



CONFERENCE
04/03/2022 | 9:30 – 13:00
HYBRID EVENT

An event organised in the context of the French presidency of the Council of the European Union
This event is not organised by the French Government. However, it is authorised thereby to use the emblem of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.



Speakers' Bios

Christa Schweng, President, European Economic and Social Committee



Christa Schweng was elected President of the EESC in October 2020 for a period of two and a half years, to run until March 2023. She has been an EESC member since 1998. Within the EESC, her work has focused on employment and social affairs. Between 2018 and 2020, she was President of the EESC's Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC). From 2013 to 2015, she chaired the work of the Labour Market Observatory (LMO). Outside the EESC, she works for the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ). Since 1994, she has been a senior advisor to WKÖ's Social Policy Department. Since 1995, she has been a Member of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work (a body that assists the European Commission in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of activities in the field of occupational safety and health). Also since 1995, she has been a member of the management board of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, based in Bilbao, and since 2001 the employers' spokesperson within the agency. Since 2001, she has held the rotating presidency of the Board every three years. For the last 25 years, she has been a Member of SMEUnited Social Affairs Committee (which she chaired between 2001 and 2009).

She holds a Masters' Degree in Law from the University of Vienna.

Thierry Breton, Commissioner for the Internal Market, European Commission



Engineer, with a Supélec qualification in computer science, Thierry Breton begins his career as an entrepreneur in the new technologies sector. In 1981, he set up in the United States Forma Systems, an SME which he heads for 5 years. At the same time he publishes a number of science-fiction novels, including *Softwar*, sold at 2 million copies and translated into a dozen or so languages. In France, he designs the Futuroscope, the first science and technology tourism park, between 1986 and 1990. In parallel, he was also elected regional councillor and then Vice-President of PoitouCharentes from 1986 to 1992. He runs a number of companies in the market for goods, as well as in the IT sector and new technologies. He was Director of the Strategy and Development, then Managing Director of Bull between 1993 and 1997. He then takes the lead of Thomson Multimedia, a global electronics company. In 2002, he was appointed to the head of the multinational operator France Télécom. In 2005 he was appointed Minister for Economic

Affairs, Finance and Industry of France, which he held until 2007. Following his ministerial office, he teaches the governance at the Harvard Business School. In 2009, he became CEO of Atos, a technology and digital service company until 2019. He chairs ANRT, the National Association for Research and Technology until 2019. He is a member of the Technology Academy. In 2019 he became the European Commissioner for the Internal Market and is responsible for industry, services, digital, defence and space, as well as tourism and audiovisual.

Thomas Courbe, Director-General of the Directorate-General for Enterprise, French Ministry of the Economy, Finance and the Recovery



Thomas Courbe is ingénieur general de l'Armement, and is a graduate of l'Ecole supérieure de l'aéronautique et de l'espace (SUPAERO). He began his career in 1995 at the Ministry of Defense as head of fighter aircraft programs then Chief of Staff of the Director of aircraft programs. He joined the Directorate General of the Treasury in 2002 where he was successively deputy head of the Asia office, head of the Africa - Maghreb office, head of the aeronautical, military and naval business office, Secretary General of the Paris Club and then Deputy Director of bilateral economic relations. In 2010, he was appointed Chief of Staff of the State Secretary in charge of Foreign Trade (Pierre Lellouche) and Deputy Chief of Staff of the French Minister of Economy, Finance and Industry (Christine Lagarde and then François Baroin). In 2012, he returned to the Treasury Department where he served as Secretary General, then Deputy Director General from 2015 to 2018. In August 2018, Thomas Courbe was appointed Director General for Entreprises. Honours : Knight of the Legion of Honour, Officer of the National Order of Merit.

Sandra Parthie, Member, European Economic and Social Committee



Sandra Parthie is a member of EESC and, among other things, active in the section on the single market (INT). She heads the Brussels Office of the German Economic Institute. Previous to her current role, she was Director for EU Regulatory Affairs at French multinational company Alstom S.A. and prior to that she was the political advisor and head of office of a German Member of the European Parliament, working on environmental and climate policy. Sandra Parthie holds an MA in Political Sciences, with a minor in economics from the Freie Universität Berlin. She also conducted parts of her studies at the Université de Montréal in Canada.

Prof. Padmashree Gehl Sampath, Berkman Klein Center, Harvard University



Prof. Padmashree Gehl Sampath is a leading expert on technology, industrialization, and the global political economy. She is currently a Visiting Professor at the South African Research Chair in Industrial Development (SARChI ID), University of Johannesburg, a Professorial Fellow at the United Nations University-MERIT, and the Chair Person of the Technical Advisory Group of the World Health Organisation’s COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (CTAP). She brings over two decades of experience on these topics having worked with a range of international organizations, national governments and regional agencies, assessing and predicting the emergence of new market segments and trends, current and future competition patterns, and new models of cooperation and regulation in the international economy. At Berkman, her research particularly focuses on the design and implementation of national digital development strategies; data sovereignty, AI for development, and the ways in which digital technologies facilitate change at the individual and collective levels. In the past, she has held several important positions in international organisations, most recently serving as Head of Policy of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). She has over 60 publications including five books and her work has appeared in the Harvard International Review and the Harvard Public Health Review. She serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Competition and Change.

Eddy Van Hijum, rapporteur of the European Committee of the Regions on the SME Strategy



Eddy van Hijum is a member of the Council of the Province of Overijssel since 2014. He holds the portfolios: Economy, financial participations and European matters. From 2003 till 2014 he was a member of the Dutch parliament. For the European Committee of the Region’s, Mr van Hijum is rapporteur for the Committee’s opinion on the SME Strategy proposed by the European Commission.

He studied Public Administration (1990-1995) and obtained his PhD (2001) at the University of Twente. He worked from 2001 to 2003 as a senior advisor at PricewaterhouseCoopers and as a manager at KPMG.

Baiba Miltoviča, president of the section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society, EESC



Baiba Miltoviča has been appointed in 2020 President of the “Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and Information Society” Section (TEN) of the EESC. In her previous mandate at the EESC, Ms. Miltoviča held a position as Vice-President of the Diversity Europe Group of the European Economic and Social Committee. She is a member of the Consumer Policy Advisory Group established by the European Commission Directorate-General Justice and Consumers. At the national level Baiba Miltoviča serves as the International and EU Affairs Adviser of the Latvian National Association for Consumer Protection (LPIAA, member of the European Consumer Organization, BEUC) and is Member of the Advisory Board of the Latvian Public Utilities Commission.

Carlo Calenda, MEP and rapporteur on A new long-term strategy for Europe's industrial future, European Parliament



Carlo Calenda has a Degree in Law with a focus on international law. He has been responsible for product marketing and programming for Sky Italia, responsible for relations with financial institutions and Head of Customer Relationship Management at Ferrari, Director of the International Affairs strategic area in Confindustria. In 2013 he was appointed Deputy Minister of Economic Development and in 2014 given the responsibility for attracting foreign investments. He was a member of the Council of Foreign Trade Ministers, appointed in May 2016 as Minister of Economic Development in the Renzi Government and reappointed in the Gentiloni Government until May 2018. From March to May 2016 he was Permanent Representative of Italy to the EU. He is currently a Member of the European Parliament, active in the ITRE committee, rapporteur on the file on Industrial Strategy. He was also the founder of his political party – Azione.

Stefano Palmieri, president of the section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion, EESC



Stefano Palmieri has been a member of the EESC since 2009 and is currently the President of its Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion. He also served as President of the EESC's Europe 2020 Steering Committee.

He is member of the International and European Department at the Italian trade union Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL). He served as head of the CGIL's Europe office in Brussels (2009-2010). Previously he held several positions including: Coordinator of research in "Local development and industrial policy" at Istituto di Ricerche Economiche e Sociali (IRES); member of the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD, of the Steering Committee of the Institute de la Protection Sociale Europeenne (IPSE), of the ICFTU/ITS/TUAC Committee for International Co-operation on Workers Capital, of the Macroeconomic Group of the Social Dialogue Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation at the European Commission; researcher at the Italian National Council for Economy and Labor (CNEL) and expert on the Science of Finance and Financial Law at the University of Rome "Tor Vergata".

Daniel Montalvo, Head of Group – Sustainable resource use and industry, European Environment Agency



Daniel Montalvo leads the activities of the European Environment Agency in the area of circular economy, sustainable resource use and industry. Daniel is an environment engineer by training, who started his career at national level, working for an environment regulator that implements EU-law on industry and promotes the use of EU funds to foster environment innovation. He worked at the European Commission in the period where the Industrial Emission Directive was proposed and subsequently adopted and participated in the discussion of several Reference Documents on Best Available Techniques (BREFs). At the European Environment Agency, he was initially responsible for the exchanges of data between countries and the EU regarding the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register, the EU inventory of Large Combustion Plants and reporting obligations around fluorinated gases and ozone depleting substances. More recently, he oversees the assessment of circular economy policies, one of the several transitions that Europe is going through to ensure that our society operates within the ecological limits of the planet. In this role, he continues to support industrial transformation, cooperating, for example, in the ongoing process of review of the Industrial Emissions Directive.

The European Environment Agency (EEA) is an agency of the European Union, whose task is to provide sound, independent information on the environment. The EEA aims to support sustainable development by helping to achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment, through the



provision of timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information to policymaking agents and the public.

Véronique Willems, Secretary General, SMEUnited



Véronique Willems represents Crafts and SMEs in Europe as the Secretary General of SMEUnited since January 2017. Beforehand and as from 2009, she was the head of European affairs at UNIZO (SMEUnited Belgian member organisation) and was responsible for advocacy on policies affecting SMEs at EU-level. Ms Willems started her career at UNIZO in 1999 as Policy Officer in charge of education, training and SME counselling and went on to work at the regional office (Vlaams-Brabant & Brussel) as responsible for advocacy at regional level, mentorship programs and individual counselling for entrepreneurs. She holds a Law degree from Vrije Universiteit Brussels and a Master's Degree in Commercial sciences / Business management from VLEKHO Business School in Brussels.



SMEUnited, formally known as UEAPME, is the association of crafts and SMEs in Europe with around 70 member organisations from over 30 European countries. SMEUnited is a recognised employers' organisation and European social partner. It acts on behalf of crafts and SMEs in the European Social Dialogue and in discussions with EU institutions.

Luc Triangle, General Secretary, IndustriAll Europe



Luc Triangle is General Secretary of the industriAll European Trade Union, elected at the 2nd Congress held in Madrid in June 2016. He has over three decades of sectoral experience with trade unions at regional, national and European level. As General Secretary of industriAll Europe, he is responsible for overall political coordination of the federation, whose priorities are industrial and sector policy, collective bargaining and social policy, company policy and building trade union power.



The IndustriAll European Trade Union is a federation of independent and democratic trade unions representing manual and non-manual workers in the metal, chemical, energy, mining, textile, clothing and footwear sectors and related industries and activities. It speaks for 7 million working men and women united within 180 national trade union affiliates in 38 European countries. Furthermore, it is a member of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

Mari-Ann Fonseca, Co-founder and COO, Gelatex



Mari-Ann Fonseca is the co-founder and COO of Gelatex. Mari-Ann has an MBA degree in Entrepreneurship and Technology Management from the University of Tartu (Estonia) and before Gelatex worked as a product development technologist in the textile industry and as a business consultant and a project manager of various EU-funded collaboration projects.



Gelatex Technologies is an Estonian materials technology company and inventor of a high-speed cost-effective technology for nanofibers production. Their scalable platform technology reduces the costs of nanofibers remarkably and thus enables the implementation of nanofibers in applications that were

inapproachable until now such as cell-cultured meat, scar-reducing wound care materials, bio-based filtration materials, liquid absorption, and more. Their main focus is on providing edible plant-based nanofibrous 3D scaffolds for affordable mass-scale cell-cultured meat production. Gelatex proprietary high-throughput nanofiber production technology enables the reduction of scaffold prices by over 90%. In 2019 the company was awarded the Green Alley Award, rewarding the most innovative circular start-ups, for its eco-friendly alternative to leather which was the focus of the company since its founding in 2016 until they decided to pivot in 2020.

Alain Coheur, President of the INT section, European Economic and Social Committee



Alain Coheur is the President of the Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption of the EESC since October 2020 and was appointed as EESC Group III member by Belgium in 2015. During the previous mandate, he was President of the EESC Temporary Study Group on Social Economy Enterprises and co-spokesperson for the Social Economy Category. During the main part of his career, Alain Coheur was in charge of various positions in the development of social economy organizations. He is currently the Director for European and International Affairs at Solidaris, the Belgian National Union of Socialist Mutual Health Funds (since 2002). In 2013, he was appointed by the European Commission as a member of the consultative multi-stakeholder group on social business (GECES). He was elected President of the Belgian Non-Governmental Organisation “Solsoc” in 2007 and President of the European platform “Social Economy Europe” in 2008.

Pietro De Lotto, Member, European Economic and Social Committee



Pietro De Lotto has been a member of the EESC since 2010. As such, he has variously been appointed President of the Eastern Neighbourhood Follow-up Committee, Spokesperson for the SMEs Category and, currently, President of the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI). He was the General Director of Confartigianato Vicenza, the Italian Confederation of Artisans, based in the city of Vicenza until September 2020. He was previously a Senior Researcher and Aggregate Professor in International Economics at the University of Trieste, carrying out research in international trade policy, development economics and the economics of defence. He then moved to the private sector, where he has been CEO of ICT and service companies and general director of one the largest Italian SME organisations.

Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission



Margrethe Vestager is the European Commission executive vice-president for a Europe fit for the digital age. She previously held the position of European commissioner for competition since November 2014. A Danish national, Vestager was minister for economic affairs and the interior as well as political leader of the Social Liberal Party from 2011 to 2014. She was minister for education from 1998 to 2001 and head of secretariat with the Danish Agency for Financial Management and Administrative Affairs from 1997 to 1998. She holds a master of science in economics from the University of Copenhagen.

The moderator

Jennifer Baker, journalist



Better known as Brusselsgeek, Jennifer has been a journalist in print, radio and television for 20 years, the last 10+ specialising in EU policy. She has worked across a wide range of media, from editing a national daily paper in Malta, to reporting on European affairs for Middle Eastern television, and has a wealth of experience in navigating the political quagmire of the EU. As well as an address book packed with insider sources and contacts in Brussels, Jennifer is skilled at translating EU policy-speak into understandable English. Regularly listed as one of the top influencers in the EU bubble, Jennifer was awarded #1 Tech Influencer 2019 by ZN, was listed by Politico as one of the [Top 20 Women Shaping Brussels](#) in 2017, and was named by Onalytica as one of the world's [Top 100 Influencers on Data Security 2016](#). She is also a [GLG expert Council Member](#) providing advice on EU Policy, and was an original member of the Expert Council of the [Good Technology Collective](#). Jennifer regularly features as an EU expert on BBC radio, Euronews, SkyNews and others, and hosts Brussels' must-watch weekly roundup show TOTW for Euractiv. She has written for some of the biggest names in media, including ArsTechnica, Computerweekly, TheNextWeb, and The Register.