

# *European Futures*

## **The Europaeum Policy Conference**

13 to 16 October 2025, Brussels



**THE EUROPAEUM**

A network of leading European universities

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# Conference Introduction

Across Europe, policymakers are grappling with urgent challenges that cut across borders: strategic autonomy, migration pressures, polarisation in public life, the pollution of information ecosystems, and the need to rethink how justice systems protect human rights. At the same time, the climate crisis requires bold steps, from reimagining our cities through urban greening to driving a just transition with the Green New Deal. This year's conference brings these themes together, asking how Europe can respond with leadership, resilience, and vision.

The debates around migration remain central to Europe's future: how to balance humanitarian commitments, integration, and security while maintaining social cohesion. Rising polarisation and the spread of online disinformation challenge democratic trust and demand new approaches to public dialogue and the media. Meanwhile, reconsidering the treatment of minor offences opens questions about fairness, efficiency, and the future direction of European justice systems. Equally, the climate emergency is no longer a distant prospect but a lived reality. Urban greening strategies are not only environmental imperatives but also social ones, reshaping the way citizens live, work, and interact in urban and rural communities alike.

Our fourth cohort of Europaeum Scholars will present fresh and practical ideas on how Europe can rise to these challenges: from rethinking migration and criminalisation, to building resilience against disinformation, to promoting greener, more liveable cities. Alongside contributions from distinguished keynote speakers, the programme brings together panels that explore both the obstacles and the opportunities in shaping Europe's policy future.

By convening diverse perspectives, this conference aims to provide pathways for a Europe that is more democratic, inclusive, resilient, sustainable, and socially just.

# Conference Agenda

**Monday 13 October**

**Venue: Fondation universitaire, 11 rue d'Egmont, Brussels 1000**

**Tel: +322 545 0400**

## **14.30 - 14.45 Opening Remarks**

- Anthony Teasdale, The Europaeum
- Tracey Sowerby, The Europaeum

## **14.45 - 16.15 Panel 1: The Future of Migration in Europe**

- Alberto Horst Neidhardt, European Policy Centre
  - Adam Kluge, The Europaeum
  - Sinéad Mulcahy, The Europaeum
  - Maria Gargano, Egmont Institute
- Chair: Tracey Sowerby, The Europaeum

## **16.15 - 16.45 Tea and Coffee**

## **16.45 - 18.15 Panel 2: Decriminalisation of Minor Offences in Europe**

- Doris Kristina Raave, The Europaeum
  - Esther Braun, The Europaeum
  - Daan Bauwens, UTSOPI
  - Robin Drevet, Modus Vivendi
- Chair: Tracey Sowerby, The Europaeum

## **18.45 - 21.00 Keynote Dinner for Europaeum Scholars and Speakers at Brasserie Volle Gas, 12 place Fernand Cocq**

Speaker: Klaus Welle, Secretary General of the European Parliament, 2009-22, on **Trump's Ten Revolutions and the Remaking of Politics in the West**

Chair: Anthony Teasdale, The Europaeum

# Conference Agenda

**Tuesday 14 October**

**Venue: Press Club Brussels, 95 rue Froissart, Brussels 1040.**

**Tel: +322 201 3705**

## **09.45 - 11.15 Panel 3: Disinformation and Media Resilience in Europe**

- Eddy Wax, Euractiv
  - Guiseppe Abbamonte, DG Connect
  - Babette de Naeyer, The Europaeum
  - Ömer Şahin, The Europaeum
- Chair: Miles Pattenden, The Europaeum

## **11.15 - 11.45 Tea and Coffee**

## **11.45 - 13.15 Keynote Conversation on 'European Challenges and European Potential'**

Speaker: Jim Cloos, TEPSA, formerly EU Council secretariat and *chef de cabinet* to President of the European Commission

Chair: Andrew Graham, The Europaeum

## **13.30 - 14.45 Informal Lunch for all at Press Club Brussels**

## **15.00 - 16.30 Keynote Roundtable 1: Depolarising Politics and Society in Europe**

- Sophie Porschlegel, The European Policy Centre / Das Progressive Zentrum
  - Erika Staël von Holstein, Re-Imagine Europa
  - Vassilis Kessidis, EPIC
  - Richard Corbett, former MEP and author
- Chair: Martin Westlake, LSE and College of Europe

**Venue: Fondation Universitaire, 11 Rue d'Egmont, Brussels 1000**

## **17.15 - 18.45 Promise and Performance in the Berlaymont: Perspectives on Von der Leyen 2.0**

- Heather Grabbe, Bruegel
  - Andrea Renda, Centre for European Policy Studies
  - Sophie Russack, Centre for European Policy Studies
  - Martin Westlake, LSE / College of Europe
- Chair: Anthony Teasdale, The Europaeum

# Conference Agenda

**Wednesday 15 October**

**Venue: Press Club Brussels, 95 Rue Froissart, Brussels 1040**

## **09.15 - 10.45 Panel 4: Urban greening and renewal in Europe**

- Heather Brooks, Eurocities
  - Filip Scherf, The Europaeum
  - Michele Collazzo, The Europaeum
- Chair: Tracey Sowerby, The Europaeum

## **10.45- 11.00 Tea and Coffee**

## **11.30 - 13.00 Award Ceremony for Europaeum Scholars' Projects 2024-25 in association with the Guardian**

### **Keynote Speaker:**

- António Leitão Amaro, Minister for the Presidency, Portugal

### **Assessors:**

- Maria João Rodrigues, Re-Imagine Europa
- Shada Islam, College of Europe
- Christian Leffler, International IDEA

Chairs: Andrew Graham, The Europaeum  
Wim van den Doel, Leiden University

## **14.00 - 18.00 Private Programme (see opposite)**

**Venue: Fondation Universitaire, 11 rue d'Egmont, Brussels 1000.**

## **18.00 - 19.30 Keynote Roundtable 3: Strategic Autonomy Now: An Idea Whose Time has Come or Already Gone?**

- Claude-France Arnould, Brussels Institute of Geopolitics
- Axel Marx, KU Leuven
- Jamie Shea, University of Exeter / Chatham House

Chair: Anthony Teasdale, The Europaeum.

## **19.30 - 21.45 Conference Dinner (by invitation only)**

### **Keynote speaker:**

- Maria João Rodrigues, Re-Imagine Europa

Chair: Andrew Graham, The Europaeum

# Private Agenda

*Wednesday 15 October*

## *Scholars' Programme and Alumni Only*

*Venue: Fondation universitaire, 11 rue d'Egmont, Brussels 1000.*

### **14.15 - 15.15 Keynote Conversation**

- MEP Ana Vasconcelos Martins, Renew Europe, Portugal
- Chair: Tracey Sowerby, The Europaeum.

### **15.15 - 15.30 Launch of the Mini-Grants Scheme and Discussion of Alumni Programme**

- Tracey Sowerby, The Europaeum
- Andrew Graham, The Europaeum

## *IDEAS Programme Only*

*Venue: European Parliament, 60 rue Wiertz, Brussels 1047 (enter on Place Luxembourg side).*

### **14.15 - 17.00 Visit to European Parliament**

- Victoria Martin de la Torre, European Parliamentary Research Service
- Philipp Schulmeister, DG Communication, European Parliament
- Lasse Boehm, DG Economy, Transformation and Industry, European Parliament

Followed by guided tour of the Paul-Henri Spaak and Altiero Spinelli Buildings by Richard Freedman, European Parliament.

*End of Private Agenda*

# IDEAS Institutional Visits Agenda

**Thursday 16 October**

**Venue: Council of EU, 'Europa' Building, 165 rue de la Loi, Brussels 1000.**

## **09.00 - 11.00 Guided Tour of the Europa Building**

Home of the European Council and Council of EU (latter aka Council of Ministers)

**Move to Mitwit Bruxelles Parlement, 38-40 Square de Meeûs, Brussels 1000.**

## **12.00 - 13.30 Discussion with Brussels-based Journalists over Lunch**

- Andy Bounds, Financial Times
- Alice Hancock, Financial Times
- Ben Munster, Politico Europe
- Jennifer Rankin, The Guardian
- Eddy Wax, Euractiv

**Move to: Triangle Building, 9a Rond-Point Schuman, Brussels 1046.**

## **14.15 - 17.00 Visit to European External Action Service (EEAS). to discuss strategic autonomy**

- Birgit Loser, Policy Planning and Strategic Communication
- Cormac James Shine, Security and Defence Policy Directorate

## **17.00 - 19.00 Debrief and Dinner at Attica, 49 rue de Trèves**



# Scholars' Keynote Dinner

(by invitation only)

**Monday 13 October**

**Venue: Brasserie Volle Gas, Place Fernand Cocq 21, Brussels 1050**

**18.45 - 21.00 Private Dinner for Scholars and Guests**

## **Keynote: 'Trump's Ten Revolutions: The Remaking of Politics in the West'**



**Klaus Welle** served as Secretary-General of the European Parliament from 2009 to 2022, following senior roles in the EPP and EU institutions. He is currently Chair of the Martens Centre Academic Council, Special Advisor to the EU Commissioner for Defence and Space, and Visiting Professor at LSE and KU Leuven.

Chair: Anthony Teasdale, The Europeaum

**Private Event**

## Scholars' Alumni Session

### *An Insider's View of the European Parliament: A Conversation with Ana Vasconcelos Martins MEP and Scholars' Alumna*



**Ana Vasconcelos Martins** is a Portuguese MEP with Iniciativa Liberal, sitting in the Renew Europe group. An alumna of the Europaeum Scholars Programme, she serves on the European Parliament's Environment Committee and international delegations, focusing on sustainability, democratic participation, and Europe's global partnerships.

**Location:** Fondation Universitaire

**Date:** Wednesday, 15 October

**Time:** 14.15 to 17.00

**Scholars Only Event**

# Scholars' Alumni Session

## Launch of the Mini-grants Scheme for Scholars Alumni

*We are pleased to announce a new initiative for Scholar alumni. Our new immigrants scheme provides funding for alumni who wish to collaborate on a policy—related project.*

## Film Screening: The Communal Urban Garden Effect



**Part of the Green Together Project:** Péter József Bori, Michele Collazzo, Amós Del Castillo Petidier, Ihor Moshenets, Filip Scherf, Beatriz Serra, Eva te Dorsthorst.

**Location:** Fondation Universitaire

**Date:** Wednesday, 15 October

**Time:** 14.15 to 17.00

**Scholars Only Event**

# Award Ceremony for Europaeum Scholars' projects 2024-25

*On Wednesday, 15 October, we will host the Europaeum Scholars' Project Award Ceremony for the 2024-25 cohort. This event celebrates the innovative and collaborative work undertaken by our Scholars during their time on the Programme. To open the ceremony, we are honoured to welcome back a former Europaeum alumnus, now serving as Portugal's Minister for the Presidency, to deliver our keynote address.*

## Keynote by His Excellency António Leitão Amaro



His Excellency **António Leitão Amaro**, Minister for the Presidency, Portugal; former Europaeum Scholar

Chairs: Andrew Graham, The Europaeum  
Wim van den Doel, Leiden University

**Location: Press Club**

**Date: Wednesday, 15 October**

**Time: 11.00 to 12.00**

Event Open to All

# Award Ceremony for Europaeum Scholars' projects 2024-25

*The ceremony will conclude with the announcement of the winning project. The award will be decided by an exceptional panel of judges whose expertise spans European politics, diplomacy, academia, and international affairs. Our distinguished assessors will ensure that every project has been evaluated with the insight and rigour they deserve. Their collective experience spans every major area of European policymaking.*

## Our Judges:



**Maria João Rodrigues**, Chair of Re-Imagine Europol; outgoing President, Foundation for European Progressive Studies, former Vice President of the European Parliament

**Shada Islam**, Visiting Professor, College of Europe, Natolin

**Christian Leffler**, former Deputy Secretary General, EEAS; Chair of the Board, International IDEA

**Chairs: Andrew Graham, The Europaeum**  
**Wim van den Doel, Leiden University**

**Location: Press Club**

**Date: Wednesday, 15 October**

**Time: 11.00 to 12.30**

Event Open to All

## Conference Dinner (by invitation)

*On Wednesday, 15 October, the conference concludes with a dinner at Fondation Universitaire. The dinner will include a keynote talk from Maria João Rodrigues.*

### Keynote Topic:



**Maria João Rodrigues** is a Portuguese economist, the Chair of the Board of Re-Imagine Europe, and the outgoing President of the Foundation for European Progressive Studies. She is a former MEP and was Vice-President of the S&D Group in the European Parliament from 2014-2019. Throughout her career she has been a key architect of major EU initiatives including the Lisbon Strategy, Lisbon Treaty, and European Pillar of Social Rights.

**Chair: Andrew Graham, The Europaemum**

**Location: Fondation Universitaire**

**Date: Wednesday, 15 October**

**Time: 19.30 to 21.45**

**Event Open to All**



# Institutional Vists



## Visit to European Parliament

Brussels Policy Seminar delegates will explore the European Parliament, engaging with experts Victoria Martin de la Torre, Philipp Schulmeister, and Lasse Boehm. A guided visit of the Paul-Henri Spaak and Altiero Spinelli buildings with Richard Freedman will provide rare insights into the inner workings of EU democracy.

**Location: European Parliament, 60 Rue Wiertz, Brussels 1047**

**Date: Wednesday, 15 October**

**Time: 14.15 to 17.00**

## Visit to the Europa Building

This guided tour of the Europa Building, home to the European Council and the Council of the EU offers delegates a unique glimpse into where Europe's leaders shape policy, providing an insider's view of the institutions driving decision-making and cooperation at the highest political level.

**Location: Triangle Building, 9a Rond-Point Schuman, Brussels 1046**

**Date: Thursday, 16 October**

**Time: 09.00 to 11.00**

## Visit to European External Action Service

The final visit of the Policy Seminar to the European External Action Service will explore the EU's pursuit of strategic autonomy. This visit offers firsthand insight into Europe's evolving global role, bridging policy theory with practice at the heart of EU diplomacy.

**Location: Triangle Building, 9a Rond-Point Schuman, Brussels 1046.**

**Date: Thursday, 16 October**

**Time: 14.00 to 16. 30**

**Brussels Policy Seminar Only Event**

# Journalist Lunch

On Thursday, 16 October, students on the Brussels Policy Seminar are invited to join a lunchtime discussion with Brussels-based journalists. This informal session offers a unique opportunity to hear first-hand insights into EU politics and media, and to engage directly with leading correspondents.

## Networking Lunch with EU-based Journalists



**Andy Bounds**, EU Correspondent at the Financial Times, formerly Netherlands Correspondent and contributor to Europe Express.

**Alice Hancock**, EU Correspondent at the Financial Times, previously worked as staff writer and online editor for Homes and Antiques.

**Ben Munster**, financial journalist at POLITICO Europe, former freelancer who has written for The New Yorker, Esquire, and Private Eye.

**Jennifer Rankin**, Brussels Correspondent at The Guardian, previously reported for Reuters, The Irish Times, and European Voice.

**Eddy Wax**, Newsletter Editor at Euractiv, former POLITICO Europe reporter.

**Location:** Mitwit Bruxelles Parlement, 9a Rond-Point Schuman, Brussels 1046.

**Date:** Thursday, 16 October

**Time:** 12.00 to 13.30

Brussels Policy Seminar Only Event

# The Europaeum Scholars' Programme

Now in its fourth two-year cycle, the Europaeum's flagship Scholars' Programme gives 30 of Europe's most outstanding doctoral students, drawn from our member universities, the opportunity to develop new cross-cutting skills and to learn what it means to lead effectively. Based on a rigorous selection process, the Europaeum chooses individuals who, in addition to being individuals of high academic merit, demonstrate integrity and are strongly committed to the European values of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law.

Over the course of two years, Scholars take part in a series of intensive modules hosted by universities and institutions across Europe, combining academic seminars, professional skills training, and direct engagement with policymakers and practitioners. Working in small, multi-disciplinary teams, they design and develop projects that respond to real-world European challenges, producing innovative proposals that aim to make Europe a better place. Central to the Programme is collaborative, multi-perspectival teamwork, and open-minded debate. Previous projects have tackled pressing issues such as democratic engagement, energy poverty, just transition, and youth unemployment.

The Programme has created a dynamic network of over 100 alumni, already making their mark in academia, politics, government, civil society, and the private sector, exemplifying the Europaeum's mission to connect scholarship with real-world impact and make Europe a better place.



# Scholars' Projects



A defining feature of the Europaeum Scholars' Programme is the collaborative project work undertaken by each cohort. Scholars are organised into small, multidisciplinary teams and challenged to design and develop a policy project that addresses an important European issue. From the outset, the teams work intensively under the guidance of experienced mentors, combining their diverse expertise and perspectives to craft new and practicable solutions.

Each project is rigorously evaluated by external experts drawn from the world of public policy, ensuring real-world relevance. The best projects are considered for publication or implementation. Current Scholars will present their proposals at this week's conference, offering Scholars a unique opportunity to influence debate, test ideas, and demonstrate how academic research can inform policy and strengthen Europe's future.

The 2024–25 cohort is addressing four important themes shaping Europe's future: migration; the decriminalisation of minor offences; disinformation and media resilience; and urban gardening as a tool for social cohesion and sustainability.

# Scholars Projects

## From Data to Dignity: Monitoring Accommodation Centres to Foster Autonomy and Participation

*Despite the EU's 2024 **Pact on Migration and Asylum** (implementation in 2026), reception standards remain unmet across Member States. Monitoring under the **Reception Conditions Directive** lacks independence, participation, training, and follow-up, leaving systemic issues unresolved and standards unenforced.*

*The proposed approach offers a rights-based, evidence-driven alternative built on five key pillars:*

- **Independence:** Guarantee autonomous monitoring with full access and protection.
- **Participation:** Engage applicants and staff meaningfully and safely.
- **Cooperation:** Foster coordination and best-practice exchange.
- **Awareness:** Train monitors to detect individual and systemic issues.
- **Accountability:** Ensure transparent follow-up and corrective action



*Evidence from monitoring frameworks that embed these principles demonstrates clear benefits: more reliable data, stronger protection of applicants' rights, and improved capacity of Member States to meet EU standards. By shifting from fragmented and inconsistent practices to a coherent rights-based model, the EU can strengthen accountability, enhance dignity, and ensure that international protection lives up to its promise.*

**Scholars:** Meike Fernbach, Apolline Foedit, Klaudia Grat, Adam Kluge, Sinéad Mulcahy, Frieda Ottmann, Elisa Sisto, working with Katerina Pantazatou

## Scholars Projects

# The European Model: Guaranteeing the Human Rights of Sex Workers in the EU

*The European Union is founded on values such as human dignity, freedom, equality, and respect for human rights. Yet, when it comes to sex workers, the EU fails to uphold these values. Sex workers across member states face discrimination, stigma and violence. Existing policies, such as criminalisation, the 'Nordic Model' and restrictive regulation, contribute to these harms.*

*The proposed **European Model** offers a rights-based, evidence-driven alternative built on three pillars:*

- *Decriminalise sex work by removing it from criminal law.*
- *Recognise sex work as work, with equal labour rights and protections.*
- *Support sex workers through measures that guarantee safety, health, and access to justice.*

*Evidence from countries that have adopted similar approaches shows clear benefits: improved wellbeing, safer working conditions, and stronger protections against exploitation and trafficking. By shifting away from punitive frameworks, this model strengthens rights, improves public health, and promotes dignity for sex workers across Europe.*

**Scholars:** Esther Braun, Abha Calindi, Julia Furtado de Barros, Ebba Mark, Francesco Nasi, Doris Kristina Raave, Rohan Stevenson working with Mireia Artigot Golobardes



# Scholars Projects

## The EU Media Wallet

*Informed citizens are the backbone of democracy. Yet today's fast-changing digital landscape amplifies the spread of disinformation, undermining trust and threatening national security. This environment has created deep challenges for the news sector: declining independence, shrinking revenues, and an "attention economy" where engagement trumps quality. The result? Citizens struggle to access reliable information, especially young people least able or willing to pay.*

*Our proposal is the EU Media Wallet – a pan-European, multilingual online platform offering high-quality, pay-per-article journalism. To reach younger audiences, it includes the Youth News Pass, granting free access to selected content for citizens aged 18–24.*

*The EU Media Wallet:*

- *Builds on EU commitments to fight disinformation, safeguard elections, and support independent journalism.*
- *Strengthens news outlets with new revenue and outreach opportunities.*
- *Gives citizens direct access to diverse, high-quality reporting.*
- *Encourages young adults to form lasting news habits.*



*By connecting consumers, outlets, and institutions, the EU Media Wallet helps reinforce Europe's democratic resilience.*

**Scholars:** Babette De Naeyer, Topi Juga, Zoe Konsbruck, Saoirse McGilligan, Kledian Myftari, Ilona Poseluzna, Ömer Şahin, Dylan Thurgood working with Claudia Negri Ribalta.

# Scholars Projects

## Green Together: Communal Urban Gardens Across Europe

European cities face pressing challenges: climate impacts, social fragmentation, widespread underuse of valuable land, and risks to food security. Green Together responds with a simple yet powerful idea – the expansion of Communal Urban Gardens (CUGs). These gardens are adaptable, low-cost, inclusive, and directly support EU policy goals.

This approach rests on three pillars:

- **ECUGO platform:** a phased, multi-stakeholder hub to guide CUG development.
- **Cost–Benefit Analysis Tool:** quantifying environmental, health, and socio-economic gains in financial terms.
- **Policy recognition:** securing stronger financial support by recognising CUGs as a distinct category within EU Cohesion Policy.



As bottom-up initiatives, CUGs act as catalysts for sustainable urban improvement, enhancing both quality of life and resilience across Europe. More than just gardens; CUGs play a vital role in capturing carbon and regenerating underused land, including neglected brownfield sites. Beyond their environmental benefits, they strengthen community ties by fostering social exchange and collaboration among diverse groups. CUGs also support healthier living by creating opportunities for local food production and access to fresh, nutritious produce. Importantly, they deliver long-term value to communities while requiring minimal administrative and financial burden, making them a sustainable and impactful solution for both people and the environment.

**Scholars:** Péter József Bori, Michele Collazzo, Amós Del Castillo Petidier, Ihor Moshenets, Filip Scherf, Beatriz Serra, Eva te Dorsthorst, working with Chiara Lovotti

# IDEAS Programme

The IDEAS Programme (formerly, Core Programme) is the Europaeum's central slate of events, bringing postgraduate students from across our member universities together to explore the pressing issues at the intersection of scholarship and policy-making. Each year, the programme offers around eight to ten opportunities for students to engage in high-level debate, intellectual exchange, and collaborative learning. These include our Spring, Summer, and Winter Schools which are hosted by different member universities each year. It also includes our annual Brussels Policy Seminar, which provides participants with a deep dive into the workings of the EU's political system.

Participation in the IDEAS Programme is designed to be immersive and hands-on. Events are usually residential, lasting several days, and encourage students not only to listen but also to actively contribute by presenting papers, chairing sessions, and taking part in lively discussions. Alongside peer-to-peer engagement, participants benefit from the insights of distinguished keynote speakers, policymakers, and academics who share expertise from across sectors and disciplines. By fostering this dynamic exchange, the programme bridges theory and practice while building a truly European intellectual community.



Each year's IDEAS Programme reflects the diversity and urgency of the challenges facing Europe today. In 2024, events ranged from explorations of media and ambivalence in Lisbon to critical thinking in the classics in Berlin, and the impact of elections in Brussels. The 2025 programme continues this tradition with themes such as the European Green Deal (Madrid), AI and the digital revolution (Luxembourg), and strategic autonomy (Brussels). Together, these events showcase the programme's central mission: equipping the next generation of thinkers and leaders with the tools, networks, and ideas to shape Europe's future.

## Brussels Policy Seminar

The Brussels Policy Seminar is a pillar of the Europaeum IDEAS (Core) Programme and is designed to immerse scholars in the realities of European policymaking: in how ideas become policy and in how Europe's institutions respond to global challenges. Held annually in the political heart of the European Union, the seminar combines visits to key institutions, including the European Parliament, with discussions and debates led by senior policymakers, officials, and analysts who are actively shaping Europe's responses to today's geopolitical pressures.

The 2025 edition of the Europaeum's Brussels Policy Seminar focuses on the EU's pursuit of strategic autonomy in a rapidly changing geopolitical context. In an era marked by shifting alliances, energy insecurity, technological competition, and renewed military threats, the concept of strategic autonomy has become a central EU priority. Participants will explore how Europe is seeking greater independence in areas such as energy security, technological sovereignty, defence capabilities, and supply chain resilience, while also weighing the political, economic, and ethical trade-offs involved in these efforts. They will further consider the tensions between strengthening autonomy and maintaining Europe's longstanding commitment to cooperation and partnership.

The Brussels Policy Seminar embodies the Europaeum's mission to bring students from across its member universities together with leading practitioners. It creates a space for rigorous discussion and exchange of perspectives and fosters critical reflection on policymaking processes. A rare opportunity for dialogue between future leaders and today's decision makers, it provides unique insights into how European institutions set priorities, negotiate compromises, and implement policy in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.



## Conference Speakers



**Giuseppe Abbamonte** is Director of Media Policy at the European Commission's DG CONNECT. He has led EU strategies on audiovisual media, data, cybersecurity, and online privacy, including the Audiovisual Media Services Directive and the European Big Data Strategy. A former lawyer in Milan, he has authored widely on EU regulation.

**Claude-France Arnould** is a French diplomat and former Ambassador to Belgium. She served as Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency, headed EU crisis management, and was Special Advisor at Ifri. A graduate of ENS and ENA, she is highly decorated for her contributions to European diplomacy and



**Daan Bauwens** is Director of UTSOPI, the Belgian Union of Sex Workers and spearheads their policy and advocacy. Before joining UTSOPI Dean worked as an investigative journalist for VRT in different countries specialising in prostitution, migration, drug-trafficking, and neo-colonialism.

**Heather Brooks** is a policy advisor at Eurocities focused on urban nature, climate adaptation, and city soundscapes. She supports cities to build their capacity to tackle urban challenges and works with them to shape relevant EU legislation. On the recently adopted Nature Restoration Law she worked with cities, national ministries, MEPs, and NGOs.



**Jim Cloos** is Secretary-General of TEPSA and Senior Associate Fellow at the Egmont Institute. A former Deputy Director-General at the EU Council, he helped draft the Maastricht Treaty, advised European leaders for decades, and served as Head of Cabinet to the President of the European Commission.

**Richard Corbett CBE** is a former Leader of the European Parliamentary Labour Party and long-serving MEP for Merseyside West and Yorkshire and the Humber. An architect of European Parliament reforms, he advised European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, writes on EU affairs, and co-authors the definitive textbook *The European Parliament*.



# Conference Speakers



**Robin Drevet** is a policy coordinator at Modus Vivendi and a specialist in harm reduction re: drug use. Previously he was an advocacy and social responsibility officer at Act Up Paris and a Project Manager at AIDES.

**Maria Gargano** is a researcher at the Egmont Institute whose interests include migration and the interlinkages between development and human mobility. She has previously worked at the Migration Policy Institute and the European Commission, and has been a Pan-European Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations.



**Heather Grabbe** is a Senior Fellow at Brusgel and a Visiting Professor at University College London, and KU Leuven. Her research focuses on the political economy of the European Green Deal and the politics of the climate transition. She was previously Director of the Open Society Foundation's European Policy Institute in Brussels, Deputy Director of the Centre for European Reform and senior advisor to then European Commissioner Olli Rehn.

**Dr Andrew Graham** is Chair of the Trustees of the Europaeum and a Senior Fellow of the Oxford Internet Institute. Former Master of Balliol College, Oxford, he conceived and secured funding for the Europaeum Scholars' Programme. Earlier in his career he was Economic Advisor to the UK Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition. His experience spans academia, public service, and leadership roles in media and philanthropy.



**Shada Islam** is a Brussels-based commentator on EU affairs and a Visiting Professor at the College of Europe. She is a member of the European Policy Centre's Strategic Council, a Senior Advisor at the Centre for Global Development, a founder member of the EU-Asia Centre and its editor-in-chief of the EUObserver Magazine. Previous roles include Director of Europe and Geopolitics at Friends of Europe.

**Vassilis Kessidis** is a strategist and the co-founder of the European Policy Innovation Council. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Strategy & Diplomacy. He has worked across European institutions, think tanks, and political consultancy, with experience in Spitzenkandidaten campaigns, national elections, and digital media.



## Conference Speakers



**His Excellency António Leitão Amaro** is Vice-President of Portugal's Social Democratic Party (PSD) and teaches Public Finance at the University of Lisbon and Católica Global School of Law. A former Secretary of State and Member of Parliament, he holds a PhD in Law, an LL.M. from Harvard, and is an alumnus of the Europaeum Scholars' Programme.

**Christian Leffler** served as Deputy Secretary-General of the European External Action Service until 2020, overseeing economic and global issues. A Swedish diplomat and EU official since 1991, he previously held senior roles in external relations, development, and the Americas. He studied at LSE and the Graduate Institute, Geneva.



**Axel Marx** is Deputy Director of the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies and a Professor at KU Leuven. He has led over 80 international research projects and advised organisations including the EU, UN, OECD, and World Bank. His research focuses on sustainability, trade, labour rights, corporate responsibility, and global governance.

**Alberto Horst Neidhardt** is a Senior Policy Analyst and Head of the European Diversity and Migration Programme at the European Policy Centre. He works on asylum, migration, and integration, with expertise in EU law and jurisprudence. He also lectures on Comparative Law and Legal Pluralism as a Visiting Professor at Antwerp University.



**Miles Pattenden** is the Director of the Europaeum's IDEAS (Core) Programme. He is a historian with interests in politics and religion in Western Europe. Miles is a regular contributor to various media outlets including the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the BBC.

**Sophie Pornschlegel** is a Senior Advisor at The European Policy Centre and Policy Fellow at Das Progressive Zentrum. A Brussels-based analyst, she works on EU democracy, institutions, and the rule of law, and teaches at Sciences Po Paris. Previously she was Deputy Director at Europe Jacques Delors.



# Conference Speakers



**Andrea Renda** is Director of Research at CEPS and heads the Global Governance, Regulation, Innovation and Digital Economy (GRID) unit. He is Adjunct Professor at the European University Institute and Visiting Professor at the College of Europe. His work focuses on digital policy, AI governance, and regulatory innovation.

**Maria João Rodrigues** is Chair of the Board of Re-Imagine Europa and the outgoing President of the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS). A Portuguese economist and politician, she was Portuguese Minister of Employment, Vice-President of the S&D Group in the European Parliament (2014–2019), and a key architect of major EU initiatives including the Lisbon Strategy, Lisbon Treaty, and European Pillar of Social Rights.



**Sophia Russack** is a Research Fellow at CEPS, focusing on EU institutions, decision-making and democratic accountability, particularly the European Commission and Parliament. Her research covers institutional reform, the Spitzenkandidaten process, and the balance of power within the EU. She also analyses politicisation, presidentialisation, and the impact of far-right influence on EU democracy.

**Jamie Shea** is Professor of Strategy and Security at the University of Exeter and former Deputy Assistant Secretary General of NATO. Widely known as NATO's spokesperson during the Kosovo War, he served nearly four decades at the Alliance and now advises and lectures internationally on security and defence.



**Tracey Sowerby** is Director of the Europaeum Scholars Programme. A scholar of early modern politics and culture at the University of Oxford, she has published widely on Tudor politics, religion, and diplomacy, and led several collaborative projects on cultural exchange and cross-confessional diplomacy.

# Conference Speakers



**Erika Staël von Holstein** is Co-Founder and Chief Executive of Re-Imagine Europa. An expert on narratives, disinformation, and depolarisation, she leads Europe's first Narrative Observatory (NODES.eu) and advises European institutions and governments. She has over two decades' experience bridging science, technology, society, and policy, shaping innovative approaches to societal transformation.

**Anthony Teasdale** became Executive Director of the Europaeum in July 2024. He previously served as Director-General of the European Parliamentary Research Service (2013–2022) and has held senior advisory and academic roles in Brussels, London, Oxford, LSE, and Columbia University. He is co-author of *The Penguin Companion to European Union*.



**Eddy Wax** is Newsletter Editor at Euractiv, where he launched a new flagship politics newsletter in 2025. A British-Belgian journalist, he previously spent seven years at POLITICO Europe as reporter and Brussels Playbook co-author. He covers EU politics with insight, clarity, and a sharp eye for Brussels intrigue.

**Martin Westlake** is a British-Belgian author, playwright, academic and former Secretary-General of the European Economic and Social Committee (2008–2013). A Visiting Professor at the College of Europe and LSE, he has published widely on European politics and institutions, alongside biographies, fiction, and plays performed in Brussels and beyond.



**Please note:** This list includes only speakers featured in the open sessions of the conference. It does not cover the private events or Europaeum Scholars presenting their work. Full details of those contributors are provided in the following pages.



# Europaeum Scholars



**Peter Bori** researches environmental politics within authoritarian populist settings, focusing specifically on the case of Hungary. It maps how topics like climate change, conservation, and energy are transformed through populist discourse and investigates the effects that such changes have on the domestic and European political landscape; environmental attitudes of voters; and policy outcomes. Overall, his research aims to uncover possible pathways towards democratic revival and emancipatory environmental politics. Peter holds a BA (Hons) in International Relations and Development from the University of Sussex and an MSc in

Agricultural Development from the University of Copenhagen. Peter speaks fluent English, Dutch, Hungarian, German, and is learning Portuguese and Danish.



**Esther Braun** is a medical doctor and bioethicist currently pursuing a DPhil in Philosophy at the University of Oxford. During her medical studies, Esther also completed a BA in Comparative Literature and History and Philosophy of Science, as well as an MA in Philosophy, at the Goethe University Frankfurt. Her research in experimental oncology for her medical doctorate was funded by the Mildred Scheel Scholarship of the German Cancer Aid. Esther was a postdoctoral research associate at the Institute for Medical Ethics and History of Medicine at Ruhr University Bochum while completing an MSt in Practical Ethics at Oxford between 2020 and 2023. She has published on bioethical topics including assisted dying, coercion in psychiatry, and psychiatric advance directives. Her DPhil project focuses on how voluntary consent can be affected by structural injustice.



**Abha Calindi** is a PhD researcher in International History and Politics at the Graduate Institute Geneva. Her work centres on the intersection of history and contemporary security policy. Her research bridges critical theory with praxis, examining the genealogies of security policy and right-wing populism in France and Britain. Abha brings professional experience from the World Trade Organization, UNHCR in Geneva, and the UK Delegation to UNESCO in Paris. She holds a BA in History and Politics from the University of Warwick and an MPhil in Politics from the University of

Cambridge.

# Europaeum Scholars

**Michele Collazzo** is a Ph.D. student in Political and Social Sciences at the University of Bologna, Italy, focusing on the cooperation between the European Union and African Union in tackling the root causes of conflicts. He holds a Master's degree in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies from the College d'Europe, Belgium, and a Bachelor's degree from L'Orientale University in Naples. He has garnered practical experience at the European Union Delegation to the USA, the International Crisis Group in Brussels and at the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) in Rome. In his hometown in the Basilicata region, Italy, Michele has over years co-organised an international jazz festival, showcasing his dedication to music and cultural events.



**Amós del Castillo Petidier** is a PhD candidate at Universidad Complutense de Madrid. His research assesses the impact of mega-events in the Europeanisation of Spain, Portugal, and Greece during the 1990s and early 2000s. Specifically, he applies a comparative and transnational approach to evaluate the links between the narratives and the materialisation of the mega-events projects, thus conceiving them as sites of negotiation for the modernisation strategies pursued in Southern Europe. This research combines elements of the history of international relations, urban history, and public diplomacy. He completed a Bachelor's double degree in Geography & Spatial Planning and History at Universidad de Sevilla. He holds a master's degree in European Studies from the same university and he received a Fulbright scholarship to study an MA in European and Mediterranean Studies at New York University.

**Babette De Naeyer** is a PhD candidate at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. She was awarded UPF's PhD in Law scholarship to completely immerse herself in the Constitutional, European, and Supranational Integration Law department's research and teaching activities. Her research focuses on the internet and social media's impact on citizen's right to freedom of expression. She specializes in the EU's Digital Service Act, Article 10 ECHR jurisprudence, and comparative legal studies (mainly the European system and the US First Amendment doctrine). Babette holds an LL.M. in European and Global Law from Universitat Pompeu Fabra, a Master in Criminal Law from Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and a Bachelor in Law from Vrije Universiteit Brussel.



## Europaeum Scholars



**Meike Fernbach** is a doctoral candidate at the Central European University, where she researches the intersections of race, gender, and coloniality in modern Germany. Her PhD examines how white German women reproduced colonial relations and helped sustain narratives of national “innocence.” By undertaking a Foucauldian genealogy, she seeks to destabilize the normalization of whiteness and trace the (dis)continuities of colonial power in Germany today. She previously completed Master’s degrees in International Relations at the London School of Economics and the Central European University.

**Apolline Foedit** is a PhD student at the Geneva Graduate Institute, specializing in the right to asylum, development, human rights, and social movements. Her doctoral research focuses on the emergence and reorganization of associations dedicated to defending the right to asylum within the context of the Europeanization of migration policies, and the institutionalization of some of these associations. She traces the roots of this opposition back to the 1930s. Apolline holds a BA in international relations from the University of Geneva and an MA in development studies from the Geneva Graduate Institute.



**Julia Furtado de Barros** is a Doctoral Researcher at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Luxembourg. She holds a BA degree in Psychology from the University of Uberlândia (Brazil) and a MSc degree in Sociology from Tilburg University (The Netherlands). She works in the PRO-active Policymaking for Equal Lives – PROPEL project which investigates housing policies and inequality. Her research interests comprise the dynamics of poverty, socioeconomic and wealth inequality. Particularly, the interplay of housing policies, labour markets and pensions influencing

socioeconomic and wealth inequalities among young people in Europe. Her work trajectory includes researching public policies for vulnerable populations in Brazil and working as a researcher at the European Values Study (EVS).

# Europaeum Scholars

**Klaudia Grąt** is a PhD researcher in Social Anthropology and Modern Languages at the University of St Andrews funded by the Social Anthropology Departmental Scholarship and Gibson-Sykora Trust Scholarship. Her research examines the socio-cultural integration of Ukrainians- long-term migrants and war refugees- to the spatial and societal reality of Warsaw, Poland. The main themes of her research encompass the individual experiences of place, shared identity, migrational trajectories, socio-cultural transference, and linguistical patterns in diasporic settings. Her research aims to shed light on the experiences of migration and livelihoods of Ukrainian migrants re-established in the urban setting of Warsaw. Klaudia has earned her BA in International Development from King's College London and earned her position on the Deans' List by receiving a Distinction from her fully funded MRes in Social Anthropology at the University of St Andrews. Klaudia comes from a museum and activist background. She speaks seven languages: Polish, English, Spanish, French, Ukrainian, Russian, and Latin.



**Topi Juga** is a doctoral researcher in Political History at the University of Helsinki. His dissertation focuses on post-Cold War European integration and the formation of Finland's EU policy during the country's early membership years (1995–1999). He examines the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference, the negotiations on European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), and the preparations for the EU's Eastern enlargement as case studies to assess Finland's strategic choices and willingness toward integration as a new EU member state.

Currently Topi lives in Berlin, where he also writes articles as a journalist focusing on the EU and Germany. Previously Topi has worked with EU affairs as a civil servant in the Prime Minister's office of Finland, as an advisor to an MEP in the European Parliament as well as a journalist. Topi enjoys playing tennis, reading and spending time with his friends and family.

**Adam Kluge** is a DPhil candidate in the Centre for Criminology, University of Oxford. His research exists at the intersection of social anthropology, penal governance, and the nuanced ways in which the kin of offenders experience state-sanctioned stigmatisation following their relative's offence. Drawing from the fields of social and political theory, his work offers a theoretical reconsideration of stigma as a political tool operated by state actors to systematically shame marginalised communities via criminal legal mechanisms. His broader research interests include social othering and state power, EU policy, and contemporary constructions of the family. Adam holds an MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice (Distinction) from the University of Oxford and a dual BA in Political Science and History from Columbia University, where he graduated with interdepartmental honours. He has experience in both the NGO sector and as an educator. Privately, Adam is an avid consumer of the arts and French literature.



## Europaeum Scholars



**Zoé Konsbruck** is a doctoral researcher at the Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C<sup>2</sup>DH) working on the history of deindustrialisation in Luxembourg. In her PhD project she examines deindustrialisation between 1970 and 2000, focusing on its impact on the steel towns in southern Luxembourg and the Greater Region. The research examines the effects of deindustrialisation while analysing how local actors such as politicians, workers, residents and trade unionists perceived and reacted to these changes at both local and transnational levels. She holds a MA in Contemporary History and a BA in History from the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich. The history of deindustrialisation, urban and cultural history are among her main academic interests.

**Saoirse McGilligan** is a PhD candidate in the School of International Relations at the University of St Andrews. Her doctoral project is a socio-legal analysis, examining the relationship between identity tensions and their governances in Northern Ireland and Catalonia. Her research interests include collective identity formation, culture and nationalism, conflict resolution and constitutionalism, and identity in the Anthropocene. Saoirse developed her interdisciplinary approach during her previous academic experience. She holds a MLitt in Global Social and Political Thought from the University of St Andrews and a BA in Classics from University College London.



**Ebba Mark** is a DPhil student at the School of Geography and the Environment at the University of Oxford supervised by Climate Econometrics, the Calleva Project at Magdalen College, the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, and the Institute for New Economic Thinking. Her DPhil research focuses on applying econometric and complexity-based methods to the study of what constitutes a 'Just Transition.' Passionate about evidence-based policymaking and ensuring that urgent environmental action is compatible

with ongoing fights for greater equality, her research interest is in advancing empirical work to discover and alleviate the potential adverse social and economic impacts of net-zero transformations. Previously, Ebba worked as Junior Policy Advisor to the OECD Chief of Staff and G20/G7 Sherpa in Paris as part of the Organisation's Young Associate Programme. Ebba holds an MSc in Environmental Change and Management from the University of Oxford and a BA in Economics from Harvard University.

# Europaeum Scholars

**Ihor Moshenets** is a PhD candidate at the Central European University. His doctoral project is dedicated to the exploration of interest groups' advocacy in defining the role of natural gas, hydrogen, and nuclear energy in EU decarbonization pathways under the EU Green Deal. His research interests encompass broader issues of international political economy of energy, energy geopolitics, and public policy theories. Additionally, Ihor's independent applied research was published by such platforms as the Foreign Policy Research Institute (US), Energy Post (EU), and Dzerkalo Tyzhnia (Ukraine). Ihor has working experience as an MP assistant in the Ukrainian Parliament, as a Policy Officer in one of the largest Ukrainian business associations, and as an analyst in civil sector organizations.



**Sinéad Mulcahy** is a PhD candidate at the Europa Institute of Leiden University, where she researches the return of “sovereignty” in EU discourse. The notion of “European sovereignty” is conceptualised as an ambition to enhance the Union's political capacity to act amidst crises and global instabilities. The emergence and persistence of “European sovereignty” suggests a significant shift in the Union's self-understanding, how it relates to its citizens, Member States and the wider world. By researching this phenomenon, Sinéad aims contribute to our understanding of the Union's ongoing transformation. Her PhD project to combines policy case-studies with doctrinal research in constitutional theory and political philosophy. Alongside her research, Sinéad lectures on the European Law LL.M., from which she herself graduated in 2022. Before moving to the Netherlands, Sinéad completed her undergraduate studies in Law and Social Justice (BCL) at University College Dublin.

**Kledian Myftari** is a joint Ph.D. candidate in International Relations at Charles University and Psychology at the University of Copenhagen. Earning summa cum laude honors, he holds an M.A. in Security Studies from Charles University and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Tirana. His research centers on foreign fighters, political violence, violent extremism, and terrorism, with a current focus on varying levels of religious radicalization in the Western Balkans. Specific interests include intergroup dynamics, social identity, conflict, religion, and their influence on social relations within this context. Myftari has notably contributed as the third author to a book chapter examining threat perceptions in violent extremism for the upcoming Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Violent Extremism, under consideration by Cambridge University Press. He has also published from an interdisciplinary, cultural studies-informed work on the Albanian media's response to the 2007 economic crisis.



# Europaeum Scholars



**Francesco Nasi** is pursuing a Ph.D. in Political and Social Sciences at the University of Bologna, Italy. His research deals with the role of artificial intelligence in promoting civic engagement and citizen participation. He holds a master's degree in International Security Studies and a bachelor's degree in Social, Political, and International Studies. During his undergraduate studies, he spent a semester at Sciences Po Paris (Reims campus). Beyond academic commitments,

Francesco serves as a Scout leader and a City Councilor in his hometown in Italy, Albinea. He is a delegate for political training at the Reggio Emilia office of the Italian Democratic party. Professionally, he is a member of the editorial board for Pandora Rivista. He has also been working for think tanks such as CeSPI and ISPI and as a research assistant for the Italian Democratic Party national office.

**Frieda Ottmann** is a PhD candidate at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich. Embedded in the Franco-German research project ELEMENT, her thesis examines European political efforts to combat water pollution in the proclaimed name of the environment. In a transnational and global framework, she critically assesses the narrative of the EU and its predecessors as environmental pioneers. Her history-oriented study not only highlights significant achievements, but also explores instances of conflict and failure. This balanced perspective offers invaluable insights and lessons for shaping future environmental policy. She holds an MA in Contemporary History and a BA in History and Political Science, both from LMU Munich. Frieda has volunteered as a tutor for refugees and has been involved in the Berlin-based think-tank Young-Security-Conference. She is passionate about the European project, foreign languages and exploring the world.



**Ilona Poseluzna** is a PhD Candidate in Political Science at the Jagiellonian University, researching EU AI policy and how decisionmakers navigate AI-related uncertainty. She holds a Master's in International Relations with distinction, completed a six-month research stay at the European University Institute (2025), and is a two-time recipient of the Minister's Scholarship for Outstanding Achievements. She also led a grant on AI and IR theory. Her work includes peer-reviewed publications on digital

transformation, and contributions to the AI and Democratic Values Index (Center for AI and Digital Policy, USA 2023). Beyond academia, she has worked in strategic and technology foresight consultancy for EU institutions and the UN. She was twice elected Department President of the Forum of Young Diplomats, the largest CEE NGO for IR students and young professionals.

# Europaeum Scholars

**Doris Kristina Raave** is a PhD candidate and junior research fellow in educational sciences at the University of Tartu with research interests in educational psychology and meaningful digital technology integration in teaching-learning processes. She is a passionate advocate of contextually and situationally apt educational transformation. Her background is in teaching foreign languages and she has worked with different education systems around the globe. She holds two MAs, one in Teaching Arts and the other in Educational Innovation. She balances her work life with art, yoga, time spent in nature, and academic writing with creative writing.



**Ömer Şahin** is a doctoral researcher at Universitat Pompeu Fabra, under the government-funded HARDSOCIOGENDER project. Coming from an economics background, he is currently working on the relationship between economic development and groups vulnerable to over-education for his PhD. He previously held research assistant roles at Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI) for the Horizon 2020 project TECHNO, at the University of Konstanz, and took part in research projects for UNHCR and Ministry of Industry and Technology of Turkey. Before starting his PhD, he completed a Bachelor's in Economics at the Özyeğin University in Turkey, and a Research Master in Political Sciences at Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Ömer debated for 9 years and shared his public speaking experiences with people in many workshops. In his free time, he runs and reads on wide variety of topics.

**Filip J. Scherf** is a researcher, author, and policy analyst focused on Russia and European security. He is a Researcher at the University of St Andrews and an Europaeum Scholar. He lectures on political risk at Charles University and serves as Research Director at the Princeps Risk Intelligence Institute. Previously, he worked as a political risk consultant in Russia, researcher at Columbia University's Harriman Institute, and at NATO PA in Brussels. He holds an MIA from Columbia SIPA and an MLitt from St Andrews, where he made the Dean's List. His research earned Columbia's Dasturdaza Dr. Jal Pavry Memorial Award for International Peace and Understanding. He was also a Harriman Junior Fellow, International Fellows Program member, and Robert Legvold Fellow. His book *The Lost Land: A Story of Modern Russia* (2024) was published in Czech and longlisted for the Czech Book of the Year Award.



# Europaeum Scholars



**Beatriz Serra** is a PhD student in Political Science and International Relations: Security and Defense at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa. Her doctoral research focusses on the role of democratic institutions in mitigating heightened risks of climate-related conflict. Before starting her PhD, Bia worked for the UK government as a Senior Policy Advisor at the Department for International Trade, advising on a number of issues in relation to the UK's representation at the World Trade Organization. Later she moved to the private sector, working in the Public Affairs sector, advising companies and charities on the impact of political and policy developments across several issues, including NI Protocol, ESG, sustainable mobility and cybersecurity matters. Bia holds a BA in International Relations (with Applied Quantitative Methods) from the University of Essex and a MSc in Politics and Communication from the London School of Economics (LSE).

**Elisa Sisto** is pursuing a DPhil (PhD) in International Development at the University of Oxford, focusing on border policy, landscape, and humanitarian action at Europe's mountainous borderlands. Prior to her DPhil, Elisa worked at the International Organization for Migration in Geneva and with different organisations across Southern and Eastern Europe, encompassing roles in migration research and operations,



refugee and migration law, as well as human rights advocacy. Elisa holds an MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies from the University of Oxford, and a dual Bachelor's degree in Human Rights from Columbia University and in Political Science from Sciences Po. Her doctoral research is supported by the Clarendon Fund, the Scatcherd European Scholarship, and the Merton College International Development Scholarship.



**Rohan Stevenson** is a PhD candidate in Political, Societal and Regional Changes at the University of Helsinki, Finland. His research is funded by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions doctoral network VORTEX (Coping with Varieties of Radicalisation into Terrorism and Extremism). Rohan's research interrogates the ways in which right-wing extremism is problematised in European counterterrorism policies, from a social constructivist and critical race perspective. Originally hailing from London, Rohan holds an MA (Hons) in Geography from the University of Edinburgh and an MA in Sociology from Goldsmiths College, University of London. His research interests are broad ranging and, previously, he has researched eco-fascist online communities, the 'hyperpop' music scene, discourses of safety in gentrification processes and platform capitalism.

# Europaeum Scholars

**Eva te Dorsthorst** is a PhD Candidate at Université du Luxembourg. Her doctoral thesis concerns the impact of budgetary decision-making on the procedure and design of international courts and tribunals. Before she joined the University of Luxembourg, Eva was an Education and Research Associate at Leiden University. She also worked as a project manager with the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of the European Law Student's Association. Eva holds a LL.M. Public International Law (cum laude) from Leiden University, and an LL.B. European Law School (bene meritum) from Radboud University Nijmegen.



**Dylan Thurgood** is a DPhil candidate in Social Data Science at the Oxford Internet Institute. His work lies at the intersection of political science, data science, psychology and communication studies. He researches how the exposure to different types of online content – with a focus on hyperpartisan news, AI-generated articles and conversations with LLM chatbots – is linked to shifts in people's beliefs about the EU, immigration, climate change, and political polarisation. Dylan has a German-British-Dutch background and holds an MSc in Social Data Science from the Oxford Internet Institute as well as a BSc in Economics from the University of Warwick, during which he spent one year studying at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona.

# Brussels Policy Seminar Speakers

**Lasse Boehm** is currently Head of the Economic Governance and EMU Scrutiny Unit at the European Parliament. He previously lead the Economic Policies Unit at the European Parliamentary Research Service and head the Economy and Environment Working Group for the EPP Group.



**Andy Bounds** is EU Correspondent at the Financial Times, covering Brexit, trade, health, and European politics, including the European Parliament. He is also Netherlands correspondent and contributor to Europe Express. He has reported for the FT since 1997, with postings in Brussels and as Northern Correspondent in the UK..

**Victoria Martin de la Torre** is an experience communications professional at the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). Former spokesperson for the Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament and press officer for its Spanish delegation. De la Torre has over two decades journalism and EU affairs, including roles at Tiempo, The Wall Street Journal, CNN, and Antenna 3.



**Richard Freedman** is a senior EU communications and policy expert with over two decades at the European Parliament. He leads web communication as team coordinator, having served as policy analyst, press officer to the President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz. His career spans digital strategy, public outreach, and policy analysis.

**Alice Hancock** is an EU Correspondent at the Financial Times, based in Brussels, covering energy, climate, environment, and the environment, and the European Parliament. She previously reported on leisure industries in London during the COVID-19 pandemic, and earlier worked as staff writer and online editor for Homes and Antiques.



**Birgit Loeser** is Advisor to the Deputy Managing Director of Planning and Strategic Communications at EEAS. Her previous roles at EEAS include Head of Division at MENA.1 Regional Affairs, Deputy Civilian Operations Commander of EEAS Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability, and Deputy Head of Division Counter Terrorism.

# Brussels Policy Seminar Speakers

**Nicole Meijer** is the Visits Coordinator in the Strategic Communications Departmental at EEAS. She is facilitating the programme for the Europaeum's Brussels Policy Seminar visit of the EEAS.



**Ben Munster** is financial journalist at POLITICO Europe, covering central banks and economic policy. Formerly a freelancer reporting on blockchain and Italian politics, he has written for The New Yorker, Esquire, and Private Eye. He previously authored the Zero Knowledge column at crypto outlet Decrypt.

**Jennifer Rankin** has been Brussels Correspondent for The Guardian since 2016, covering EU politics and institutions. She previously reported for Reuters, The Irish Times, and European Voice, and began her journalism career as Nico Colchester fellow with The Economist and the Financial Times in 2006.



**Philipp Schulmeister** is Director for Campaigns, European Parliament. Previous roles in the Parliament include Head of Public Opinion Monitoring Unit, and Member of the office of the Secretary General, as well as working as a policy advisor for the EPP Group in the European Parliament.

**Cormac James Shine** is Policy Officer and Coordinator, Security and Defence Policy Directorate at EEAS. Previously he worked for the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland, with postings in Brussels and Uganda. He has also worked for the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UBS Y think tank.



**Eddy Wax** is Newsletter Editor at Euractiv, where he launched a new flagship politics newsletter in 2025. A British-Belgian journalist, he previously spent seven years at POLITICO Europe as reporter and Brussels Playbook co-author. He covers EU politics with insight, clarity, and a sharp eye for Brussels intrigue.

## Brussels Policy Seminar Delegates

*Bonde, Halvard - The Graduate Institute, Geneva*

*Castagnoli, Riccardo - The University of Bologna*

*Čekal, Cornelia - Central European University*

*Daniels, Justin - The University of Oxford*

*De Leon, Isabelle - The University of Luxembourg*

*Ferroglio, Felisa - The Graduate Institute, Geneva*

*Gröniger, Jana - The Graduate Institute, Geneva*

*Herman, Juliëtte - European Politics and Society (EPS)*

*Koźmiński, Filip - The Jagiellonian University*

*Lavtenaite, Greta - The University of Oxford*

*Leybold, Elina - European Politics and Society (EPS)*

*Philpott, Hope - The University of Leiden*

*Pillitterri, Antonio Armando - The Graduate Institute, Geneva*

*Piraino, Antonio - The University of Oxford*

*Rebersak, Paola - The University of Luxembourg*

*Rubes, Dominic - The University of Oxford*

*Simarro Correa, Alberto - University Complutense Madrid*

*Tammelaan, Kaur Rasmus - The University of Tartu*

*Walkowiak, Patrick - Central European University*

*Wijayarathna, Anudini - The University of Helsinki*

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