



## EIP-AGRI BROKERAGE EVENT 'GET INVOLVED IN THE EU MISSION: A SOIL DEAL FOR EUROPE' 8-9 JUNE 2022 - BRUSSELS, BELGIUM



### Speaker and facilitator bios

### Speakers (in order of the programme)



#### **Hugo Almeida**

**Deputy Head of Unit "Rural areas & networks", DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission**

Hugo Almeida finalised his studies in economics in 1997 and after a first working experience in the private sector in Portugal, decided to try an international career. In 2000, during the Portuguese Presidency of the European Council becomes a trainee in the recently created Co-decision unit. In the second half of 2000 starts working in the United Nations Mission Interim in Kosovo (UNMIK) as Budget and Finance Officer where he stayed until end of 2002. In 2003 he joins the European Commission and starts working in the Budget unit of DG AGRI where he stayed for seven years and worked in different files like direct management expenditure and direct aids. In 2010 moves to the Direct aids unit where among other things is appointed as Head of the Single Payment Scheme sector. In 2013 is appointed Deputy Head of the Unit responsible for the Rural development programs of Spain and Portugal where he stayed until January 2022. Currently he is Deputy Head in the unit "Rural areas and Networks" which is responsible for the implementation of the Long-term vision for EU's rural areas, the networking activities related with the implementation of the CAP strategic Plans, innovation and knowledge exchange as well as the horizontal coordination within DG AGRI in the area of broadband.



#### **Albin Hunia**

**Main facilitator, Support Facility for Innovation and knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI**

Albin Hunia is an EIP-AGRI workshop facilitator from the Netherlands. He has a background in rural-development project-management and formerly worked in integrated land-consolidation and re-wilding projects. His current other work is as adviser for transnational Interreg cooperation programmes.



#### **Orsolya Frizon Somogyi**

**Deputy Head of Unit "Research and Innovation", DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission**

Orsolya Frizon Somogyi works in the European Commission DG AGRI, in F2 unit responsible for agricultural and rural research as deputy head of unit. Previously in the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture, she joined DG AGRI in 2005. The last 17 years she was responsible successively for rice market management, for rural development in Hungary and in Malta, she dealt with social inclusion issues in the agricultural sector and in rural areas. She recently worked as deputy head of unit until January 2022 on agricultural statistics. In F2 Orsolya is involved in Horizon Europe agricultural and rural research and innovation, she participates in the unit activities related to the Horizon Europe Mission 'A Soil deal for Europe'.



**Korinna Varga**  
**Hungary**

Korinna Varga is the Head of Agricultural Policy Research Group at the Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (ÖMKI). Her area of expertise involves organic farming and agroecology relevant national policy analysis, research and advisory for achieving sustainable transition of the agri-food sector. In addition, her research work focuses on co-creation experiences in agroecological living labs, and she works toward the wider adoption of "living lab" approach and methodology in national and macro-regional agricultural research. She manages ÖMKI On-Farm Living Lab (hosted by ÖMKI) which is a nationwide participatory experimentation network that conducts a variety of field trials and technology tests co-designed and co-implemented with farmers and other agri-food stakeholders in Hungary. One of the Living Lab's research project experiments with sustainable soil cultivation technologies for increased climate adaptability for organic production systems.



**Panos Ilias**  
**Belgium**

Panos Ilias (PhD) is an IT Business Analyst at the Flemish Institute for Agriculture, fisheries and food (ILVO). In the early years, he worked as a GEO-AI engineer in many research and industrial projects, gaining experience in geospatial technology and tools. After he continued his carrier as an ICT Manager, dealing with projects related to the development of LOB (Line of Business) Applications, having a mission to support an organization doing what they do, using advanced technological means. In 2014 he participated as a core team member in building a smart farming platform, delivering advisory services to the farmers, and joining the COPA COGEGA AgriTech WG to develop the EU Code of Contact on Agricultural data sharing contractual agreements. Since 2018, works at ILVO to support digitalization activities in Data Sharing, Soil Management and IIoT in the Agrifood sector, performing as the principal architect of the DjustConnect Platform. Since 2022, Panos has been leading the BDVA TF7.SG9: Agriculture.



**Didier Stilmant**  
**Belgium**

Didier Stilmant is agricultural engineer. He has a PhD on biological control of aphids through the use of parasitoids before to study, in the Walloon Agricultural Research Centre, the interactions between bigger herbivores (cattle and sheep) and their herbaceous resources. Since 2000 he manages an interdisciplinary team studying farming systems sustainability with some expertise in intervention/participatory research (co-construction of sustainable organic beef production, co-construction of cropping schemes towards low-till and low pesticides use, ...). Currently, he is the head of the "Sustainability, Systems and Perspectives" Department including three research units "Soil, Water and Integrated production", "Agricultural Systems" and "Agriculture and Sustainability".



**Guillermo Cardon**  
**Policy officer, "Research and Innovation", DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission**

Guillermo Cardon works since January 2022 as Policy Officer/Research Programme Officer in Unit F2 Research and Innovation of the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, where he is member of the Secretariat of the Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe". He studied agronomy and earned a doctoral degree in biology, with specialization in plant molecular genetics. He worked as a researcher in the public and private sector for over ten years before joining the European Commission in July 2001, to work initially as a Research Programme officer for plant production systems, plant genetics, genomics and biotechnology at the Directorate General for Research and Innovation. Before joining DG AGRI he also worked for 13 years in the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety as Policy Officer for plant health and for food safety.



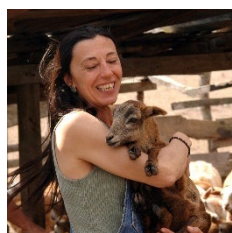
**Simone Maccaferri**  
**Italy**

Simone Maccaferri holds a European PhD in Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology from the University of Bologna, Italy. After his graduation, Simone spent a period as Visiting Marie Curie Researcher at the Faculty of Faculty of Medical & Health Sciences, University of Auckland (New Zealand) and completed a postdoc at the University of Bologna, focusing his research interest in the food microbiology. Simone is currently working as Senior Research Advisor in the Research Support Services Division of the University of Bologna, where he is leading the team providing support for the Bioeconomy theme. He is responsible for supporting the development and management of large collaborative research, innovation, capacity building, public engagement and education/training projects in the field of (circular) bioeconomy.



**Natalia Shukadarova**  
**Bulgaria**

Natalia Shukadarova is executive director of the National Grain Producers Association in Bulgaria since 2011; expert in agriculture and rural development policy; graduate from Sofia University and Agricultural University – Plovdiv; PhD student at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv with the doctoral thesis: "Sustainability of the Bulgarian grain production sector in the context of the European Green Deal"; member of the Economic and Social Council of Republic of Bulgaria, representing the farmers' organizations.



**Pilar Andrés**  
**Spain**

Pilar Andrés is a soil ecologist, with more than 20 years of experience on soil biodiversity and on the environmental services it provides. In 2003, while leading an EU ALFA project, she began to work on the integrated planning of farming areas degraded by historical overexploitation in Central America. This was a very intense experience that led her to put together the needs of farmers of very contrasting economic status, land managers, policy makers and markets and that totally changed her professional orientation towards combining basic and applied research. In 2013, coming back to Europe after a research stay in the CSU, in close contact with the USDA station of the Central Great Plains, she began to work with Mediterranean farmers, supporting them in the transition from intensive to sustainable practices. She has contributed to the edition of the Global Soil Biodiversity Atlas (EU, 2016) and the FAO report on the State of knowledge of soil biodiversity (2020). Recently, she has led the report o "Agricultural potential in carbon sequestration - Humus content of land used for agriculture and CO2 storage in soil" to the EU Parliament (in press) intended to support climate actions in the Common Agricultural Policy. Currently, she cooperates with the FAO Global Soil Laboratory Network in the standardisation of indicators and protocols for soil quality evaluation, and with the EC Network Nature Project in producing a handbook about soil bioindicators to evaluate environmental effects of Nature Based Solutions. She actively assists several farmer associations and companies in the transition from intensive to sustainable agriculture.



**Daniel Ács**  
**Slovakia**

Dr. Daniel Ács is a Senior Expert and Innovation Broker of the Bioeconomy Cluster in Slovakia and CEO of PROUNION farm advisory company. Currently, he is involved in networking of relevant innovative partners in bioeconomy (farmers, food processors, bio-based SMEs, researchers and academics, NGOs, and policy makers), providing support in the field as well as at the policy level. Last week, with close cooperation of regenerative farming community, he held a preparatory brainstorming meeting to encourage the most relevant Slovak stakeholders to be involved in the Soil Mission. He has initiated and managed co-creation of several EIP Operational Groups including those related to healthy soils. He is also active in National AKIS development. In his career, he has been contributing to development of various policies such as Agricultural and Rural Development Policy and Innovation Policy. He has been involved in implementation of international projects including FP7 and H2020 (including COSME) focused on innovation, technology transfer and networking in bio-based and agri-related "destinations". In the past, he worked as a representative of the European Commission Delegation in Bratislava, and was a contractor of the US Department of Agriculture. He also worked at the World Bank as an expert.

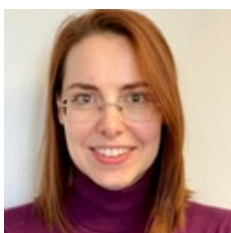
## DG Agriculture and Rural Development



**Marta Iglesias**

**European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development**

Policy officer at the European Commission Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development For nearly 20 years Research Programme officer in agriculture research and innovation, in the areas of water, soil and nutrients and part of the EU Soil Mission secretariat  
Academic background: Agriculture engineer with a master degree on watering, soils and drains.



**Magdalena Mach**

**European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development**

Magdalena Mach is a Policy Officer at the European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, Research & Innovation Unit. She holds a Master's degree in International Relations. Before joining the EC she worked for the Agriculture and Fisheries Section of the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to the European Union and Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development where for 6 years she was responsible for the implementation of LEADER approach under Rural Development Programme.

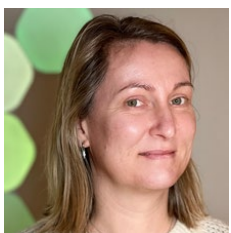
## Support Facility 'Innovation and knowledge exchange | EIP-AGRI' team



**Xurxo Loureiro Veira**

**Task Manager**

Xurxo is research and innovation officer at the EIP-AGRI Support Facility. He studied forest engineer at Santiago de Compostela University (USC) with a postgraduate course in agri-food business management from A Coruña University and a master degree in land planning (USC). He is working in Land Laboratory (USC) on food security, forest resilience, biogovernance, ecosystem services and rural development.



**Ina Van Hoyer**

**Event communication officer**

Ina Van Hoyer is communication manager at the EIP-AGRI Support Facility, coordinating the communication unit. She is responsible for the communication action plan, contributes to all communication tools, including social media, press, videos and takes up the role of event communication officer.

Ina Van Hoyer is a communication expert who has more than 20 years communication experience. From 2013 until 2021 she was the coordinating communication officer at the EIP-AGRI Service Point. Previously she was involved in several regional and European projects for the Flemish Government, Waterwegen en Zeekanaal NV to support them in their communication for several Sigma Plan projects.



**Pacôme Elouna Eyenga**

**Team leader**

Pacôme Elouna Eyenga is Belgian and was born in Yaoundé, Cameroon. He graduated as agronomist in the field of rural economy and sociology, at Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech / Université de Liège in Belgium. Since July 2021, he is the Team Leader of the Support Facility for 'Innovation & Knowledge Exchange | EIP-AGRI. From 2013 until May 2021, he has been Deputy Team Leader and then Team Leader of the EIP-AGRI Service Point established by the European Commission - DG AGRI.



**Willemine Brinkman**  
**Facilitator**

Willemine Brinkman is the deputy team leaders of the EIP-AGRI Support Facility. She was deputy team leader of the EIP-AGRI Service Point between April 2013 and May 2021. Since 2007, she has worked in various executive agencies of the Netherlands Ministries of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy and of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. She previously coordinated the European Tropical Forest Research Network, bringing research closer to policy and practice. Ms Brinkman studied tropical forestry and agronomy at Wageningen Agricultural University, and worked as an advisor in forestry and agriculture in an integrated rural development project in the Philippines.



**Szabolcs Biró**  
**Facilitator**

Szabolcs Biró is a Research & Innovation Officer and Head of Division B: Fostering a smart and resilient agricultural sector and food security. His main task is to monitor and evaluate innovation development related to farmer's income and resilience, competitiveness and their position in the food value chain.



**Sergiu Didicescu**  
**Facilitator**

Sergiu has a background in oenology and agri-environmental economics. He started professional life as an oenologist in the 'Dealul Mare' area, one of Romania's largest wine producing regions. Later, he joined Romania's Rural Development Managing Authority where he was responsible for programming the agri-environmental measures for Romania's first RDP. Since 2013 Sergiu works for the EIP-AGRI Support Facility currently as Head of Division C 'Environment and Climate'.



**Céline Karasinski**  
**Facilitator**

She started in June 2014 as policy officer for the European innovation partnership 'Agricultural productivity and sustainability' (EIP-AGRI Service Point). She works since 2009 for Chamber of Agriculture network in France. She was involved in rural development and research and innovation. From June 2017 to March 2020, she managed a LEADER programme in her country and facilitated a Local Action Group. From 2018 to 2021, she works as facilitator for the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Regional Rural Network. In this unit, she is responsible for the organisation of meetings and conferences, coordination of working groups and help to the cooperation projects of the Local Action Group. She participates in the French rural network's meetings and conferences. Céline Karasinski is Agricultural engineer, specialist of environment and ecology; she studied at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie of Toulouse (France).