

Biographies of the Speakers



1. Rūta Bičiuvienė

Rūta Bičiuvienė is the coordinator of international relations at the Lithuanian association of agricultural cooperatives. She has been working on agriculture for 14 years, for farmers and on behalf of farmers and their cooperatives. She has been involved in the formulation of farmers' position regarding the Lithuanian land law, especially on behalf of small scale farmers. She is an expert representing cooperatives at different international events as well as at European Commission Civil dialogue groups. "I believe the future of European agriculture relies on family farms, unique with their attitude, living and harmony with environment", says Rūta



2. Paul Bonhommeau

Paul Bonhommeau is a trained agricultural engineer and started his career working for agricultural unions. Later, he became a farmer on a cooperative dairy farm in the French department Loire-Atlantique. He then decided to study law and served as the lawyer of the small farmers' union Confédération Paysanne between 1995 and 2007. He is currently active with the CIAP (Coopérative d'installation en agriculture paysanne) which aims at facilitating the access to land for young farmers.



3. José Bové

Elected MEP in 2009, José Bové dedicates his efforts to the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, to make it more equitable and more ecological, which has led to denouncing the lobbies infiltrated in the institutions. His opposition to free trade agreements is rooted in the belief that they are dangerous to democracy. In France and in Europe, in the fields and in the institutions, he participated in the fight against the exploitation and exploration of shale gas. As a peasant until 2009, former spokesman for the "Confédération paysanne" union and Via Campesina, his involvement dates back to the 1970s and the victorious struggle against the extension of the Larzac military camp. Uniting local action in the global struggle, he participated in the dismantling of a Mac Donald's restaurant in Millau to denounce the policies of the WTO and the taxation of Roquefort cheese. From 1997 to today, he has committed himself against GMOs alongside thousands of volunteers and peasants.



4. Brendan Burns

Business owner with his son with financial and management interests in several rural businesses. The main company is based in North Scotland in harvesting and extraction of commercial forestry. Involved in various Scottish and UK trade and business organisations that support and lobby on behalf of small and micro businesses in rural and remote areas. Appointed by UK Government as a member of the European Economic & Social Committee in Brussels. Member for twelve years, currently President of the Section Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment.



5. Thierry de l'Escaille

Thierry de l'Escaille is the Secretary General – CEO of the European Landowners' Organization asbl since 1996, deputy CEO of the RISE Foundation and an administrator in numerous organisations of national and EU wide importance with a strong relation to agriculture, environment and finance. Trained as a lawyer, he also runs an agricultural family farming enterprise with operations in Belgium, France and the Netherlands.



6. Benny Haerlin

Benedikt Haerlin heads the Berlin office of the Foundation on Future Farming (Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft). He co-ordinates the European initiative "Save our Seeds" and the Conference of European GMO Free Regions. He co-organises a campaign of 50 German NGOs on the EU's Common Agricultural Policy ("Meine Landwirtschaft") and runs a campaign on "2000 square meters" – the amount of crop land available for every person on this planet. From 2002 to 2008 he served in the Bureau of the United Nations International Agricultural Assessment of Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD). From 1991 to 2002 Haerlin worked for Greenpeace International, between 1984 and 1989 he was a Member of the European Parliament. Before, he worked as a publisher and journalist in Berlin.



7. Martin Häusling

Martin Häusling is a German Member of the European Parliament for the Greens/EFA group and their spokesperson of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and a substitute member of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. Besides this, he runs an organic farm in Hesse (Germany) with 60 cows and its own cheese dairy. He is a member of the following associations: Slow-Food, ATTAC, Bioland, hessisches Anti-Gentec-Bündnis as well as Bund Deutscher Milchviehhalter (BDM, a German Dairy Farmers' Association) and Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft (AbL, a farmer's consortium of family-run farms).



8. Maria Heubuch

Before joining the European Parliament in 2014, Maria Heubuch (Greens/EFA) was at the head of the AbL (German member of Via Campesina). She has been an advocate for smallholder's rights and is currently fighting for improved legislation to prevent land concentration and speculation in Europe and the Global South. In her home country Germany, Maria runs a dairy farm together with her family.

She is also the spokesperson for development for the Greens in the European Parliament. Her work focuses on food security, rural livelihoods and agricultural policy. She was the Parliament's rapporteur on the "New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition", a controversial donor initiative.



9. Jobst Jungehülsing

Jobst Jungehülsing is a trained farmer and also holds a university degree in agricultural sciences. He started his career in the agricultural extension services of the German land Schleswig Holstein. In 1991, he joined the German Ministry for food and agriculture, where he today works as head of division. Between 2014 and 2015, he headed a working group on agricultural land markets made up of both federal and regional government experts. The working group pointed to deficiencies of the current control system for acquisition and rent of agricultural lands and made a number of recommendations for law reform.



10. Sylvia Kay

Sylvia Kay is a political scientist with an MSc. in Global Politics from the London School of Economics and Social Science (LSE). She joined the Transnational Institute (TNI) in 2011 as a researcher working on issues around land tenure, natural resource governance, agricultural investment and rural development. She is the lead author of an official European Parliament commissioned study on land grabbing in Europe. She has contributed to a number of books, including the Handbook on International Political Economy of Production (Edward Elgar, 2015) and peer reviewed academic journals including the Journal of Peasant Studies.

She has over two years of experience of direct engagement with the Committee on World Food Security in Rome, where she participated in the negotiations on the Principles on Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems.



11. Helmut Klüter

Helmut Klüter was born in North-Western Germany and studied in Münster, St. Petersburg and Copenhagen. In 1994 he became professor for regional geography at the University of Greifswald. His research themes include regional development in Northern Germany, Scandinavia and Russia. His latest publication is a monography on „Agriculture in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern compared with the other 15 federal states of Germany“.



12. Robert Levesque

Mr Levesque is trained as an agricultural engineer and is the director of Terres d'Europe-Scafr, the research office of the French national federation of SAFER. He is also part of the administration of SAFER as well as the management board of AEIAR (European association for rural development institutions). He is the author of "Terre nourricière, si elle venait à manquer" (L'Harmattan, 2011) and of "Terre et Humanité, la voie de l'écocène" (L'Harmattan, 2016).



13. Florent Marcellesi

Florent Marcellesi has been a spokesperson for the Spanish party EQUO in the European Parliament since May 2014 and MEP since October 2016. Besides his diploma as a road engineer and urban planner, he is also a specialist in international cooperation. Florent is a member of the think tank Ecología Política and author among other titles of "Which Europe do we want?" (Icaria, 2014) and "Goodbye to growth. Living well in a world of solidarity and sustainability" (El Viejo Topo, 2013).



14. Maria Noichl

Maria Noichl (S&D) is a member of the European Parliament representing the Bavarian regions Oberbayern and Schwaben. She is a member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development as well as the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. Currently, Maria Noichl is the rapporteur of the initiative report on the "State of play of farmland concentration in the EU: how to facilitate the access to land for farmers?". Prior to her decision to run for the European Parliament, she was a member of the Bavarian Parliament and the spokesperson for agriculture and forestry. She used to work as a teacher for nutrition and handicrafts.



15. Kaul Nurm

Trained as an engineer of water management, Kaul Nurm was secretary general of the Estonian Farmers Federation from 1992 to 2016. In 2005 he joined the European Economic and Social Council and served as president of its section Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment from 2012 to 2015. He was the EESC’s rapporteur for its own-initiative opinion on “Land grabbing – a wake-up call for Europe and an imminent threat to family farming”.



16. Adam Payne

Adam Payne is a young farmer in the south west of England, producing sheep, pigs and vegetables on a small organic farm. He is active with the Landworkers’ Alliance, and on the coordinating committee of the European Coordination Via Campesina.



17. Véronique Rioufol

Veronique Rioufol is the European programme officer of Terre de liens, a French civic organisation securing access to land for agroecological farmers. She is also coordinator of the informal European network *Access to land*, gathering field-based organisations working on access to land. She is trained in public policies and international relations.



18. Pete Ritchie

Pete Ritchie runs a diversified organic upland farm in the Scottish Borders. He is also founding director of Nourish Scotland, a membership based civil society organisation working for a fairer and more sustainable food system in Scotland.



19. Bronis Ropė

Bronis Ropė, Member of the European Parliament’s Agriculture and Rural Development Committee and Regional Development Committee. Being an expert and practitioner of local self-government, Bronis Ropė during many years was actively engaged in the national debate on land management and ownership regulation in Lithuania. He was one of the key political figures in the process of introduction and revision of safeguards, defining and limiting trade in land and its concentration.

During his political career Bronis Ropė was the mayor of Ignalina District Municipality (1995-2014), a member and secretary of the Lithuanian delegation to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (1999-2012), and the president (2000-2003) and vice-president of the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania (2003-2008 and 2011-2014). Since 2012 Bronis Ropė is the vice-chairman of the Lithuanian Union of Peasants and Greens, a leading political party, representing the interests of local and regional actors, the agrarian and forestry sector, and environmentalists.



20. Molly Scott Cato

Molly is a Green MEP for South West England and Gibraltar, and an economist by vocation. Her South West constituency has a large farming sector, particularly focused on dairy. As a member of the European Parliament’s Agriculture and Rural Affairs committee, she has worked on issues including antibiotic resistance, TTIP and food security in Africa and Latin America. As an economist Molly is involved in debates about strengthening local economies and building resilience into local communities. In her most recent book, *The Bioregional Economy* (2012), she sketches a future economy where the maximum happiness is bought for the minimum energy. More practically, she was part of a group that set up the Stroud Pound, is a member of Stroud Community Agriculture, and worked with Transition Stroud.



21. Mustapha Sinaceur

Mustapha Sinaceur was appointed Director of the FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium, effective 4 August 2014. He is a national of Morocco, and holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Economics and Jurisprudence from the Faculty of Economics and Jurisprudence, Mohammed V University, Rabat. Before joining the FAO in 1994, he held various positions in the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, and the National Bank for Economic Development.



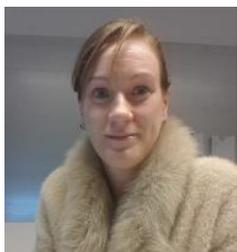
22. Bart Staes

Bart Staes is member of European Parliament since 1999. His focus is on food safety, environment and public health, but also on fraud issues and the spending of the EU. For him, it is clear that the classic model of agriculture is in need of renovation: monocultures, concentration and high production levels give the sector an extreme vulnerability in terms of food quality, environment protection and employment. In his opinion agroecology can provide an answer. But some obstacles still need to be taken, like access to land for instance.



23. Attila Szöcs-Boruss

Attila Szocs is a peasant farmer and Land Rights campaign coordinator at Eco Ruralis, a Romanian association of peasants and agroecological food producers, member of the European Coordination Via Campesina. Besides producing peasant seeds on a collective farm, Attila focuses on the effects of the EU Common Agricultural Policy on small farmers, the problem of agricultural land grabbing and advocates for the implementation of agroecology and food sovereignty in the Eastern European region.



24. Liesbet Vranken

Prof. Dr. Ir. Liesbet Vranken has a Master in Bioscience Engineering and a Phd in Economics, both from the University of Leuven. She is currently working as an associate professor at the Division of Bioeconomics, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the KU Leuven.

Liesbet is a specialist in studying the behaviour of food consumers, agricultural producers and land users and in analysing potential behavioural adjustments to improve welfare and realize economic growth. She is well trained in quantitative skills and in analysing economic survey data which led to the publication of her work in international journals and dissemination among international organizations (EU Commission, World Bank, FAO). Specific research themes include sustainable land use: how to maximize the societal (economic and environmental) benefits related to different types of land use?



25. Thomas Wiedmann

Thomas Wiedmann is an official of the European Commission since 2005. He works as a legal officer in the Commission's Directorate General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Market Union. Since 2011, he is dealing with investment issues in a unit responsible for the free movement of capital. Prior to entering the European Commission, Thomas Wiedmann has held various functions in the German judiciary service, inter alia, he was a judge at the Superior Court of Stuttgart (Landgericht) in civil law matters. He began his career in the ministry administration of the German land of Baden-Württemberg, serving in the state chancellery as well as in offices in Bonn and in Berlin. Mr Wiedmann studied law at the universities of Tübingen and Paris (Paris 2, Pantheon-Assas). He specialised in comparative law (PhD in 1996). Mr Wiedmann is the author of numerous publications on European law and public comparative law.