



The 2026 Conference of the European Semester Group

European Semester 2026: Driving competitiveness, sustainable growth and social resilience in a strategic budgetary framework

30 June 2026 | 9:30 - 13:00 | Online event

SPEAKERS VADEMECUM 1st panel



Géraldine Mahieu - Deputy Director-General, DG ECFIN, European Commission

Ms **Mahieu** is the Deputy Director-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN) of the European Commission, appointed in 2026. Before this role, she served as acting director of Directorate B, which focuses on investment, growth, and structural reforms within DG ECFIN.

Ms **Mahieu** was also responsible for the design and negotiations of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, which was adopted in February 2021. Before her tenure at DG ECFIN, she was head of a unit at DG REFORM, where she provided technical support to EU Member States in areas such as labour markets, healthcare, education, and other social issues. In addition, she served as the European Commission's deputy mission chief for the Cypriot adjustment programme and

previously worked as a Senior Economist at the International Monetary Fund.

Jakob Wegener Friis - Chief Economic Advisor to the President of the European Council

Mr **Friis** is Chief Economic Advisor to the President of the European Council, António Costa. In this role, he leads the Competitiveness and Sustainability team within the President's cabinet, advising on areas including EU economic and monetary affairs, competitiveness strategy, G7 and G20 coordination, Eurogroup and Euro Summit matters.

Previously, Mr **Friis** was Deputy Head of Cabinet for Commissioner Paulo Gentiloni, Commissioner for Economy. He is a former Head of Unit (2012-2019) in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN), where he was responsible for coordinating economic surveillance. Previously, he was mission chief for the economic adjustment programme for Cyprus and responsible for the economic surveillance of Germany and Austria. He headed the Office of the Director General for DG ECFIN (2009-2012). He held the position of Member of the Cabinet of the European Commission (2007-2009) and worked in DG ECFIN on the Strategy for Growth and Jobs and the Stability and Growth Pact (2004-2007). Before joining the European Commission, he served as Financial Counsellor at the Permanent Representation of Denmark to the EU (2002-2004) as well as Private Secretary to the Minister for Economic Affairs of Denmark (1999-2002).





Michael Forte – Senior Policy Advisor in the EU Politics & Climate Governance team at E3G (Third Generation Environmentalism)

Mr Forte joined E3G in 2024. He works on building a stronger foundation for a managed transition, improving consistency across the EU's climate, social, and economic governance frameworks, and reinforcing the role of climate science advisory bodies. His expertise covers the EU fiscal rules and budget negotiations.

Mr Forte previously worked as a cohesion, sustainable cities, intergenerational policies, and fiscal and economic policy advisor for the Party of European Socialists (PES). He holds a BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from the University of Oxford, and a Master's in European Affairs from Sciences Po Paris.

Piotr Sadowski – Co-Chair of the EESC Liaison Group with European civil society organisations and networks

Mr **Sadowski** is a committed civil society leader and an advocate for social justice, serving alongside the EESC President and jointly steering the Liaison Group's efforts to promote civil dialogue and participatory democracy across the EU.

Additionally, he serves as Secretary General of Volonteurope, a Brussels-based European network dedicated to social justice through volunteering and active citizenship. He is also Vice President of the Conference of INGOs at the Council of Europe and Vice President of the Lifelong Learning Platform. Throughout his career, he has championed European values and ensured that the voices of organised civil society are represented at both the EU and the Council of Europe levels. Mr **Sadowski** is a long-standing member of the European socialist and democratic movement and a vocal supporter of progressive policies, as well as an active advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights, working to promote equality, dignity and inclusion across Europe.



SPEAKERS VADEMECUM 2nd panel



Tony Murphy - President of the European Court of Auditors

Mr **Murphy** has served as President of the European Court of Auditors since October 2022 and has been a Member of the Court representing Ireland since 2018. Between 2017 and 2022, he held several senior leadership positions within the Court, including Dean of Chamber V, responsible for audits related to financing and administering the Union. Before this, from 2013 to 2017, he served as Head of Cabinet to European Court of Auditors Member Iliana Ivanova, supporting audits in Cohesion policy.

Before joining the European Court of Auditors, Mr **Murphy** spent more than three decades at Ireland's Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (1984–2012), where he held a range of senior audit and management positions. Earlier in his career, he also worked with the European Investment Fund, contributing expertise in financial management, EU investment instruments, and institutional oversight.

Li Andersson - Chair of the EMPL Committee, European Parliament

Ms **Andersson** is a Finnish Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and the Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL). She represents Finland's Left Alliance party within The Left group (GUE/NGL). Since July 2024, Ms Andersson has been responsible for overseeing parliamentary work related to employment, workers' rights, social inclusion, vocational training, workplace regulation, and EU social policy.



Prior to her current role, Ms **Andersson** served as Finland's Minister of Education from 2019 to 2023, where she led national education policy reforms and advocated for equal access to education and public services. Additionally, she was a Member of the Finnish Parliament from 2015 to 2024, contributing to committees on education, culture, employment, and social affairs. She also held the position of Chairperson of the Left Alliance from 2016 to 2024.



Franck Conrad, Head of Unit, Multiannual Financial Framework, DG BUDG, European Commission

Mr **Conrad** has been working at the European Commission for nearly 15 years, where he began in DG MARKT. Since December 2025, he has served as a Head of Unit in the Multiannual Financial Framework division of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Budget (DG BUDG), leading strategic work on the EU's long-term budget planning and financial priorities.

From 2023 to 2025, he headed the Budget Performance and Coordination Unit in DG BUDG, overseeing coordination of EU budget implementation and performance frameworks. Between 2020 and 2023, he played a central role in implementing the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility within the Secretariat-General, contributing to the Union's post-pandemic economic recovery strategy. Before this, Mr **Conrad** worked from 2019 to 2020 on initiatives to deepen the Economic and Monetary Union. The earlier experience includes leading work on international taxation and the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions in DG TAXUD from 2017 to 2018, as well as coordinating policy on the single market, financial services, and taxation within the Secretariat-General from 2014 to 2017.

Ludovic Voet, Confederal Secretary of ETUC

Mr **Voet** is a trade union leader and Confederal Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). Re-elected at the ETUC Congress in Berlin in May 2023. Since first being elected ETUC Confederal Secretary in 2019, he has coordinated the trade union campaign for an ambitious European Platform Work Directive. He has steered ETUC engagement in European debates on climate action and Just Transition, aiming to ensure that the green and digital transitions deliver fair outcomes for workers.



Before joining the ETUC, Mr **Voet** served as President of Young CSC from 2015 to 2019, during which he led campaigns and organising efforts focused on youth participation, social protection, and trade union renewal within the Belgian CSC. His trade union engagement began during his studies at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), where he became active in the Federation of French-speaking Students (FEF), contributing to campaigns that reduced higher education study costs in French-speaking Belgium in 2010.



Lúcio Vinhas de Souza, Director of Economics Department and Chief Economist, BusinessEurope

Mr **Vinhas de Souza** has been the Chief Economist and Director of the Economics Department of "BusinessEurope" in Brussels, Belgium, since September 2024. Previously, he was a Fellow at the Weatherhead Centre for International Affairs at Harvard University and a Visiting Professor at Brandeis University in the U.S., an Advisor to the leadership of the European External Action Service and a Board Member of the National Economic Club in Washington, D.C. Before that, he

led the Economics Department of the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), an internal advisory body to the European Commission President, a position he joined from Moody's Investors Service headquarters in New York City, where he was Managing Director and Global Chief Economist.

Previously, Mr **Vinhas de Souza** was at the World Bank in Washington, D.C. Before that, he was Coordinator for economic relations between the EU and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States at the European Commission. He joined the European Commission from the Kiel Institute for the World Economy in Germany. Mr **Vinhas de Souza** began his career at the United Nations in New York City.