

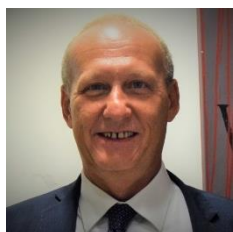
eip-agri
AGRICULTURE & INNOVATION

EIP-AGRI WORKSHOP CONVERSION TO ORGANIC FARMING 22-23 JUNE 2022 - FLORENCE, ITALY



Speaker and facilitator bios

Plenary speakers (in order of the programme)



Roberto Scalacci
Tuscany Region

Director for Agriculture and Rural Development at the Government of Tuscany Region since 2015. Agricultural expert and Graduated in Law from the University of Siena. Previous roles and positions: Director of the Representative Office at the EU of the Italian Farmers' Confederation (CIA) in Brussels and member of the POCC of the COPA (2008-2015). President of the Tuscan Young Farmer Association (2000-2006) and national Vice President (2005-2006). Member of the National Committee of PDO and PGI wines of the Italian Ministry of Agriculture (2003-2008) and Officer at the Tuscany section of CIA (1997-2008). Technician at the CIPA.AT (Center for Agricultural Professional Education and Technical Assistance) (1992-1996). Author of articles and publications on agri-food and European policies (since 1996) and Winner of the "Antico Fattore" International Literary Prize of the Georgofili Academy (2009).



Hugo Almeida
European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

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.



Patrizia Pitton
European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

Patrizia Pitton is an agronomist graduated from University of Turin in Italy. As officer for the region Piemonte, she already had experience in Organic Farming and Integrated Pest management and other agro-environmental measures dating back to the beginning of 1990.

She joined the European Commission in 2001, working as inspector at the Food and Veterinary Office. From 2005 to 2018 she worked as legislative and policy officer in the Unit Pesticides and Biocides of General Direction Health and Food Safety with focus on EU legislation concerning plant protection products, in particular Regulation (EU) No 1107/2009 and EU Directive 2009/128 on the sustainable use of pesticides. In June 2018, she joined DG AGRI Unit B4 dealing with organic productions and worked actively on the finalisation of secondary legislation under new organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848.



Susana Gaona Sáez

European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

Susana Gaona Sáez is Research Programme Officer at the European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, Research & Innovation Unit, where she is responsible for the portfolio of agroecology and organic farming. Before joining the European Commission in 2018, she worked for 10 years at the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), holding various positions in Rome and in Brussels. Prior to that, she represented the main Spanish national farmers' association in Brussels during three years. She started her professional career in Andalusia (Spain), supporting the regional government in the implementation of the CAP aid regime.

She holds a MSc in Agricultural Engineering fulfilled at the Universities of Córdoba (Spain) and Ghent (Belgium), and a post-graduate Master in European Union Studies from the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB).



Vidal Sánchez Vicente

EIP-AGRI Operational Group ECOPIONET

Vidal is agronomist engineer (UPM 2007), postgraduate diploma in Advance Studies in Food Science and Engineering (UPM 2009), MBA in International Management (CECO – ICEX 2010), and master in marketing and digital communication (San Pablo CEU 2014). He has worked for several companies, national associations and public entities in different fields. As an expert in competitive transformation and an agent of innovation, combines this knowledge with the agricultural world, where there is a great opportunity to grow not only by improving processes but also by dynamising rural development. He also collaborates with the EU as an evaluator of research projects.



Sara Kuschnereit

FINKA – Kompetenzzentrum Ökolandbau Niedersachsen (Competence Centre for organic farming Lower Saxony)

The Kompetenzzentrum Ökolandbau Niedersachsen (KÖN) was funded in 2002 to support organic farming in Lower Saxony, Germany. We are working on this task by managing projects, that deal with questions around organic farming. In addition to that, we are working in farm advising, organizing events and networking. I was always interested in farming and since I began my studies, the interest in organic farming grew stronger and stronger. I'm working since 2016 as a projectmanager at the KÖN. Since 2021 I'm also deputy CEO. I'm doing acquisition for new projects and also manage projects in EIP and Horizon programme as well as in different German programmes for agriculture, that deal with organic farming. My topic is to bring people from different backgrounds together so that they can profit from each others know how and experiences.



Maria Gernert

TP Organics

M.Sc. Maria Gernert is coordinating TP Organics, the European Technology Platform for organic food and farming. During her nutrition, health and food industry studies, M.Sc. Maria Gernert specialised in nutrition and health communication and was working as an intern in public relations at international organic producers' and processors' association Naturland. She subsequently completed an inter- and transdisciplinary Master's programme in Sustainable Service Management and Food Industries at Münster University of Applied Sciences (Germany), taking part in several projects, including "Sustainability Transitions and Food Security" and RobustFish. As a research assistant, Ms. Gernert also worked on a project on the organic sector's communication about health. Since 2018, she is working in the Research & Innovation unit at IFOAM Organics Europe, the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming that also hosts the Secretariat of TP Organics: strengthening research & innovation for organic and other agroecological approaches that contribute to sustainable food and farming systems (advocacy on EU research & innovation policy), communicating with the members, supporters and groups, and organising events (Organic Innovation Days, Science Day). Before her studies, Ms. Gernert was working voluntarily on different organic farms in the South of France (with WWOOF).



Thomas Snellman
REKO

Thomas Snellman is the founder of the REKO movement that was established in Ostrobothnia, Finland, in 2012. He is a farmer who converted his own farm into organic production 32 years ago – according to himself the best decision he ever made. Thomas is also the founder of the first organic committee in The Farmers Union in Finland, and in 2001–2015 he worked as a certified organic controller at Evira, the Finnish Food Authority. The list of his commissions of trust is long, here are a few examples: Member of the international working group "Logistics for short Circuit Agriculture" 2014–2015, "Nordic Food Entrepreneur of the year" in Copenhagen, Denmark 2017, "The countryside profile of the year" in Finland 2018 and a keynote speaker at the 11:th European IFOAM Conference in Vienna 2018. Since 2021 he is representing Finland in the management team in the EU-funded project agroBridges, which aims to build bridges between consumers and producers. Today Thomas Snellman is a well known name all over the world – thanks to REKO. His simple, but clever concept has spread to more than 20 countries and over 2,5 million people are members of a REKO ring. Don't hesitate to contact him, he speaks Swedish, Finnish, English, French and some German.



Albina Yasinskaya
Rozino Organic Farm

Albina Yasinskaya is the founder and CEO of 'Rozino Organic Farm' and of 'Gelato & Latte', Bulgaria. She is the founder of the 'Breeding Association Jersey Bulgaria' and is one of the world gelato ambassadors or 'Ambasciatore del Gelato nel mondo'.

Albina has a first master degree in Economics in social service and tourism, and a second master degree in Agronomy in organic agriculture. She successfully applies methods of sustainable organic farming and permaculture in creating a sustainable business model in the production of certified organic dairy products and ice cream – gelato type – with a closed cycle of animal selection, production of organic raw materials, production of the final product and its implementation.



Gianluca Barbieri
Tuscany Region

Executive manager for Agriculture and Rural Development at the Government of Tuscany Region since 2016. Manager of rural and biological districts of Tuscany and of the territorial office of the provinces of Massa, Lucca, Pisa, Livorno, ensuring that all preliminary, authorization and control activities are carried out in accordance with the guidelines of the regional council.

Graduated in geological sciences from the University of Parma.

Previous roles and positions: Executive manager for Province of Massa Carrara since 2008, where he dealt with agriculture, forests, civil protection.

Writer of the regional law 51/2019 Discipline of organic districts and of the regional law 17/2017 new regulation of rural districts.



Iacopo Zetti
University of Florence, Department of Architecture – Municipal Administration of Fiesole

Iacopo Zetti is associate professor of Urban and regional planning at the University of Florence. Master degree in architecture in 1994 and PhD in Urban, territorial and environmental planning in 2000. Since 2014 he has been deputy mayor of the Municipality of Fiesole for urban planning and landscaping, public works and environmental policies.

In the past, he was a consultant in several urban plans, in Italy and abroad and worked as a researcher in the Tuscan Regional Institute for Economic Planning (IRPET). His research activity covers several fields, as: GIS and cartography as knowledge instruments for urban planning; the participation of inhabitants in the urban project and to planning policies; re-use and rehabilitation of marginal spaces and in-between areas.

Recently he has published an (open access) book about the experience of the biological district of Fiesole titled "[Paesaggi d'innovazione. Il Distretto Biologico di Fiesole: un progetto corale di territorio](#)" [Landscapes of Innovation. The Biological District of Fiesole: a Choral Territorial Project]

Contact: iacopo.zetti@unifi.it



Klavdija Ramsak-Noemi

European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

Klavdija Ramsak-Noemi is a Policy Officer at the European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, Research & Innovation Unit. She joined European Commission, DG AGRI, in 2005. As a programme manager she managed the approval negotiations and implementation of the Rural Development Programme for Slovenia 2007-2013 and contributed to the preparation of the Partnership agreement with Slovenia 2014-2020. At DG AGRI she worked on German Rural Development matters as well as financial management. She has held a socio-economic researcher position in Switzerland. She studied economics in Ljubljana and holds a Master's degree in Human Ecology from Free University of Brussels.

DG Agriculture and Rural Development



Anikó Seregélyi

European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

Anikó Seregélyi joined the European Commission in 2007. Since March 2015, she has been working as Policy officer for the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, in the EIP-AGRI team. In the past seven years, she was involved in numerous EIP-AGRI workshops, seminars and Focus Groups mainly related to the sustainable management of natural resources and capacity building activities.

She studied geography, European studies and science management in Budapest, Freiburg, Aachen and Speyer.

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



Marta Yonkova

Task Manager

Marta is a Smart Farm Practices & Rural Development Officer at the EIP-Agri Support Facility team. She has a Master degree in International Projects' Management and has studied Economics in Bulgaria and Italy. Experienced in Marketing and Consultancy in the agri-food sector, Marta has a rich portfolio, which includes a vast number of projects, social activities and even issuing an agricultural magazine. Her work experience includes working for one of the biggest NGOs in the agricultural sector in Bulgaria, several information campaigns and many initiatives aimed at farmers and their needs.



Sarah Watson

Lead Facilitator

Sarah believes in the power of community and has over 20 years' experience as a facilitator bringing people together to share, explore and create innovative solutions. She works across Europe with a focus on rural areas, their challenges and the opportunities they bring. Her early career included working as a researcher for Bournemouth University's Centre for Land Based Studies whose focus included organic farming. She has also managed two LEADER programme and has had the pleasure of working in a European context ever since. She now runs her own facilitation and innovation consultancy, working with communities to aspire and realise change.



Friedrich Leitgeb
Coordinating Expert

Friedrich Leitgeb holds a PhD in agricultural science from University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna. For his thesis he did field research on "organic farmers' experiments and innovations" in Cuba. Currently, he is research assistant at the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL. Before that, he was working in organic inspection for an Austrian control body. Since 2009 he is giving lectures on organic farming at BOKU university and holds seminars and workshops. His fields of activity include knowledge systems and innovations in organic farming, civic and alternative food networks, food sovereignty, short food supply chains, policy advice, extension and sustainability assessment. Since 2010 he is living and working part time on a collectively managed and certified organic grassland farm, keeping an endangered sheep breed and producing organic plantlets. He has been involved with organic farming since almost 25 years in his professional and personal life and is committed to sustainable and small-scale peasant farming. Contact: friedrich.leitgeb@fibl.org



Elisabeth Klingbacher
Co-Task Manager

Elisabeth Klingbacher is part-time research and innovation officer at the EIP-AGRI Support Facility. She studied agricultural sciences at the University of natural resources and life sciences and agrarian pedagogy at the University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy in Vienna (Austria). Elisabeth has a broad experience in organic agriculture with a focus on organic knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange. Besides, she works at the Research Institute of organic agriculture (FiBL Austria) in the department of sustainable food systems.



Rasa Pakeltienė
Co-Task Manager

Rasa is a Knowledge and Innovation Officer at the EIP-AGRI | Innovation, and knowledge exchange Support facility. She is working as an associated professor at the Bioeconomy Development Faculty of Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), as well as AKIS activities coordinator at the Business and Social Partnership Center of VMU. Furthermore, she is secretary-general of the Association for European Life Science Universities, representing over 50 higher education institutions in the fields relating to the circular bioeconomy, the sustainable use of natural resources, the protection of the environment, and rural development. Rasa is an expert on national and international research and study projects and is an active member of scientific associations and other thematic networks.



Tine Defour
Communication Officer

As part of the Support Facility's communication team, Tine writes and coordinates brochures, press articles and other EIP-AGRI publications, including the yearly *Agriinnovation* magazine. She contributes to the contents of the EIP-AGRI website and offers support for European events. From 2014 till 2021, she worked full-time as a member of the EIP-AGRI Service Point team. She loves whipping words into publishable shape. Tine has an academic background, with a PhD in English linguistics. From 2003 to 2014 she was a researcher and lecturer at Ghent University, Belgium, allowing her to gain experience in international networking and in organising events. During that time she also worked as an editorial assistant and proofreader for a peer-reviewed academic journal.

Twitter: [@TineDefour](https://twitter.com/TineDefour) | **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/tine-defour-288a1b82/>



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.



Beatriz Guimarey Fernandez

Facilitator

Grown up on a small family farm in Galicia region (NW Spain), Beatriz Guimarey is Forestry Engineer and has a Master in Sustainable Land Planning by the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain). She's Sustainable Forestry Management Officer at the EIP-AGRI and her main duties involve the organisation and facilitation of EIP-AGRI events, screening of projects and initiatives for their analysis and providing content for communication products. Furthermore, at the University of Santiago de Compostela, she works as a researcher at the Land Laboratory and Territorial Information System Platform. There, she participates in projects related to spatial planning, rural development and land use change.



Stefania Lombardo

Facilitator

Stefania began working for the EIP-AGRI Innovation & knowledge exchange as a Sustainable Forestry Management Officer in 2021 as a part of the Innovation & knowledge exchange - EIP-AGRI team. Since 2021, she has been a programming officer for rural initiatives, knowledge transfer, and farmer adoption with Ente Terre Regionali Toscane. Prior to this, she spent nearly two years at the University of Florence researching precision agriculture technology adoption. She has a Master's in Forestry and a PhD in Agro-Forestry Engineering in joint supervision between the University of Florence and the University of Sevilla.



Tajana Radić

Facilitator

Tajana Radić is a Head of Division D "Strengthening the Socio-economic fabric of rural areas" in EIP-AGRI. Her main work is coordination of the activities that aim to attract young farmers, promote employment, local development including bioeconomy and sustainable forestry and to improve the response of EU agriculture to societal demands on food and health, including safe, nutritious and sustainable food, as well as animal welfare policy. She holds a Ph.D. degree in Agricultural Science and 12 years of experience in the field of agriculture and rural development as a Head of the Policy, Innovation and International Cooperation Department of the Croatian Chamber of Agriculture. She was managing the projects funded by the European Commission (*Information measures relating to the Common Agricultural Policy Programme*) "CAP for you" and "CAP for us" that were focused on showing the benefits of the Common Agricultural Policy and synergy among stakeholders.



Bavo Verwimp

Facilitator

Bavo Verwimp is a "Smart farm practices and rural development officer" for the Support Facility of the EIP-agri. He is an agricultural engineer, specialised in animal husbandry (Leuven University, Belgium) and got a degree in agricultural economics (Louvain-la-Neuve University, Belgium). After some short experiences abroad, Bavo started working as agricultural economist for the Flemish Land Agency (www.vlm.be). Since 2008 Bavo took over the farm of his parents and changed it into an organic farm with cattle and vegetables. The combination of two part-time jobs, makes that Bavo can bridge the gap between theory and practices.