

# 10 YEARS OF YERUN: LOOKING AHEAD, GROWING TOGETHER

## *Speakers' Bios*



10 Year Anniversary | 2015-2025

## **YERUN 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference**

**SPARKS**

60 rue Ravenstein - 1000 Brussels

**THURSDAY 5 JUNE 2025, 08.45 AM - 6.30 PM CEST**

09.30 - 09.50

*Welcome address*



**Dag Rune Olsen**, YERUN President, and Rector of UiT-The Arctic University of Norway

Dag Rune Olsen is professor of medical physics and holds a PhD from the University of Oslo (1999). He served as head of cancer research at The Norwegian Radium Hospital in Oslo and professor at University of Oslo until he took up a position as Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (2010-2013) at the University of Bergen. After serving as dean for one period, he was elected rector and served two periods (2013-2021) before he was appointed rector at UiT The Arctic University of Norway (2021-today).

Professor Olsen has served as chair of universities Norway (the Norwegian rectors conference) and as member of the research policy working group of EUA. He chairs the board of the Nordic Institute of Studies of Innovation, Research and Education and serves on the board of cultural institutions in Norway.

Olsen has been awarded with The Breur Award for his research, is elected member of The Norwegian Academy of Technological Sciences the Academia Europea of which he was also presented with the Presidents Merit Award this year. He is also an honorary professor at the Shandong University. He chairs the board of the Nordic Institute of Studies of Innovation, Research and Education and serves on the board of cultural institutions in Norway.



**Silvia Gómez Recio**, YERUN Secretary General

Silvia Gómez Recio is the first Secretary General of YERUN - Young European Research Universities Network - since October 2016, when the network opened its Brussels office. She leads YERUN's strategic direction, coordinates networking activities, and oversees the implementation of the network's strategy and objectives.

09.50 - 10.00

*Keynote speech*



**Henna Virkkunen**, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy

As Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, Ms Henna Virkkunen is tasked with combatting the increasingly complex security threats facing the EU, whilst at the same time strengthening our external borders and our internal security. This goes hand in hand with her responsibility to ensure our freedoms, justice and democracy are strengthened too.

Furthermore, she is responsible for the Digital and Frontier Technologies portfolio. This entails leading Europe's efforts in shaping a competitive, resilient and inclusive digital future and maintaining or attaining leadership in strategic digital technologies.

Prior to joining the European Commission Ms Virkkunen served as a Member of the European Parliament for over ten years. As a Member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy her work focused on digitalisation, research and frontier technologies.

Ms Virkkunen has held various ministerial positions in Finland, namely Minister of Transport and Local Government (2014), Minister of Public Administration and Local Government (2011-2014) as well as Minister of Education and Science (2008-2011).

# HIGH-LEVEL PANEL

## THEATER



10.00 - 11.00

### *Funding Europe's Future: What Do We Need for a Competitive Europe?*



**Andrzej Szeptycki**, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of Poland

Undersecretary of state at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education responsible for international cooperation, professor of social sciences, lecturer at the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Studies of the University of Warsaw, member of Szymon Hołownia's Poland 2050 political party. He lectured among other in France, Ukraine and China, His most recent publication is "Contemporary Polish-Ukrainian Relations" (2023).



**Eszter Lakos**, Member of the European Parliament (EPP)

Eszter Lakos (EPP, Hungary) was elected to the European Parliament in 2024 as a member of the TISZA Party. In the EP, MEP Lakos serves as a member of the Committee on Industry, Research, and Energy (ITRE) and as a substitute in the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), Committee on Security and Defence (SEDE) and in the special committee on the European Democracy Shield (EUDS).

She is a member of STOA, the Science and Technology Options Assessment Panel of the EP. Before, she worked in the European Institute of Technology & Innovation (EIT) in Budapest. From 2015 to 2023, she was a research attaché at the Perm. Rep. of Hungary to the EU, representing Hungary in Horizon Europe negotiations. She holds a PhD in International Law & Economics from Bocconi University in Milan.

# HIGH-LEVEL PANEL

## THEATER



10.00 - 11.00

### *Funding Europe's Future: What Do We Need for a Competitive Europe?*



**Maria Leptin**, President of the European Research Council

Maria Leptin is a developmental biologist and geneticist who is the President of the European Research Council (ERC). She carried out her PhD research at the Basel Institute for Immunology. She then moved to the Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, became a group leader at the Max Planck Institute for Developmental Biology in Tübingen, and professor at the Institute of Genetics, University of Cologne.

Before her appointment as ERC President, Leptin was the Director of the European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO) in Heidelberg and a research group leader at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory. She is an elected member of EMBO, the Academia Europaea and the German National Academy of Sciences (Leopoldina). She is an Honorary Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences, a Foreign Member of the Royal Society and an international member of the US National Academy of Sciences.



**Pauline Rouch**, Director for the Common Policy Centre, DG RTD

Pauline Rouch is a French national with degrees in political science (Sciences Po Strasbourg) and European studies (ULB Brussels). She joined the European Commission in 2005 as a policy officer in DG INFSO. She later served in the Cabinets of Commissioners Viviane Reding, Martine Reicherts, and President Jean-Claude Juncker, advising on justice, equality, digital policy, and institutional relations. From 2017 to 2020, she was the Commission's Representative to Coreper I, and joined President von der Leyen's transition team in 2019. She was Head of Private Office to Commissioner Mariya Gabriel (2021–2023) and led the Commission team supporting Mario Draghi's 2024 report on European competitiveness. Since December 2024, she is Director of the Common Policy Centre in DG Research and Innovation, overseeing Horizon Europe. In recognition of her service, she was named Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur by France in 2024.

# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## MORNING - THEATER

11.30 - 12.30

*Europe's competitiveness: What are the real assets of Europe? Can technology alone save us?*



**Maria Cristina Russo**, Director for Prosperity, DG RTD, European Commission



**Lina Gálvez MEP**, Member of the European Parliament (S&D)



**Jon Deer**, Treasurer of EASSH, European Alliance of Social Sciences and Humanities. Director of Research and Innovation at City & St George's University of London



**Rianne Letschert**, President of Maastricht University

### **Moderator**

**Massimo Busuoli**, Director of NTNU





# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## MORNING - THEATER

11.30 - 12.30

*Europe's competitiveness: What are the real assets of Europe? Can technology alone save us?*



**Maria Cristina Russo**, Director for Prosperity, DG RTD

Maria Cristina Russo is Director of the Prosperity Directorate in DG Research and Innovation. In this role she is responsible for Industrial research innovation & investments agenda, Valorisation policies and IPR, Industrial transformation, and Industry 5.0 and AI in Science. Previously Director for Global Approach & International Cooperation in R&I with responsibility for developing and implementing the EU international strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation and the international dimension of the Horizon programme. She has been working for the European Commission since 1992 where she held several policy and managerial positions related to external relations, the EU decision-making process and various EU policies, in particular Research & Innovation. Before being appointed Director, she was member of the Cabinet of the Commissioner in charge of research policy and Head of Unit in the Secretariat-General of the European Commission holding different positions dealing with inter-institutional relations and policy making, and in the department in charge of consumers' policies and financial services.



**Lina Gálvez MEP**, Member of the European Parliament (S&D)

Lina Gálvez Muñoz is a Member of the European Parliament (EP) for Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) group, since July 2019. In the EP, she is Chair of the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee, member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and Vice-chair of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA). She also sits on the Committee on International Trade (INTA) as substitute member. She is a member of the Delegations for Relations with the United States and the Korean Peninsula, Vice-Chair of the Sky and Space Intergroup, and serves as an Ambassador of Women Political Leaders for the European Parliament. She is Vice-President of The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS), where she is Chair of FEPS Scientific Council since June 2023.



**Jon Deer**, Treasurer of EASSH, European Alliance of Social Sciences and Humanities. Director of Research and Innovation at City & St George's University of London

Jonathan Deer is Director of Research and Innovation at City St.George's after nearly 20 years at the London School of Economics. He has been active in wider roles in science policy engagement as a board member of the UK Campaign for Social Science and is one of the founding members of the European Alliance for Social Science and Humanities. In 2017 he was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.



**Rianne Letschert**, President of Maastricht University

Prof. Dr. Rianne Letschert (1976) has been President of Maastricht University since November 2021 and previously served as its Rector Magnificus from 2016 to 2022. Letschert has been actively involved in national and international academic organizations, serving as Chair of De Jonge Akademie of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Renowned for bridging science and society, she has advised international courts, delivered public lectures, and held socially engaged roles. She co-leads the national 'Recognition and Rewards' programme, championing inclusive academic career paths. In 2023–2024, she served as President of CoARA, promoting reform in research assessment. Currently, she chairs the Advisory Committee of the Dutch National Growth Fund and sits on the Supervisory Boards of Catharina Hospital and the Fund for Victim Support.

**Massimo Busuoli**, Director of NTNU



Massimo Busuoli is the Director of NTNU Brussels office since 2016. With a background as a Physicist, he started his career in ENEA (Italy), first as a researcher then becoming the Head of the European Affair Unit located in Brussels. Active in Brussels since 2006, he is an expert in EU policies and strategies, and has coordinated several projects and EU networks (like IGLO and the EERA Secretariat), and he is currently serving as coordinator of the European Ocean Research and Education Alliance (EOREA) Secretariat. He has been instrumental in the creation of some important EU initiatives such as EERA, the European Energy Research Alliance, the Italian Node in the KIC Raw Materials and the UnLiON network.



# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

MORNING - ROOM 7, THE BALCONY

11.30 - 12.30

*How Can the R&I Sector Better Contribute  
to Europe's Future?*



**Caroline Vandierendonck**, Head STEP Platform Unit, DG BUDG, European Commission



**Pirita Lindholm**, Director ERRIN



**Colin Fitzpatrick**, Vice President of Global and Community Engagement at University of Limerick



**Malin Ideland**, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Malmö University



**Geoff Rodgers**, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Brunel University of London

## **Moderator**

**Charlotte Van Velthoven-Geerdink**, Charly Speaks



# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## MORNING - ROOM 7, THE BALCONY

11.30 - 12.30

*How Can the R&I Sector Better Contribute  
to Europe's Future?*



**Caroline Vandierendonck**, Head STEP Platform Unit, DG BUDG

Caroline is an accomplished policy leader with a strong background in European economics, financial services and budgetary matters.

She joined the European Commission to work on national Budgetary Governance in DG ECFIN during the subprime crisis. She later took on a pivotal role in DG FISMA as Lead Negotiator for the adoption of the EMIR 2.2 Regulation on Central Clearing Counterparties during Brexit. Next, Caroline advised the President of the Eurogroup and the President of the Economic and Financial Committee. In this role, she served as Deputy Head of the Secretariat of the Economic and Financial Committee.

Since January 2024, she leads the STEP Platform Taskforce within DG BUDG. Her mandate includes the implementation of the STEO and the preparation of the future European Multiannual Budget.



**Pirita Lindholm**, Director ERRIN

Pirita Lindholm is the Director of ERRIN - European Regions Research and Innovation Network. ERRIN is a well-known Brussels-based network that gathers some 120 regional organisations from 24 European countries. Established in 2001, ERRIN supports members to enhance their regional and local research and innovation capacities and further develop their R&I ecosystems. Pirita is an enthusiast of mission-oriented policy and served as a member of the Mission Assembly of the climate-neutral and smart cities mission between 2019-2021. Furthermore, Pirita has over 20 years of experience working in European networks representing local and regional actors, covering several policy areas such as climate, energy and sustainability.

# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

MORNING - ROOM 7, THE BALCONY

11.30 - 12.30

*How Can the R&I Sector Better Contribute  
to Europe's Future?*



**Colin Fitzpatrick**, Vice President of Global and Community Engagement at University of Limerick

Professor Colin Fitzpatrick is the Vice President of Global and Community Engagement at University of Limerick since January 2025. With over two decades of academic leadership and a distinguished career at UL, he brings extensive expertise in fostering global connections and enhancing community partnerships. As Vice President, he leads the development of a comprehensive global engagement strategy, focusing on building strategic international partnerships, enhancing UL's teaching and research excellence, and deepening ties with local and regional communities. His vision includes fostering inclusive and sustainable educational opportunities that align with UL's mission and values.



**Malin Ideland**, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Malmo University

Malin Ideland is pro-vice-chancellor responsible for research and doctoral education at Malmö University. She also works as Professor in Educational Sciences. Her research has during later years mainly focused on the conditions for, and consequences of, commercialisation of Swedish education. Furthermore, Ideland is the scientific leader of a doctoral school for future teacher educators: Education, Learning and Globalization.

# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

MORNING - ROOM 7, THE BALCONY

11.30 - 12.30

*How Can the R&I Sector Better Contribute  
to Europe's Future?*



**Geoff Rodgers, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Brunel University of London**

Professor Rodgers was appointed to Brunel University in 1989 as a lecturer in Physics, becoming a Reader in Mathematical Physics in 2001 and Professor of Theoretical Physics in 2003. In 2004 he joined the Brunel Graduate School and was appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research in 2008. He was promoted to Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research in 2014. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Physics and the Higher Education Academy. He is also a Visiting Professor at the University of Havana, Cuba. Between 2010 and 2014 he chaired the Research Excellence Group of London Higher, made up of the PVCs for Research of the universities in London. In 2018 he led the Science and Innovation Audit on Sustainable Airports on behalf of BEIS, working with stakeholders to build an agenda for growth and innovation in the west London economy.

**Charlotte Van Velthoven-Geerdink, Charly Speaks**



Charlotte Van Velthoven is an experienced and all-round moderator with a specialization in topics related but not limited to science, research, education and innovation due to the fact that as a lobbyist, she advocated for (Dutch and Swiss) research and innovation communities in Brussels. Moreover, she built up experience in the maritime sector and the digital health sector. She is a Dutch national and is fluent in English and German. She moderates in English, German and Dutch. Her goal is to convey complex material in an understandable way. She always strives to put speakers, panelists and audience at ease. Her life motto 'sharing is caring' applies well to both her character and her moderation style: She makes sure the event runs smoothly.

# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

MORNING - ROOM 8, THE LAUNCHPAD



11.30 - 12.30

## *Who Leads the Leaders? Rethinking University Leadership in a Changing World*



**Lana Par**, Vice President of the European Students' Union



**Thomas Estermann**, Director of Governance, Funding and Public Policy Development at European University Association



**Ada Pellert**, Rector of University of Klagenfurt



**Jens Ringsmose**, Rector of University of Southern Denmark

### **Moderator**

**Silvia Gómez Recio**, YERUN Secretary General



# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## MORNING - ROOM 8, THE LAUNCHPAD



11.30 - 12.30

### *Who Leads the Leaders? Rethinking University Leadership in a Changing World*



**Lana Par**, Vice President of the European Students' Union

Lana Par is the Vice-President of the European Students' Union (ESU), representing 20 million students across 40 countries. She holds a degree in Biotechnology and Drug Research and has over five years of experience in student advocacy. Lana previously led the student council at the University of Rijeka and was active in the Croatian Students' Council. Her work focuses on student-centered learning, quality education, micro-credentials, digitalisation, and the advancement of the European Education Area, especially focusing on democratic student representation in European University Alliances.



**Thomas Estermann**, Director of Governance, Funding and Public Policy Development at European University Association (EUA)

Thomas Estermann is Director for Governance, Funding and Public Policy Development with responsibilities for EUA's work aimed at strengthening universities' autonomy, governance, leadership, management and their financial sustainability.

Thomas is actively involved in various European and national committees, expert groups, editorial boards, and advisory boards, including those of European university alliances. He regularly contributes to higher education management programs and recently developed the EUA Leadership Development Programme to equip senior university leaders with the leadership tools to drive transformation in higher education. He has provided guidance in multiple national higher education reform processes in Europe and beyond and has authored publications on university funding, governance, leadership, and management.

Prior to joining EUA in 2007, he held the position of Deputy University Director at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna.



# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## MORNING - ROOM 8, THE LAUNCHPAD



11.30 - 12.30

### *Who Leads the Leaders? Rethinking University Leadership in a Changing World*



**Ada Pellert**, Rector of University of Klagenfurt

Ada Pellert has been Rector of the University of Klagenfurt since December 2024. Over the years, she has held numerous academic leadership roles, including Vice-Rector at the Universities of Graz and Krems, and Rector of FernUniversität in Hagen (2016–2024). From 2009 to 2015, she served as founding president of the German University for Professional Studies in Berlin. Ada Pellert has also contributed significantly to national and international education policy, serving on Germany's Digital Council (2018–2021), as President of the Carl Benz Academy in Beijing (2011–2016) and since 2023 as Vice President of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU).



**Jens Ringsmose**, Rector of University of Southern Denmark

Jens Ringsmose is a Professor of International Politics and the Rector of the University of Southern Denmark (SDU), a position he has held since 2021. Before becoming Rector, he served as Dean of the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences at SDU and before that as Vice-Dean for Research and Director of the Institute for Military Operations at the Royal Danish Defence College. He earned his MA in History and PhD in International Politics from SDU. His research interests include strategic studies, security and defense policy, NATO and asymmetric conflicts.

Jens is also a member of YERUN's Executive Board, and both Jens and SDU are very committed to internationalisation and the European higher education and research areas.

13.30 - 14.50

*Ted Talks*



**Adam Izdebski, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń**

Adam Izdebski is an interdisciplinary historian and ecologist, a graduate of Warsaw and Oxford Universities. Since 2018, he has been leading an independent research group at the Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology in Jena, Germany. In July 2025, he is moving to Toruń, Poland, to take up a professorship in human ecology at the Nicolaus Copernicus University and found a new research group at the Centre for Modern Interdisciplinary Technologies as one of the PIs of the recently-awarded ERC Synergy Grant EUROpest. Adam is also a visiting professor and project leader at the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature in Kyoto, Japan. His research interests cover climate change, pandemics, biodiversity, and the interaction of economic development and ecological dynamics in the Late Holocene. He has been involved in several science for policy initiatives and from May 2025 he is a member of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors to the European Commission.



**Gideon Koekoek, Maastricht University**

Gideon Koekoek is associate professor of physics at Maastricht University. Having advanced degrees in theoretical physics as well as education, he spends equal time between creating and teaching courses in theoretical physics and research in gravitational waves and general relativity. On a mission to demystify physics so that everyone can understand the revolutionary discoveries being done by physicists every day, Gideon also coordinates regional, national, and international projects for public, educational, and political outreach of fundamental science, and is a frequently asked presenter on physics, research, and education.

13.30 - 14.50

*Ted Talks*



**Tina Kold Jensen, University of Southern Denmark**

Tina Kold Jensen is professor in environmental epidemiology and has studied adverse effects of exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals and impact on both fetuses, children and adults. She is the research leader in the Odense Child Cohort, in which more than 100 articles in peer reviewed journals have been published and more than 50 mill DK from external grants have been obtained. She is a member of expert committees in The Danish National Board of Health and The Danish Environmental Agency addressing the adverse health effects of PFAS exposure and knowledge gaps in PFAS and in WHO expert group to evaluate PFAS. In addition, she holds an ERC advanced grant addressing adverse health effects of PFAS exposure. Fun facts: Love open water swimming and bridge.



**Gabriele Spilker, University of Konstanz**

Gabriele Spilker is Professor of „International Politics – Global Inequality“ at the Department of Politics and Public Administration and co-speaker of the Excellence Cluster "The Politics of Inequality". Gabriele Spilker completed her PhD at ETH Zurich as part of the National Center of Competence in Research (NCCR) "Challenges to Democracy" in 2009. Before joining the University of Konstanz, she was a Fritz Thyssen Fellow at the Weatherhead Center of International Affairs at Harvard University (2011-2012), a postdoctoral researcher in the "International Political Economy" group at the Center for Comparative and International Studies (CIS) at ETH Zurich (2012-2013) as well as Assistant/Associate Professor of International Politics (2014-2020) and Professor for Empirical Research Methods at the Department of Political Science and Sociology of the University of Salzburg (2020-2021). Her main research interest concerns the societal-level consequences of climate change, for instance, in terms of migration and protest.

# TED TALKS & THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FUTURE

## THEATER



13.30 - 14.50

*Ted Talks*



**Cyprien Verseux, University of Bremen**

Dr. Cyprien Verseux is an astrobiologist who founded and currently leads the Laboratory of Applied Space Microbiology at the ZARM (University of Bremen). His group develops biology-based technologies in support of future crewed missions beyond Earth. Since February this year, he has been leading the ERC project MarCyano. His doctoral work was oriented toward astrobiology, including contributions to the EXPOSE-R2 space mission. He also conducted field work, most notably during a one-year appointment as the Station Leader and as Glaciologist at the Concordia research station (Antarctica) and as Crew Biologist in the one-year, NASA-funded HI-SEAS IV mission (Mauna Loa volcano, Hawaii).

14.50 - 15.30

*The University of the Future*



**Jamil Salmi, Global Tertiary Education Expert**

Until recently, Jamil Salmi, a Moroccan education economist, served as the coordinator of the World Bank's tertiary education program. Mr. Salmi was the principal author of a recent Tertiary Education Strategy entitled "Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education" and more recently authored "The Challenge of Establishing World Class Universities." Over the past seventeen years, he has provided policy advice on tertiary education reform to the governments of over 60 countries around the world. Mr. Salmi has also guided the strategic planning efforts of several public and private universities. Mr. Salmi is a member of the Governing Board of the International Institute for Educational Planning, the International Advisory Network of the UK Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, and the Editorial Committee of OECD's Journal of Higher Education Management and Policy.

# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## AFTERNOON - THEATER

16.00-17.00

*Working Together for Impact: The Future  
of European University Collaboration*



**Charlotte Nilsen**, USN Student representative in the EDUC Alliance



**Susanne Conze**, Head of Unit for Higher Education, DG EAC, European Commission



**Veronika Kupriyanova**, Deputy Director ACA



**Valerie Schegk**, Secretary General at YUFE Alliance, and FOREU4ALL Forum Board Representative



**João Amaro de Matos**, Vice Rector for Education and International Development at NOVA University Lisbon

### **Moderator**

**Charlotte Van Velthoven-Geerdink**, Charly Speaks



# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## AFTERNOON - THEATER

16.00-17.00

### *Working Together for Impact: The Future of European University Collaboration*



**Charlotte Nilsen**, USN Student representative in the EDUC Alliance

Charlotte Nilsen is the Student President at the University of South-Eastern Norway (USN) and governs the local student body. She is also a member of the EDUC Student Board, which promotes student participation and engagement within the alliance.

Charlotte has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in human rights and multiculturalism, an interdisciplinary international degree which is a unique programme offered at USN. Charlotte has been part of several boards and committees at USN and is currently a representative in the board of the National Union of Students in Norway.

As a student trustee Charlotte has especially worked for strengthening the student voice in institutional processes and strengthening the rights for both international and local students.



**Susanne Conze**, Head of Unit for Higher Education, DG EAC

Susanne Conze is Head of Unit for Higher education in the Directorate General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport of the European Commission. The unit is the lead service for the development of the European Education Area's higher education dimension as well as devising and managing the higher education strand of the flagship Erasmus+ Programme via the National Agencies and the Executive Agency EACEA.

During her career, both in the Commission and before, Susanne worked in different areas of education and social inclusion policies as well as in the management of European education programmes. She studied history, sociology and political science and holds a PhD in history.



# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## AFTERNOON - THEATER

16.00-17.00

### *Working Together for Impact: The Future of European University Collaboration*



**Veronika Kupriyanova**, Deputy Director ACA

Veronika Kupriyanova is the Deputy Director of the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA). Veronika leads the ACA Secretariat's policy development, advocacy and member engagement work and serves as the co-chair of the ACAThematic Peer Group "European Policies and Programmes" assisting members in preparing joint actions and policy contributions at the EU level. Veronika has more than fifteen years of experience in the design, implementation, coordination and evaluation of EU policy initiatives and projects in higher education and research.



**Valerie Schegk**, Secretary General at YUFE Alliance, and  
FOREU4ALL Forum Board Representative

Maria-Valerie Schegk works as Secretary General for the Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) Universities Alliance. In this function, she spearheads the work with the partners of the Alliance to strengthen the collaboration and deepen its impact on its communities and the wider higher education sector. Furthermore, she is passionate about developing strategies for the benefit of YUFE's various learner groups and their skills as well as to support academics in their proposals for EU funding. Valerie is a convinced European, motivated to serve the knowledge square.

# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## AFTERNOON - THEATER



16.00-17.00

### *Working Together for Impact: The Future of European University Collaboration*



**João Amaro de Matos**, Vice Rector for Education and International Development at NOVA University Lisbon

João Amaro de Matos is Vice Rector of NOVA University Lisbon since September 2017, overseeing International Development and Teaching & Education. He holds PhDs in Mathematical Physics (USP, Brazil) and Management (INSEAD), and is a Professor of Finance at Nova School of Business and Economics.

He played a pivotal role in expanding NOVA's global footprint. In 2018, he spearheaded the development of a pioneering pre-university programme aimed at attracting and preparing international students. He negotiated the establishment of NOVA's international campus in Cairo, initiated in 2019 and launched in 2022. Under his leadership, NOVA also joined the European University Alliance EUTOPIA in 2023, further strengthening its commitment to international collaboration and academic excellence.

A strong advocate for educational innovation, he has driven the early adoption of forward-looking pedagogical approaches across the university. His initiatives have emphasized the integration of digital technologies, entrepreneurial thinking, and sustainability competencies at all levels of instruction.

# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

AFTERNOON - ROOM 7, THE BALCONY



16.00-17.00

## *Enabling Talent to Grow: Creating the Right Conditions for Careers*



**Claire Morel**, Head of Unit in charge of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, DG EAC, European Commission



**Emmanuelle Gardan**, Director at COIMBRA Group



**Clare Viney**, Chief Executive Officer at CRAC/Vitae



**Julia Sievers**, Head of Academic Affairs at University of Bremen



**Saša Zelenika**, Rector's Advisor for European Policies and Internationalisation at University of Rijeka

### **Moderator**

**Marta Agostinho**, Executive Director of EU-LIFE



# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## AFTERNOON - ROOM 7, THE BALCONY



16.00-17.00

### *Enabling Talent to Grow: Creating the Right Conditions for Careers*



**Claire Morel**, Head of Unit in charge of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, DG EAC, European Commission

Claire Morel is, at the European Commission, the Head of unit in charge of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions for the skills, career development and mobility of researchers. Before that she was the Head of the Unit for international cooperation at DG Education, Culture, Youth and Sport of the European Commission, with particular focus on the international dimension of the Erasmus+ programme and international policy dialogues in higher education and youth with various partners of the EU in the world. She has worked several years with the countries neighbouring the EU. Before, she worked for the Tempus programme (for higher education modernisation), cooperating with Central Asian countries, and for the European Training Foundation, an agency of the EU based in Turin, on the reform of vocational education and training systems in the Eastern neighbouring countries and Central Asia.



**Emmanuelle Gardan**, Director at COIMBRA Group

Emmanuelle Gardan joined the Coimbra Group as Director of the Brussels Office in January 2020. In this capacity she has represented her organisation as co-sponsor of the European Research Area policy action on research careers. She has more than 20 years' experience in international academic cooperation, built through leading positions in the public, private and non-profit sectors. She previously worked as Head of Sector for Higher Education and Research at the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, after spending the first decade of her career at the French Erasmus+ National Agency where she was successively in charge of policy support, programme management, international cooperation and foresight. She served as national contact point for the Erasmus Mundus programme in 2009-2010. She holds a Master's degree in European Studies from the Political Science Institute of the University of Strasbourg.

# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## AFTERNOON - ROOM 7, THE BALCONY

16.00-17.00

### *Enabling Talent to Grow: Creating the Right Conditions for Careers*



**Clare Viney**, Chief Executive Officer at CRAC/Vitae

Clare Viney is Chief Executive Officer of CRAC, where she has led since 2016. With over 25 years of experience in advocacy, policy and external affairs, she is a Chartered Scientist and Chemist with a strong track record in the science community and not-for-profit sector. At CRAC, she oversees the Vitae programme, which supports the professional development of researchers and drives positive change in research culture. Previously, Clare spent 16 years at the Royal Society of Chemistry in senior roles across membership, policy, fundraising and communications. She is deeply committed to supporting diverse talent and empowering individuals to reach their potential. Clare currently chairs the Technician Commitment Steering Board and the Career Development Policy Group, and is a member of several advisory boards, including the University of Southampton's Department of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering.



**Julia Sievers**, Head of Academic Affairs at University of Bremen

Julia Sievers has been the Head of Academic Affairs at the University of Bremen for three years, following her previous role as Head of Research Services. In these positions, she has played a key role in drafting and implementing the university's Academic Staff Development Policy and Tenure Track Programme. Prior to that, she was a lecturer in political science and was elected dean of studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Bremen. Julia holds a degree in political science from Freie Universität Berlin, and earned her PhD at the University of Bremen, including a one-year research stay at the European University Institute in Florence. With a strong interest in European cooperation and affairs, she has been actively involved in the Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN) since its inception.

# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## AFTERNOON - ROOM 7, THE BALCONY



16.00-17.00

### *Enabling Talent to Grow: Creating the Right Conditions for Careers*



**Saša Zelenika**, Rector's Advisor for European Policies and Internationalisation at University of Rijeka

Saša Zelenika is a tenured full professor at the University of Rijeka (UNIRI). He was Assistant Minister for Science and Deputy Minister at the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. He has authored more than 220 scientific and professional publications, 2 textbooks, a patent, 63 scientific broadening newspaper articles, 128 broadening talks and 18 scientific broadening radio shows, and actively participates(ed) in 11 EU FP projects. He just finished his term as UNIRI's Vice-Rector for Strategic Projects where, often in collaborations within the YERUN network, he has led the UNIRI activities on the reform of research(er) assessment, fostered UNIRI's activities related to open science and AI policies, and was in charge of innovation and knowledge valorisation activities. Currently he is UNIRI's a.i. Rector's Advisor for European Policies and Internationalisation.

**Marta Agostinho**, Executive Director of EU-LIFE



Marta Agostinho is the Executive Director of EU-LIFE, an alliance of leading European research institutes in the life sciences that aims at promoting excellence in research and acting as a voice for research institutes in the European policy landscape. Her fields of action include science policy, research governance & culture, strategic science management and communication, outreach and public dialogue with science. She is also expert evaluator in EU programmes. As Executive Director of EU-LIFE, M. Agostinho co-designs and oversees the implementation of EU-LIFE's overall strategy, including leading the science policy area, representing EU-LIFE externally and supervising the EU-LIFE office. She is currently based in Barcelona, Spain



# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

AFTERNOON - ROOM 8, THE LAUNCHPAD



16.00-17.00

*Connect by YERUN: How can networks  
maximise Research Collaborations?*



**Dusan Misevic**, Data Scientist at University of Southern Denmark, and Developer of CONNECT by YERUN



**Maéva Vignes**, Freelancer in Data Science & EU Research Funding, and Developer of CONNECT by YERUN



**Wainer Lusoli**, Deputy Head, Reforming European R&I and Research Infrastructures, European Research Executive Agency



**Anne Adams**, Head of Grants Office at University of Antwerp



**Adam Kola**, YERUN Vice President, and Vice Rector for Research at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

## **Moderator**

**Silvia Gómez Recio**, YERUN Secretary General



# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## AFTERNOON - ROOM 8, THE LAUNCHPAD



16.00-17.00

### *Connect by YERUN: How can networks maximise Research Collaborations?*



**Dusan Misevic**, Data Scientist at University of Southern Denmark, and Developer of CONNECT by YERUN

Dusan Misevic is a data scientist at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) in Odense, where he is developing web platforms that use open data and artificial intelligence methods to help researchers identify promising funding opportunities and relevant collaborators. More generally, he is part of an SDU team of web developers, programmers, and data scientists who analyze, synthesize, and share complex and scattered data with researchers, research support managers, and other stakeholders through a suite of web tools. He holds a PhD in evolutionary biology, has worked as a researcher at ETH Zurich (Switzerland) and INSERM (France), and as the Director of Research Affairs at the Center for Research and Interdisciplinarity in Paris. His academic interests are in the fields of citizen science, artificial life, and artificial intelligence, and he remains active in related research and practitioner communities.



**Maéva Vignes**, Freelancer in Data Science & EU Research Funding, and Developer of CONNECT by YERUN

Maéva Vignes is a freelance data scientist with a strong foundation in academic research and over eight years of experience in research management. She previously worked at the University of Southern Denmark, where she co-led an interdisciplinary team focused on developing data-driven tools to improve grant applications and foster research collaborations. Her work bridges research funding strategy, data analytics, and digital tools, with a particular focus on the EU research & innovation landscape. Maéva has extensive expertise in research mapping, science policy, and the use of scholarly metadata and artificial intelligence to support institutional decision-making. She now collaborates with universities and networks across Europe to enhance their research visibility, identify strategic opportunities, and translate complex data into actionable insights.

# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## AFTERNOON - ROOM 8, THE LAUNCHPAD

16.00-17.00

### *Connect by YERUN: How can networks maximise Research Collaborations?*



**Wainer Lusoli**, Deputy Head, Reforming European R&I and Research Infrastructures, European Research Executive Agency

Wainer has 20+ years of experience in science policy, digital policy, and data policy and implementation. He worked in senior and management positions at university, at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, at the Directorate General for Research & Innovation. Since 2021, He is deputy Head of Unit at the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Day to day, he helps manage 50 people and steer 3 billion EUR of EU funding to support the development of the European Research Area and of Research Infrastructures. For two years, he has been a member of the Task Force steering the preparation of the (10th) Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2028-2034). Previously in Brussels, he led the team that designed the European Open Science Cloud, the Europe-wide network to share scientific data across disciplines and borders, a priority of Commissioner Moedas and today of Commission President von der Leyen.



**Anne Adams**, Head of Grants Office at University of Antwerp

Anne Adams is policy advisor at the Department of Research, Valorization and Innovation at Antwerp University and heads its Grants Office, a team of sixteen experts providing services and advice to the academic community. In this capacity she (co) chairs the internal platform of R&I support staff within the faculties, connecting strengths and powers for the sake of research and innovation and grants acquisition.

Within YERUN Anne has been member of the Policy Working Group since its start. Since 2024 she chairs the Flemish interuniversity 'Working group on EU Research', contributing to strong and consistent voicing of university interests in R&I.

Building research collaboration is also at the core of the YUFE4Postdoc project, supported by Horizon Europe's Marie Skłodowska-Curie program. Anne Adams initiated and now leads this project, that has resulted in the appointment of 55 postdocs, interconnecting academics of nine of the universities of the YUFE alliance.

# PARALLEL PANEL SESSION

## AFTERNOON - ROOM 8, THE LAUNCHPAD



16.00-17.00

*Connect by YERUN: How can networks  
maximise Research Collaborations?*



**Adam Kola**, YERUN Vice President, and Vice Rector for Research at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

Prof. Adam Kola, currently Vice-Rector for Research at Nicolaus Copernicus University, has an academic career spanning over two decades with leadership roles in research and higher education. He served as head of the IMSErt Centre of Excellence (2019-2024) and has been Vice Dean of both the Faculty of Philology and the Faculty of Humanities. Additionally, he holds the position of Assistant Secretary-General of the UNESCO-affiliated FILLM. His research focuses on knowledge transfer as a socio-cultural and geopolitical phenomenon, and he has secured grants from prestigious institutions. Prof. Kola has held fellowships at leading global universities and completed advanced leadership programmes at Yale and Cambridge, furthering his expertise in university strategy, innovation, and sustainability. At present, he is Vice President of YERUN.

# KEYNOTE: UPCOMING DANISH EU PRESIDENCY THEATER

17.00 - 17.30

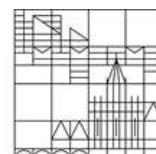
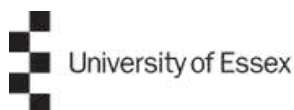
*Keynote: Upcoming Danish EU Presidency*



**Christina Egelund**, Minister of Higher Education and Science of Denmark

Christina Egelund has served as Denmark's Minister for Higher Education and Science since December 2022. A former Member of Parliament for the Liberal Alliance (2015–2019), she also chaired the party's parliamentary group from 2018 to 2019. Her career spans both politics and business, with roles including Special Political Developer at the Confederation of Danish Industry, Public Affairs Director at The Rud Pedersen Group, and Head of Justitia Academy at Think Tank Justitia. Before entering politics, she ran her own business, Jambo Holiday Park, for nearly a decade. Earlier in her career, she worked as a stockbroker in Paris. Christina studied Lettres Modernes at the Sorbonne and holds an upper secondary certificate in mathematics from Hjørring Gymnasium. She has also served on the board of VisitDenmark and as a judge for the Libre Prize. Her background blends political insight with private sector experience and a strong interest in education and public engagement.

## - YERUN Members -



YERUN, Young European Research Universities Network, 2025

For questions about this document please contact [YerunTeam@yerun.eu](mailto:YerunTeam@yerun.eu)



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