

SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Member of College, Valdis Dombrovskis, European Commissioner for Economy and Productivity, as well as Implementation and Simplification.



Valdis Dombrovskis has been the European Commissioner for Economy and Productivity, as well as Implementation and Simplification, since December 2024. His portfolio includes the coordination and implementation of the EU's economic policies, as well as overseeing the reduction of administrative burden and ensuring better implementation of EU rules.

From 2019 to 2024, he served as the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for An Economy that Works for People, and was also in charge of Trade. He previously served as Vice-President of the European Commission from 2014 to 2019, overseeing the Euro and Social Dialogue, as well as Financial Stability, Financial Services, and the Capital Markets Union. Before that, from 2009 to 2014, he served three consecutive terms as Prime Minister of Latvia, becoming the longest-serving elected head of government in Latvia's history.

Before becoming a European Commission Vice-President, Dombrovskis was elected for the second time as a Member of the European Parliament in 2014 (having first served from 2004 to 2009) and was also the Head of the Latvian Delegation in the EPP Group. He served as a Member of the Saeima (Parliament) of Latvia (March 2004–June 2004; January 2014–June 2014) and was Latvia's Minister of Finance from 2002 to 2004.

Valdis Dombrovskis was born on 5 August 1971 in Riga, Latvia. He graduated with a degree in physics from the University of Latvia (1993) and a degree in economics from Riga University of Technology (1995). He received his master's degree in physics from the University of Latvia in 1995. In 1995–1998, he worked as a research assistant at Mainz University, in Germany, at the Institute of Solid-State Physics in Latvia, and at the University of Maryland (USA).

Prior to entering politics, he worked as a senior economist and Chief Economist at the Bank of Latvia (1998–2002). Together with Anders Aslund, he co-authored the book "How Latvia came through the financial crisis", which was published in 2011.

In November 2014, Valdis Dombrovskis was awarded the Order of the Three Stars *(Triju Zvaigžņu ordenis)*, the highest state decoration of the Republic of Latvia.



Panel I

Philippe Mengal, Board Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB), European Commission



Since 2022, Philippe Mengal is a member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB) of the European Commission. He joined the EU institutions in 2015 as the Executive Director of the EU agency CBE joint undertaking (2015-2022).
Before joining the EU Institutions, Philippe has 25 years of professional experience in the private sector (1990-2015), as R&D Manager, Senior consultant (ARTHUR D. LITTLE) and CEO of 3 companies (14 years) in France and Belgium. He taught courses and conferences in a Master program of chemical engineering, he is co-author of a book “Biomass in the bioeconomy”, 20 scientific papers and 9 patents.
On top of his professional activity he is Scientific advisor for VIVES Inter University Fund an early-stage multi-sectorial fund and was Vice President of INDIGO committee coaching of new entrepreneur (Belgium), Governing Board member of VALBIOM ASBL a non-profit organisation for the valorisation of biomass (Belgium), Governing Board member of WAGRALIM the food industry competitive cluster (Belgium) and Teacher in a master programme of chemical engineering ENSCR (France).
Philippe was graduated Bioengineer from Gembloux AgroBioTech University in 1990, and an additional executive program in Strategic Innovation Management form INSEAD in 2005.



Pascal Leardini, Deputy Secretary-General (SG), European Commission



Mr Pascal Leardini is Deputy Secretary-General and Chief Operating Officer of the European Commission.

He joined the European Commission in 1994 after working as a lawyer specialised in EU matters in the private sector.

Since then, he held different positions within the institution including being the Director in charge of the Relations with the other Institutions and the Director in charge of Institutional and Administrative Policies in the Secretariat-General of the European Commission.



Mario Nava, Director-General, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL), European Commission



Mario Nava is the Director-General of DG EMPL of the EU Commission.

Previously, he was the Director-General of DG REFORM and has held Director and Head of Unit posts in the DG for Financial Services.

He was also President of Italian Financial Market Authority. He teaches at Bocconi University and at Solvay Business School.

In 2023, he was awarded the title of Bocconi Alumnus of the year.



May Pettigrew, President, European Evaluation Society



May is an independent evaluation specialist with 30 years of experience across a wide range of education (mainstream, higher and vocational), information technology and social initiatives.

Her recent work has included international development evaluations and evaluation quality assurance.

Previously May held evaluation posts within the European Commission (DG CNECT) where she led on impact assessment and UNESCO where she held responsibilities for evaluation of global education initiatives.

As President of EES, she oversees the society's strategy for European and international outreach, training provision, policy interchange and services to members.

May is also a member of the Advisory Board of the Sage Journal, 'Evaluation'.



Jörgen Warborn, Member of European Parliament, the JURI Standing rapporteur on regulatory fitness, subsidiarity and proportionality



Jörgen Warborn is a Swedish entrepreneur and politician from the Moderate Party, currently serving his second term as a Member of the European Parliament (2019–2029). He is a dedicated advocate for free trade and reducing bureaucracy to empower European businesses.

In the European Parliament, Warborn serves as a Member of the Committee on International Trade, where he is also the EPP Group Coordinator. He is a Substitute Member of both the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the Committee on Legal Affairs. His work focuses on creating a more competitive and innovation-friendly Europe.

Warborn is Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO and the EPP shadow rapporteur for the WTO e-commerce monitoring group. In these roles, he champions innovation, cross-border data flows, and the adoption of electronic trade documents to simplify global trade processes.

He is a Board Member of the EPP SME Circle, and serves as President of SME Global and SME Europe, two key organizations affiliated with the EPP political group. Since 2016, he has also been the National Chairman of the Moderate Party's Business Council. Currently, he is the rapporteur for the EU's first Omnibus Simplification Package, an initiative aimed at cutting red tape for European companies.

Warborn holds academic credentials in Economics and Leadership from the International University of Monaco, International Relations from the London School of Economics, and Entrepreneurship from Babson College in Boston. He launched his first business at age 17 and has since founded and managed several small enterprises, primarily in the IT and marketing sectors.

Before entering the European Parliament, Warborn served as Mayor of Varberg Municipality following the 2010 general election. He was elected to the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) in 2014 and re-elected in 2018.



James Morrison, Director and Board Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB), European Commission



James Morrison has been Director of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board since July 2021. Prior to that he was Head of Cabinet of the Commissioner for Security Union and before that from November 2014, he was Policy Director in the Secretariat-General of the European Commission covering a portfolio including international trade, counter terrorism, cyber security, the digital single market, migration and development. From November 2009, James was the Chief of Staff of the first EU High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the European Commission and played a central role in the establishment of the European External Action Service. He was Head of Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Trade in 2009. Before joining the European Commission James was a British diplomat for 20 years. He was Policy Advisor to the Minister for Europe in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 2007-2008. From 2006-2007, he was on loan to Ashridge Business School in Hertfordshire, UK. He twice served at the UK Representation to the EU (1994-1999 and 2004- 2006) covering two UK Presidencies of the Council (1997 and 2005) and representing the UK on EU Committees dealing with trade with N, S and SE Asia and Central and Latin America. James is an experienced multilateral negotiator with extensive EU and diplomatic experience. He holds a Masters degree in Business Administration and was appointed Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) in the 2015 New Year's Honours



Panel II

Joanna Drake, Deputy Director-General, DG Research and Innovation (RTD), European Commission



Deputy Director-General: Planet, People and Science for Policy Acting Director: Clean Planet, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission.
Entirely dedicated to the European Union, Joanna Drake's career has been propelled by her relentless energy and passion for the project and the values the EU stands for. As such for the last 40 years, she has contributed to the EU in several roles at the national and European level. Since 2021, she has been the Deputy Director-General of the European Commission's DirectorateGeneral (DG) for Research and Innovation (DG RTD). In this role, she provides overall assistance to the Director-General in the management of the DG, contributing to the definition, coordination and implementation of strategy and policy orientation. She currently focuses mainly on the areas of science for policy, environment, climate, energy, culture and health (she is mission manager for Cancer) and is currently serving as Acting Director for the Clean Planet Directorate. Between 2016 and 2021, she was Deputy Director-General in DG Environment where she chaired a crosscutting Task Force spear-heading strategic positions for the DG on (inter-alia) the post-2020 Commission financial framework negotiations, Brexit co-ordination, the urban agenda and the futureproofing of the EU's environmental acquis. Between 2010 and 2015 she was director for SME's and Entrepreneurship in the DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW). During her tenure in DG GROW she also led the Commission's Task Force on The Collaborative Economy, New Business Models and SME's.
By training, Joanna holds a doctorate in laws from the University of Malta, where she also taught EU law full time in the Department of European and Comparative Law in the run up to Malta's EU accession. She acquired a post-graduate degree in Advanced European Legal Studies from the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium. She held various legal and management posts in the private (including Head of Legal/Regulatory Department in Vodafone Malta) and public sector before joining the European Commission as head of the European Commission Representation in Malta in 2005. She also had a key role in the Malta-EU accession negotiations as member of the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee and chaired the national 'YES movement' in the run up to the referendum on Malta's EU accession in 2003.



Anna Pietikäinen, Head of Division, OECD



Anna PIETIKÄINEN, Head of Division, Regulatory Policy, Public Governance, OECD Anna has almost 20 years' experience advising governments with the OECD and the United Nations. As Head of the Regulatory Policy Division, she leads the Organisation's work supporting member countries' regulatory reform and better regulation agendas through its Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC).

Previously she led the secretariat of the OECD Network of Economic Regulators (NER). At the OECD she also held positions at the Development Centre and the Sahel West Africa Club.

Prior to joining the OECD, she worked at the United Nations - International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) where she provided support and advice to governments on the development and management of national rural development programmes.

Anna is a political scientist with degrees from the London School of Economics and Sciences-Po Paris.



Céline Kauffmann, Chief Programmes Officer, IDDRI



Céline Kauffmann is IDDRI's Chief Programmes Officer. Her mission is to support the continued development of IDDRI and help ensure its impacts and relevance through strategic guidance and planning, enhanced dialogue with stakeholders and international partnerships.

Céline Kauffmann was previously at the OECD, where she started her career in 2001 and held various positions over the years as an economist and senior manager on a range of issues of relevance to sustainable development. In particular, she has led several policy-relevant initiatives, established stakeholder platforms, and held ministerial discussions, on greening the business sector, green investment, international governance, and water. In 2020-2023, she led the OECD Division on Entrepreneurship, SME and Tourism where she spearheaded work on greening SMEs, green entrepreneurship and sustainable finance. Previously, she was Deputy Head of the Regulatory Policy Division where she led work on international regulatory cooperation among other. Before that, she was responsible for green investment in the OECD Investment Division.

She joined the OECD in 2001 to coordinate and author the African Economic Outlook – joint flagship report of the OECD Development Centre and the African Development Bank. Before the OECD, Céline Kauffmann contributed to the 2000 Transition Report of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

She also worked at the London School of Economics as research assistant.

CK holds a PhD in economics from Université Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne.



Véronique Willems, Secretary-General, SME United



Véronique Willems serves as Secretary General of SMEunited, the association of Crafts and SMEs in Europe, as of 2017. SMEunited stands for 65 SME organisations – national crosssectoral and European sector federations – from over 30 European countries.

With 25 years of experience in advocacy at local, regional, national and European level, Ms Willems builds on several years of counselling and mentoring SMEs and uses their everyday life as a basis to shape an SME-friendly business environment.

Véronique holds a law degree and a master's degree in commercial sciences/business management.



Jolita Butkeviciene, Director, Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission



As the Director for Innovation in Science and Policymaking in the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC), Jolita leads a team of dedicated scientists and passionate professionals from a broad range of disciplines with the mission to bring innovation and scientific evidence in EU policymaking. Her Directorate provides scientific knowledge, foresight methods, evaluation techniques and engagement with citizens as a way of strengthening the positive impact of EU policies on society.

Prior to joining the Joint Research Centre, Jolita was, for more than 10 years, Director for Latin America and Caribbean, Overseas Countries and Territories in the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA). She has extensive experience of working in the United Nations in the field of international cooperation. Her formal background and experience is in quantitative economics and international trade and trade negotiations.



Rytis Martikonis, Director-General and Chair of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB), European Commission



Rytis Martikonis holds degrees in law, political science and international relations. He studied in Lithuania, the United States, Denmark, and The Netherlands.

He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania in 1992 and pursued his career in the European Affairs.

From 2001 until 2004, he worked as the Secretary of State in the Lithuanian MFA. During the same period, until 2003, he was the Deputy Head of Lithuania's delegation for the European Union accession negotiations.

In 2002 and 2003, he was Member of the European Convention.

After Lithuania's accession to the EU, he was Ambassador in the Political and Security Committee (2004-2005), before becoming the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the EU (2005-2010).

He was appointed Director-General for Translation in the European Commission in 2011. He joined the Regulatory Scrutiny Board as Director-General and Chair in early 2022.