture, France

Sylvain Sturel is an agricultural engineer (MSc) with 30 years' experience. He first worked on agricultural and rural development projects in Africa and Asia, before joining Chambres d'Agriculture France, which federates the French chambers of agriculture. These provide services to farmers and represent them to public authorities. Sylvain was first in charge of international cooperation, then EU projects. He has been involved in more than 20 EU research and innovation projects on training & networking of advisors, on-farm demonstration, interactive innovation & AKIS, soil functions, diversification, IPM, organic farming, rural development... In particular, he was the coordinator of i2connect (H2020).



Susanne von Münchhausen

Eberswalde University of Sustainable Development

Dr. Susanne von Muenchhausen is an agricultural economist working with Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development in the unit 'Policy and Markets in the Agri-Food Sector'. She coordinates the Horizon CSA project PREMIERE – Preparing Multi-Actor Projects in a Co-creative Way, which develops material and offers workshops for multi-actor partnerships as well as policy briefs for the further development of the EIP-AGRI. She is also involved in the projects “Female-led Innovation – FLIARA” and the OrganicAdviceNetwork. Moreover, Susanne is the EU-FarmBook Ambassador for Germany. On the grass-roots level, Susanne coordinates an agri-food civil society network in the Federal State of Hessen, which is setting up an agri-food value chain living lab with the organic farming network in Hessen. Some actors involved are also linked to Operational Group projects or other practice-driven innovation initiatives.





Ana Ruiz Sierra

Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking

Ana is a leading expert in bioeconomy and currently serves as a Programme Officer at the Circular Bio-Based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU). She holds a degree in Agronomic Engineering. With nearly 20 years of experience, Ana worked at the Spanish Ministry of Environment from 2004 to 2009. She then joined the European Commission (2009–2014), where she contributed to EU research and innovation policy, focusing on biotechnology and bio-based products and processes. Since 2014, she works at CBE JU, monitoring the implementation of funded projects. She also leads strategic initiatives, including managing the Member States' advisory body and other activities aimed at strengthening the primary sector's role in circular bio-based value chains.



Ivan Stefanic

European Innovation Council

Ivan Stefanic is the EIC Programme Manager for Food Chain Technologies and Novel and Sustainable Food. He is a business development and technology transfer specialist with more than 30 years of international experience in research and business. Ivan is also a Full Professor in the field of economics and entrepreneurship in agribusiness. He is passionate about deeptech and disruptive innovations, gamification of learning experiences, mentoring students and young entrepreneurs, and enterprising university. As an EIC Programme Manager he proactively manages four portfolios of projects. Two thematic portfolios 'Novel technologies for resilient agriculture' and 'Precision fermentation & Algae', and two Pathfinder challenge portfolio 'Precision nutrition' and Nature inspired alternatives for food packaging and films for agriculture'.



Elena Contioso-Fleming

EIT Digital

Elena Contioso-Fleming is the Regional Director South at EIT Digital, where she fosters innovation, supports entrepreneurs, and connects key players in the digital ecosystem. Since joining EIT Digital in 2018, she has contributed to the organization's expansion and engagement in Southern Europe.

With a strong background in technology transfer, research, and innovation, Elena has spent over 15 years bridging the gap between academia, startups, and industry. Before joining EIT Digital, she was General Manager at FIUS, the Research Foundation of the University of Seville, where she oversaw



operations and strategic execution. She also played a key role at the International Campus of Excellence Andalucía TECH, managing large-scale innovation initiatives.

Passionate about impact-driven innovation, she is dedicated to helping bold thinkers turn their ideas into reality.

Elena holds an MSc in Telecommunications Engineering from the University of Seville and furthered her expertise in strategic management through studies at EOI Business School.

Mario Roccaro **EIT Food**



I am a policy/programme manager with over 10 years of experience in R&I policy analysis and project management. Strong scientific background in life sciences and bioeconomy. I joined EIT Food in April 2018 as Programme Manager of Education. He is responsible for developing educational offerings, including professional development actions for graduates and agribusiness professionals. I plays a strategic role in building consortia for R&I European Programmes. Previously, I was a policy officer at the European Commission DG EAC, designing and implementing the HORIZON 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions and managing working groups developing policies for online learning and transversal skills and competencies. After graduating with a degree in Food Science and Technology from the University of Milan (IT), I worked in several food industries in Italy before continuing her studies. I obtained a PhD in Molecular Biology from the University of Edinburgh (UK). Subsequently, he worked as a molecular biologist at the Max Planck Institute in Cologne (DE), focusing on fundamental and applied science.

Stelios Dritsas **EIT Climate-KIC**



Stelios Dritsas is a designer and producer of climate-neutral food systems and bioeconomy at EIT Climate-KIC. He works on agri-food projects with a focus on integrating renewables at the farm level, carbon farming, and climate-smart agriculture. Stelios supports and connects farmers in their transition toward more resilient and sustainable practices.



European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI)



Marta Iglesias

European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, D.1 Rural areas and networks

I am a senior policy innovation and communication officer at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, with over 23 years of experience. My career spans EU research and innovation policy, specialising in soil, water, and nutrient management within the EU R&I Framework programmes. Currently, I drive innovation initiatives under the EIP-AGRI. With a background in agricultural engineering and a master's degree in watering, soils, and drains, I am passionate about advancing sustainable practices in agriculture.

EU CAP Network team

1. Support Facility 'Innovation & Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI' team



Szilvia Zsargó

Main facilitator

I work as a facilitator, supporting organisations and teams in various domains to get the best out of themselves and the issue they are working on together. Engineering mindset, artistic freedom, spiced with some humor and playfulness.



Martin Jamrich

Task manager

Martin is a Smart Farm Practices & Rural Development Officer at the EIP-AGRI Support Facility team. He has a Master's degree in Quantitative Methods in Economics and a PhD degree in Economics and Management of Agriculture and Food Processing. His research was focused on household consumption and unfair trading practices in the dairy supply chain in Slovakia. Martin has experience with the analysis of data in agriculture, forestry, food and rural development. Since 2021 he has been a project and public manager focusing on coordination, enhancing communication and cooperation between farmers, foresters, researchers, advisors, national networks, organisations, administrations and rural innovation actors.





Darius Kavaliauskas

Co-task manager

I work as a Research & Innovation Officer at EIP-AGRI and as a senior researcher at Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania), specializing in forest genetics. I hold a PhD in Forestry and a Master's degree in Forest Ecology. With over 10 years of experience in forestry, forest management, and genetic research, my work focuses on forest genetic resource conservation, sustainable forest management, forest genetic monitoring, and the traceability of forest reproductive material.



Liina Ulm

Co-task manager

I work at the EU CAP Network Support Facility for Innovation & Knowledge Exchange, supporting knowledge sharing and collaboration in agricultural and rural innovation. I facilitate networking between stakeholders, helping to connect researchers, farmers, advisors, and businesses to foster impactful partnerships. My focus is on practical solutions that enhance sustainability, digitalization, and resilience in agriculture and rural areas.



Tine Defour

Event communication officer

Within the EIP-AGRI Support Facility's communication team, Tine writes and coordinates publications, including the yearly Agrinnovation magazine. She loves whipping words into publishable shape. Tine contributes to the contents of the EU CAP Network website, the EU CAP magazine, and the newsletter on Innovation & Knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI. She coordinates social media and offers support for events. From 2014 to 2021, she was a member of the EIP-AGRI Service Point team. Tine has an academic background, with a PhD in English linguistics. From 2003 to 2014 she was a researcher and lecturer at Ghent University (BE), where she gained experience in international networking and organising events. During that time she also worked as editorial assistant and proofreader for a peer-reviewed academic journal.





Pacôme Elouna Eyenga
Team leader

Team Leader of the EU CAP Network Support Facility for Innovation & Knowledge Exchange | EIP-AGRI. Previously, Team Leader of the EIP-AGRI Service Point.



Margarida Ambar
Facilitator

Margarida Ambar is part of the EIP-AGRI Support Facility team, where she is the Head of the Division dealing with AKIS and stakeholders involvement. She is an agricultural engineer and has a master's degree in Geography - Territorial Management, focusing on stakeholders' involvement. Margarida Ambar is part of the EIP-AGRI Support Facility team, where she is the Head of the Division dealing with AKIS and stakeholders involvement. She is an agricultural engineer and has a master's degree in Geography - Territorial Management, focusing on stakeholders' involvement.

She worked for over 20 years for the Portuguese Ministry of Agriculture, then working full time with EIP-AGRI since 2013. She has also gained experience in international cooperation through other projects and networks aiming at knowledge exchange on various topics.



Sergiu Didicescu
Facilitator

Sergiu is the Deputy Team Leader of the EU CAP Network's Support Facility for Innovation and Knowledge Exchange, including EIP-AGRI. Originally from Romania, he has a background in oenology and agricultural economics. Sergiu is passionate about knowledge systems and innovation, and how they can help us achieve more with less.



2. Communications and Events Support



Francesco Aiello

Event organiser

After years working on making events happen on the ground as a steward, Francesco joined the EU CAP Network - Communication and Logistical Support Team. He also brings with him the volunteer experience at the International Short Movie Festival CinemàCinemà as part of the event organisers and as Art Director.



Anne-Fleur Labbé

Events team leader

Anne-Fleur, Managing Partner at Phrenos, is a multilingual professional with 18 years of experience in events and communication. She is currently the Events Team Leader for the Logistical & Communication Support for Networking Activities of the CAP (Lot 4) for DG AGRI.

She graduated from the London School of Economics with a MSc in History of International Relations, and from Université Paris II – Panthéon Assas with a MSc in Banking & Finance. At INSEAD, she completed a certification in “Strategy in the Age of AI and Digital Disruption”, “Design Thinking and Creativity for Business”, as well as one in “Leadership in a Crisis”. She speaks French, English, Italian, and German.

