



European Economic
and Social Committee
Civil Society Organisations' Group

CONFERENCE
**EU food sovereignty: the role of
agriculture, fisheries and consumers**

**LIVE
STREAM** **26/09/2023 | 9:30 - 16:30**
City of Culture of Galicia, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

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#EUFarm2Fork
#EU4Consumers
#EU2023ES

Biographies of the speakers:



Séamus Boland was re-elected President of the EESC's Civil Society Organisations' Group in April 2023. He has been an EESC Member since 2011. He has held different roles at the Committee, including the Vice-Presidency of the Civil Society Organisations' Group (2018-2020). His policy and political interests include the eradication of poverty, social exclusion and inequality. Mr Boland currently sits on the SOC, REX and ECO Sections of the Committee as well as on the CCMI. In addition to the Group presidency, he holds several other roles outside the EESC. He has been CEO of Irish Rural Link since 2001, a Board Member of Inland Fisheries Ireland since 2018 and Chair of Peatlands Council since 2012. Mr Boland is a farmer and has worked in civil society for over 40 years, including with young people, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and people living in rural isolation. He is a trained Speech and Drama Educator.



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José González Vázquez was born in Ourense in 1970, José holds a Degree in Law from the University of Santiago de Compostela. In 1997 he joined the Spanish State's Senior Corps of Revenue and Customs Inspectors, specialising in financial and tax inspections and customs and excise duties. He was a member of the Vigo Free Trade Zone Consortium Committee and plenary from 2009 to 2014, and represented Spanish Customs in various committees reforming the Community Customs Code in 2009. As well member of various Vigo Port Authority commissions for the coordination of external trade controls, José was an associate lecturer at the University of Vigo's Financial Law Department from 2002 to 2006, and specialist lecturer in the field of value added tax and external trade, and in tax accounting. From 2016 to 2021 José was a Member of the Galician Parliament, where he held many roles, including spokesperson for the People's Party Parliamentary Group; member of Committee 7 for Agriculture, Food, Livestock and Forestry; member of Committee 3 for Economy, Finance and Budget; Vice-President of the non-legislative standing committee for relations with the Galician Accounts Committee; and member of the special committee for studying and analysing reforms to the forestry policy on prevention and defence against forest fires, and reforms to the Galician forest plan. Since 2018 he has held the post of Galician Regional Minister for the Rural Environment.



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Ileana Izverniceanu de la Iglesia has a degree in Tourism and Law. She is Director of Communication and Institutional Relations and Spokesperson for the Organization of Consumers and Users OCU, to which she belongs since 1994. In OCU she has developed his work in the department of legal advice and later in the Department of Communication of Institutional Relations, where she directs the institutional and communication policy of the Organization and holds the public representation of the Organization in the media, forums, national and international, conferences, seminars including: Counsellor of the European Economic and Social Committee, Represents the organization in the Council of Consumers and Users of Spain (CCU), Represents the organization in the Board of the European Consumer Organization (BEUC) on behalf of OCU, Member of the Consumer Policy Advisory Body of the European Commission. She has taught courses and lectures at various institutions and universities and participated in forums, debates, conferences and conferences organized by different entities. It has successfully developed and implemented the territorial expansion of OCU, reaching 9 regions in two years. Leads the Class Action Committee (Representative Actions) She is a regular contributor to the media (press, radio, TV) as an expert in Communication and Communications.



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Blanca Corroto González is native of Navahermosa (Toledo). She is a Law graduate. She is currently president of the women's branch and the Toledo branch of the Young Farmers' Association (Asaja) and sits on the board of Asaja at national level in the role of treasurer. She is also vice-president of the Castile-La Mancha branch of Asaja. She is a farmer and runs an olive grove in Navahermosa. She also has ties to the agricultural cooperative movement and sits on the governing board of the San Miguel olive oil cooperative in her home town.



Basilio Otero Rodríguez. Captain and shipowner since 1995, he holds a coastal skipper certificate and has been a captain in the Burela Fisherman's Guild since 2008, President of the Lugo Provincial Federation of Fishermen's Guilds since October 2014, and President of the National Federation of Fishermen's Guilds since April 2017.



Miguel Padilla Campoy is a professional farmer and stockbreeder in Lorca (Murcia). For more than 30 years he has run a mixed farm dedicated to growing horticultural products and generating photovoltaic energy. Although he studied law at the University of Murcia, he has always worked in the agricultural sector. Between 2012 and 2021 he was president of the Murcia branch of the Farmers' and Stockbreeders' Coordinating Body (COAG), combining this role with that of head of organisation on the COAG Executive Committee at national level. He is also a trustee for the Agricultura Viva and Agromutua foundations. Moreover, he is a member of the



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Region of Murcia's Economic and Social Council. His other responsibilities include being president of COAG Lorca and president of the SUAGRILORCA cooperative.



Enrique García López started working in the consumer movement in 1991 in different organisations. Since June 2002, he has been working in the Department of Institutional Relations and Communication of the Organisation of Consumers and Users (OCU). During this time, he has worked in different aspects of the consumer world (Banking, Insurance, Housing, Services, Health, Distribution and Food) both with the Public Administration and with the affected sectors and social entities. Mr García López has been a member of the Insurance Advisory Council, the Telecommunications Advisory Council and the Environment Advisory Council, representing the Consumers and Users Council, as well as a member of the Economic Affairs Committee of this body. He is member of the Consumers and Users Council since 2002.



Lorenzo Ramos Silva is Secretary-general of the Union of Small Farmers and Livestock Breeders (UPA) since 2004. He was born in Valdelacalzada (Badajoz) in 1958. He is a professional farmer, producing fruits, vegetables, flowers and plants on his family farm. In 2009 he was elected vice-president of the Committee of Agricultural Organisations in the European Union (COPA), occupying this role until 2013. Mr Ramos Silva, a long-time activist for UPA, helped set up this Spanish agricultural professions' organisation, which represents small and medium-scale farmers and livestock breeders across the country. He was elected secretary-general of UPA Badajoz in 1989 and secretary-general of UPA Extremadura in April 1999. In



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December 2001, after the organisation UCE was incorporated into UPA, Mr Ramos Silva was elected secretary-general of UPA-UCE Extremadura. He was an active member of the Extremadura Economic and Social Council between 2002 and 2004. He is president of the Rural Studies Foundation and of the Spanish agricultural agency for international development cooperation (Acodea).



Ricardo Serra Arias was born in 1956, Ricardo holds a Degree in Agricultural Engineering specialising in phytotechnology from the Higher Technical School of Agricultural Engineering in Córdoba, and Master's Degree in the Management of Agri-Food Businesses from the San Telmo Business School, part of the University of Navarre. An agricultural engineer and businessman, he is also President of the both the Seville and the Andalusian Young Farmers' Associations, and Vice-President of the National Young Farmers' Association. He manages a family farm located in Cantillana (Seville) that produces citrus fruits, potatoes, lucerne, quinoa and cotton, among other crops. Additionally, he was the first Spaniard to hold a Vice-Presidency of the EU's Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations (COPA). President of the interbranch organisation for olive oil INTERACEITUNA since its creation in February 2016, he also participates in various projects in a number of capacities, such as person responsible for the Young Farmers' Association's international operations, member of the European Economic and Social Committee since 2015, and member of the citrus fruit subgroup of DG AGRI's fruit and vegetables market observatory. Ricardo has been involved in international publications and presentations on agricultural issues, such as the annual conferences between North America



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(Canada, the US and Mexico) and the EU, and in negotiations on agriculture within the World Trade Organization, such as those held in Seattle in November and December 1999, in Cancún in 2003 and in Hong Kong in 2005. Through these achievements Ricardo has been granted honorary membership of the College of Agricultural Engineers in Seville, and has been awarded the medal for agricultural merit from the Ministry of Agriculture.



Pekka Pesonen is the Secretary General of Copa, representing European farmers, and Cogeca, representing European agri-cooperatives, which together count more than 70 national farming organisations from across Europe. Previously, he worked as State Secretary for the Finnish Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry. In addition, Mr Pesonen has extensive professional experience in lobbying at EU level on behalf of Finnish farmers, forest owners (MTK and SLC) and agri-forestry cooperatives (Pellervo). In the 1990s, he worked in the sales and marketing department of Valio, a Finnish dairy company. Mr Pesonen has also been a member of several high-level advisory groups concerning EU policy preparation. He is a qualified agronomist and is married with three adult children. Mr Pesonen comes from a 300-year-old Finnish family farm with active forest management.



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Isabel Vilalba Seivane graduated in Hispanic philology, specialising in Galician-Portuguese, with second-stage studies in information science from the University of Santiago de Compostela. She is currently co-owner of a family farm in Lourenzá producing milk and beans. Since 1998 she has been involved in the trade union Sindicato Labrego Galego (SLG), which is a member of the European organisation La Via Campesina, acting as head of the women's secretariat (2002-2012), food sovereignty coordinator and, from 2012 onwards, secretary-general. She sat on La Via Campesina's coordination committee, where she was responsible for work related to the European dairy sector, as a result of which she regularly took part in the European Milk Market Observatory and the Civil Dialogue Group on the dairy sector. She also represented civil society in Geneva as part of the United Nations process for the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas and in Rome as part of the work of the Committee on World Food Security of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In Galicia, she has represented SLG in organisations such as the Economic and Social Council and the Galician Agricultural Council. At international level, she has represented SLG, La Via Campesina and the World March of Women in various forums, such as: La Via Campesina's World Congress of Women (October 2006, Santiago de Compostela); European Social Forum (September 2008, Sweden); FAO meetings.



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Daniel Voces de Onáindi has a law degree from the University of Santiago de Compostela, a master's degree in European studies and a postgraduate degree in international maritime transport. After traineeships at Fundación Galicia Europa and the European Parliament, since 2012 he has been working at the European association Europêche, representing the fishing industry, and he became its managing director in 2016. He was appointed as an alternate member and expert of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) for the period 2020-2025 and is a member of the European Social Dialogue Committee for Fisheries and various EU fishery advisory councils.



Marco Pierani, Director Public Affairs and Media Relation at Euroconsumers, graduated in Law at the University of Bologna (IT), LL.M. in European Business Law at the University of Nijmegen (NL). Formerly a lawyer at the Milan Bar, for more than 20 years Marco has been dealing full-time with consumer protection, first in Altroconsumo, the most representative Italian consumers organization, as Head of External Relations and, from 2016 as Director of Public Affairs & Media Relations and Executive Board Member at Euroconsumers, the world's leading consumer cluster in terms of innovative information, personalized services and defence of consumer's rights, gathering five national consumer organizations, Test-Aankoop/Test-Achats (Belgium), Altroconsumo (Italy), DECOProteste (Portugal), OCU (Spain), Proteste (Brazil) and giving voice to a total of more than 1.5 million people. Marco is a communication and policy expert, a passionate user of the Internet and, above all, he believes in innovation as a lever for social, economic, and democratic development.



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Garat Pérez was born in Sanlúcar de Barrameda (Cádiz, Spain) on 27 January 1971. He graduated in law and EU law from the Complutense University of Madrid (CEU San Pablo). He also holds a master's degree in international and EU law from the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL, Belgium). Between October 2021 and February 2022, he followed the Directors' Programme at the Esade business school. After working in Brussels for two years (1996 and 1997) in the fisheries team of the European Commission's Legal Service and as an assistant to the fisheries councillor at the Permanent Representation of Spain to the European Union, he worked as a lawyer for four years at NautaDutilh, an international law firm of Dutch origin. In April 2001, he joined the Spanish Federation of Fisheries Organisations (FEOPE) as secretary-general. He is currently secretary-general of the Spanish Fishing Confederation (Cepesca), president of the association of producers' organisations Pesca España, president of the Association of National Organisations of Fishing Enterprises in the EU (Europêche), president of the International Coalition of Fisheries Associations (ICFA) and a member of the European Economic and Social Committee.



Nicasio Daniel Mejuto Martí was born in 1961 in Ferrol, Galicia. Agronomist Engineer by the Escuela Superior de Ingenieros Agrónomos de Madrid, he started carrying out land restructuring works in the autonomous communities of Galicia and Aragón from 1987 to 1990. Later, he participated from 1992 to 2010 in the Integral Plan of Genetic Improvement of the Xunta de Galicia with the implementation of the dairy control system and the own program of testing of Friesian breed bovine stallions and the production of embryos as a way of genetic improvement. He continued his professional career



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as head of associative promotion programs within the Consellería de Medio Rural from 2010 to 2013. His great professional career led him to occupy the position of Deputy Director General of Agricultural Holdings of the Ministry of Rural Environment of the Xunta de Galicia from 2013 to 2023, where the following activities stand out; responsible for the registration of farms in the Community and the second pillar of the CAP aid related to investment farms and the incorporation of young people to farming, responsible for wine production potential, and the support program for the wine sector in the Community. On the other hand, he was responsible for everything related to plant health and production in Galicia, carrying out all the official programs of hygiene of primary production, control of the commercialization and use of phytosanitary products as well as the programs of surveillance and eradication of pests of the European Union and control of nursery production.



Antonio Basanta Fernández, is Director-General for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Technological Innovation at Galicia's Ministry of the Sea. Antonio holds a Degree in Political Sciences and Administration in the field of public administration, and a Master's Degree in Fisheries Economics from the University of Santiago de Compostela. He is a specialist in data processing and analysis, and a deck rating for the merchant navy. He was an advisor for the Ministry of the Environment between 2004 and 2005, person responsible for institutional and international relations for the Ministry of the Sea between 2009 and 2012, and Head of Cabinet of the Ministry of Rural and Marine Affairs from 2012 to 2015, and of the Ministry of the Sea between 2015 and May 2022. He was also a seaman in



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fishing and port services, lecturer for various courses and master's at Galicia's three universities, and has participated and collaborated on numerous EU projects.



Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle has been Director Strategy and policy analysis at DG AGRI (European Commission) since 1 January 2023. From 1 September 2020 to 31 December 2022, she was Director at the General Secretariat of the Council, responsible for Veterinary and Plant Health Questions, Food and Forestry. Between December 2019 and August 2020, she was Deputy Head of Cabinet of the EU Commissioner responsible for agriculture and rural development. From July 2018 to June 2019, she was the candidate of the EU for the position of Director general of the FAO. Between 2013 and 2018, she was responsible for the implementation of the CAP in France, in her capacity as Director general for Economic and Environmental Performance of Enterprises at the French Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. Between 2006 and 2013, she was Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). From 2003 to 2006, she was Regional Director of Agriculture and Forestry for the Ile de France region. Prior to that, she was Director General of the Food Department within the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. She also worked at the European Commission from 1991 to 1993 as Seconded National Expert at DG III (DG Industry and Internal Market) in the area of food safety. She is an agronomist with a Master of Science from the Institut National Agronomique Paris-Grignon and from the Ecole Nationale du Génie Rural, des Eaux et des Forêts



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José María Pita Ponte is Head of the Consumer Protection Service of the Galician Institute of Consumer Affairs and Competition of the Xunta de Galicia. He has a degree in Law and a degree in Political Science from the University of Santiago de Compostela, and a degree in Legal Sciences of the Administration from the UNED. His professional career has been developed entirely in the field of the Civil Service of the Xunta de Galicia, belonging to the Senior Corps of the General Administration of the Autonomous Community of Galicia. Since 2009 he has held the position of Head of Consumer Protection Service, being also the Secretary of the Xunta Arbitral de Consumo de Galicia. He is, among others, a member of the Regulations Section of the Sectorial Commission of Consumer Affairs of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and has drafted several regional regulations such as the Galician Consumer Protection Law, the Galician Consumer Inspection Law or the Law of Official Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Galicia.



Alfonso Villares Bermúdez was born in 1970, Alfonso holds a Degree in Veterinary Sciences from the University of Santiago de Compostela. Between 1996 and 2007 he worked as a veterinarian. At the same time, between 1995 and 2007, he was a member of the Cervo Council, holding government responsibilities since 1999. From 2007 until June 2023, he was Mayor of Cervo. From 2011 to 2023 he was also Vice-President of the Galician Federation of Municipalities and Provinces. Since June 2023 he has been Regional Minister at the Ministry of the Sea.