

The European Young Leaders Class of 2017 will meet for the first time from 16 to 18 March 2017 in Portugal.

The seminar takes place almost 60 years to the day since six governments signed the Treaty of Rome, the founding agreement of what would later become the European Union.

The Treaty put in place the principles of free movement of labour, goods, services and capital. It also launched Europe on a journey – of varying pace – towards closer integration of its governments and peoples, through a series of treaties and agreements.

But since the Lisbon Treaty was signed in 2007, progress has faltered – and even been reversed. There have been no more treaties; the United Kingdom has voted to leave the EU; and the ‘four freedoms’ have been put in question. Is the whole project under threat?

Europe’s challenges are many and complex – but not insuperable.

Most European citizens are still fond of ‘Europe’: its values, culture and social model. But they lack trust in its leaders, whom they see as disconnected from their daily reality and unable to tackle the challenges Europe faces.

The prime objective of the seminar is to create bonds of trust between the young leaders so as to stimulate collaborative actions between them for the better of the EU and our societies.

The European project is under threat from the rise of populism and post-fact politics. But can Europe use this crisis to change and focus on improving how it works, on educating people about the basic principles, on delivering tangible results and better communicating its successes?

And while there is currently an atmosphere of doom sown by acts of terrorism, uncertainty about the United States’ stances on global issues such as defence, trade and climate change under Donald Trump, and threats to the liberal democratic order, the European Union remains a historically successful project. How can Europe display resilience in its words and actions, and overcome its current problems?

These are just some of the questions that the European Young Leaders will debate in Lisbon and Cascais, using their range of experience and knowledge to develop ideas that will help Europe overcome its challenges.

With the help of the 40 new European Young Leaders and several other senior figures, we will look at Europe in context.

We will consider themes of freedom, equality and solidarity. We will look at what is going right in Europe and how we may bring back optimism and trust in our common destiny. We will aim to be catalysts of change.

Working together, we will seek new ideas for a better Europe.

08.30 Meeting in the lobby of the Sana Lisboa Hotel and transfer to Cascais

09.30 - 10.30

PLENARY SESSION

IS IT TIME TO RETHINK DEMOCRACY?

Recent elections and referendums have shaken the liberal democratic order. The old rules no longer seem to apply, with social media contributing to the development of 'post-truth' politics in which perceptions seem to count for more than facts. At the same time extremist forces who threaten democracy are using democratic means to access power. How can European democracies and the EU institutions face up to these challenges? What measures should be taken to curb the rise of extremist and populist tendencies? Is it time for a radical rethink of how we perceive 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'?

Introductory remarks by:

Luis Morago, Campaigns Director at Avaaz
Tiberiu Pfiszter, Romanian anti-corruption activist

Reactions by:

Zanda Kalnina-Lukaševica, Latvian Parliamentary State Secretary for European Affairs and 2017 European Young Leader

10.30 - 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 - 12.00

PARALLEL SESSION I

BREXIT

How can we restart the European engine?

Britain's referendum vote to leave the EU has delivered a profound shock to the continent. The looming departure of one of the EU's strongest diplomatic, economic and military powers is a serious blow for the European project. How can Europe fight against general apathy and move forward? How can we bring back optimism and trust in our common destiny?

Introductory remarks by:

Denis MacShane, British Minister of State for Europe (2002-2005)
Tim Oliver, Dahrendorf Fellow at the London School of Economics

Moderated by:

Owen Jones, Columnist for the Guardian and 2017 European Young Leader

PARALLEL SESSION II

UNITED STATES

The end of a long-lasting alliance?

The election of Donald Trump as President of the United States is a game-changer for transatlantic relations. The triumph of 'America first' is likely to see the US retreat from the world and questions former alliances. It also gives Europe a unique opportunity to play a bigger role in international relations. How can Europe fill the vacuum? Can it be the new beacon of hope?

An interview of Anthony L. Gardner, Visiting Fellow at the College of Europe and US Ambassador to the EU (2014-2017) by **Mehdi Hasan**, Broadcaster, Journalist and Presenter at Al Jazeera International and 2017 European Young Leader

12.00 - 13.00 Lunch

13.00 - 14.30

WORKING GROUPS **IF YOU WERE IN CHARGE**

Spend time organising yourselves, thinking through the issues and how you intend to discuss the topic and come to an agreement. Ensure you have a set of recommendations to share with the wider group; present your dilemma and areas of disagreement; also consider and take account of what you think good leadership is about.

Working Group I – Migration

Migration is an issue that continues to be high on Europe's agenda. It is often combined with the refugee crisis, perceptions of social welfare abuse and terrorism. But can we educate people and change the narrative to the positive impact – and the necessity – of migration in an ageing and economically stagnant Europe? And what can the EU do in terms of job creation and social integration to ensure that it delivers for its citizens and residents, old and new?

Scene setter:

Philippe Legrain, Founder of the Open Political Economy Network (OPEN) and Author of 'Immigrants: Your country needs them'

Chair:

Michael Printzos, Programme Director at The Hellenic Initiative and 2015-2016 European Young Leader

Rapporteur:

Muna Duzdar, Austrian Secretary of State for Diversity, Public Service and Digitalisation and 2017 European Young Leader

Working Group II – Climate and Energy

COP21 and COP22 were successful steps towards tackling climate change, but there is still a long way to go before reaching global emissions targets. New technologies could ease the shift to cleaner energy through digitalisation, low-carbon mobility and smarter grids. Europe spearheads the green transition, but it relies heavily on only a few suppliers and lacks adequate interconnections. How can Europe lead the move to a competitive low-carbon economy while boosting energy security?

Scene setter:

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, Professor of Climatology and Environmental Sciences at the Université catholique de Louvain (UCL) and Vice Chair of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2008-2015)

Chair:

Jane Burston, Head of Climate and Environment at the UK National Physical Laboratory and 2015-2016 European Young Leader

Rapporteur:

Kirsten Brosbøl, Member of Parliament, Danish Minister of the Environment (2014-2015) and 2017 European Young Leader

Working Group III – Education

The ability to count, read and write are key elements of education, but many thousands of European school-leavers lack these basic skills. Meanwhile the range of skills needed by young people is enlarging, with the digital revolution transforming how we learn and how we work. How can Europe prepare its education infrastructure to deal with the challenges of the 21st century? Is civic education the silver bullet to fight populism?

Scene setter:

Montserrat Gomendio, Deputy Director for Education and Skills at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Spanish Secretary of State for Education, Vocational Training and Universities (2012-2015)

Chair:

Kamilla Sultanova, Chair of Global Dignity Finland and 2015-2016 European Young Leader

Rapporteur:

Aoibhinn Ní Shúilleabháin, Lecturer at the University College Dublin School of Mathematics and Statistics and 2017 European Young Leader

Working Group IV – Digital Economy

While some innovative US start-ups such as Airbnb and Uber have already become big global players, digital as a driver for growth remains largely a story of untapped potential on this side of the Atlantic. Europe is struggling to keep pace with the digital transition and is failing to fulfil its digital promise. How can Europe successfully transform its economy? How can it fully benefit from digital market initiatives and stop the brain drain? How can it create a culture of innovation?

Scene setter:

Fabio Pianesi, Research Director at EIT Digital

Chair:

Michal Štencl, Founder & CEO of Sygic and 2017 European Young Leader

Rapporteur:

Kaja Kallas, Member of the European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and 2017 European Young Leader

14.30 - 15.00

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

An opportunity for EYs to share the recommendations that came out of the working groups in plenary.

Rapporteurs:

Kirsten Brosbøl, Member of Parliament, Danish Minister of the Environment (2014-2015) and 2017 European Young Leader

Muna Duzdar, Austrian Secretary of State for Diversity, Public Service and Digitalisation and 2017 European Young Leader

Kaja Kallas, Member of the European Parliament, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and 2017 European Young Leader

Aoibhinn Ní Shúilleabháin, Lecturer at the University College Dublin School of Mathematics and Statistics and 2017 European Young Leader

15.00 - 15.30

Coffee break

15.30 - 18.00

PARALLEL STUDY VISITS **NEW IDEAS FOR EUROPE**

Two success stories from the Lisbon region will open their doors to European Young Leaders for an exclusive, behind-the-scenes visit to showcase their achievements, share good practices and inspire.

A. Champalimaud Centre for the Unknown - Championing research in health

The Champalimaud Foundation is a private biomedical research foundation that aims to develop programmes of advanced biomedical research and provide excellent clinical care.

B. DNA Cascais - Promoting innovation through entrepreneurship

DNA Cascais is a business incubator whose mission is to foster entrepreneurship in Cascais and in the Lisbon region through the development and promotion of social and young entrepreneurship.

18.00 - 19.00 Time off

19.00 Dinner at the Cascais Citadel Palace

In the presence of the **President of Portugal, H.E. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa**

22.00 Transfer to Lisbon and Lisbon by night

EUROPEAN YOUNG LEADERS



ELENI ANTONIADOU

Greece

Co-Founder of Transplants without Donors & 2017 European Young Leader

Eleni has been working on artificial organ technology and regenerative medicine in hospitals in Greece, the United Kingdom and the United States. After graduating in biomedicine, she participated in the first successful artificial trachea transplant operation on a late-stage cancer patient. In 2009, she co-founded the London-based start-up Transplants without Donors, the aim of which is to develop tissue-engineered organs that are transplanted into sick patients. Eleni also studied the effects of changes in atmospheric pressure on the nervous systems of astronauts at the NASA Mars Exploration Lab and trained NASA astronauts in biomedical experimentation for the International Space Station. She is the recipient of multiple prestigious awards and is part of the 2015 Forbes 30 under 30 for healthcare and the BBC's 100 Most Powerful Women.

 [Eleni Antoniadou](#)

 [Eleni Antoniadou](#)

 [@E_Antoniadou](#)



ANDREAS ARAOUZOS

Cyprus

Actor, Director and Producer & 2017 European Young Leader

Andreas completed courses at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. In 2002, he founded a theatre productions company, Alpha Square, to enhance theatre in Cyprus and provide spectators with an inspirational selection of plays. Andreas has already directed 14 stage productions in his country, including several award-winning plays and his own musical-comedy adaptation of Cinderella, which will tour Greece in 2017. Andreas has also written several plays, such as 'The Rich Also Cry', which was staged by Teatro Ena in 2007. He has translated numerous theatre texts from English to Greek and published a collection of articles in Phileleftheros, the biggest-selling newspaper in Cyprus.

 [Andreas Araouzos](#)

 [Andreas Araouzos](#)

 [@araouzos](#)



INÉS ARRIMADAS GARCÍA

Spain

Leader of the Opposition in the Catalan parliament & 2017 European Young Leader

Inés started her career in the private sector working for an industrial services company. In 2010, she attended a Ciudadanos rally with a friend and joined the party shortly afterward as the youth section spokesperson. In 2012, she was elected to the Catalanian parliament as deputy spokesperson. She sat on the Committee on Business and Employment, where she focused on socio-economic issues such as the fight against inequalities and unemployment. Throughout her mandate, she was actively involved in different programmes at local, regional and national level. In 2015, she was appointed Leader of the Opposition as Ciudadanos won second place in the Catalan parliamentary election.

 [Inés Arrimadas García](#)

 [Inés Arrimadas García](#)

 [@inesarrimadas](#)




ENEKO ATXA

Spain

Chef at three-Michelin-starred restaurant Azurmendi & 2017 European Young Leader

Eneko is a leader in international cuisine. In 2007, he opened his now-renowned restaurant Azurmendi in the Basque country. Within five years, the restaurant – located in the beautiful town of Larrabetzu – had been awarded three Michelin stars. Azurmendi was named Most Sustainable Restaurant in the World by the World's 50 Best in 2014 and as number two on Elite Traveler's 2016 list of the best restaurants in the world. Eneko has a creative mind, skilled hands and a work ethic based on care, precision and speed. His intense cuisine is deeply rooted in the local Basque identity. He has been named Champion Young Chef in Spain and Best Chef of the Year by the prestigious French gourmet club Fourchettes.

 [Eneko Atxa](#)

 [@eneko_atxa](#)



RICARDO BAPTISTA LEITE

Portugal

Member of Parliament & 2015-2016 European Young Leader

In addition to being a Member of the Portuguese Parliament for the Social Democratic Party, Ricardo is also a medical doctor with specific training in infectious diseases, having studied at Johns Hopkins University and Harvard Medical School. He has an active role on a number of scientific and advisory boards of health-related foundations and organisations – including his role as Head of Public Health at the Catholic University of Portugal. Since his election in 2011, the Portuguese-Canadian citizen has expanded his focus beyond health issues and currently serves as Coordinator and Permanent Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee as well as President of the Portugal-Canada Parliamentary Friendship Group.

[in](#) Ricardo Baptista Leite [f](#) Ricardo Baptista Leite [t](#) @RBaptistaLeite



KIRSTEN BROSBØL

Denmark

Member of Parliament & 2017 European Young Leader

Kirsten has represented the Social Democrats in the Danish Parliament since 2005. She was a rapporteur on research and higher education as well as on gender equality and food. She was appointed as Denmark’s Minister of the Environment in 2014, in the government of Helle Thorning-Schmidt. In that position, she facilitated the development of sustainable solutions and contributed to the development of industrial growth and workplaces in Denmark. In the 2015 general election, she was re-elected to the Danish Parliament. Kirsten is the co-founder of the Bilateral Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. The network operates across party lines in the Danish Parliament to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights at a national and international level.

[in](#) Kirsten Brosbøl [f](#) Kirsten Brosbøl [t](#) @kirstenbrosbol



JANE BURSTON

United Kingdom

Head of the Centre for Carbon Measurement at the National Physical Laboratory & 2015-2016 European Young Leader

Jane has dedicated most her life to climate and environmental issues, serving first as a strategic consultant on low carbon policy to the Mayor of London and is now running a world-class climate science and low carbon technology centre at the UK’s National Measurement Institute. In 2008, she founded Carbon Retirement, an award-winning social enterprise working with the EU ETS. Her dedication to sustainability and entrepreneurial drive was rewarded with being named as one of the ‘Top 30 UK entrepreneurs under 30’ by Real Business in 2010, a ‘Social Entrepreneur of the Year’ by Square Mile in 2011 and one of the ‘Top 10 Outstanding Young Persons of the UK’ by the Chamber of Commerce International in 2015, among others.

[in](#) Jane Burston [f](#) Jane Burston [t](#) @Jane_Burston



EDOARDO CAMILLI

Italy

Co-Founder & CEO of Hozint & 2017 European Young Leader

A young entrepreneur and security expert, Edoardo started working as a political and security risk consultant after graduating from the University of Bologna. In 2010, he established the International Security Observer, a web-based think tank seeking to foster the next generation of security experts. At the time, he was also working as a research analyst at the Italian Institute of Strategic Studies Niccolò Machiavelli, where his activities focused on insurgency, intelligence, national security policies and organised crime. Edoardo is the co-founder of Hozint (Horizon Intelligence), a consulting firm providing location-based media and social media monitoring services on political, safety and security risks. He is frequently interviewed on security issues by media in Italy and across Europe.

[in](#) Edoardo Camilli [f](#) Edoardo Camilli [t](#) @camilliedoardo



CIARA CLANCY

Ireland

CEO of Beats Medical & 2017 European Young Leader

Ciara is a chartered physiotherapist and experienced researcher who has worked alongside people with Parkinson's disease for many years. She is passionately dedicated to improving the management and treatment of people with Parkinson's disease and other neurological conditions. At the age of 22, she launched Beats Medical, a medical application available on smartphones, which aims to help people with Parkinson's disease take control of their condition through technology. Her efforts have been recognised internationally. Beats Medical came top in Google's Adopt a Start-Up programme in 2015. Ciara also received the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists Anne O'Brien Prize for Clinical Excellence and the Cartier Women's Initiative Award.

 [Ciara Clancy](#)

 [Ciara Clancy](#)

 [@ciarapt](#)



SILVIA CONSOLE BATTILANA

Italy

Co-Founder & CEO of Auctionomics & 2017 European Young Leader

Silvia is a young economist and entrepreneur specialising in game theory and interest groups. She has extensive experience as a strategist in auction design. In 2008, she co-founded Auctionomics, a high-stakes auction consulting and software firm with clients ranging from governments to Fortune 500 companies. Silvia has acted as project manager on several high-stakes auctions in Australia, Canada and the United States, in many European countries, and in Africa and Latin America. She is also the co-founder of xSwan, an interactive version of eBay that allows charities to raise more money via online auctions. Silvia frequently speaks at major universities both in the United States (including Berkeley and Harvard) and around the world.

 [Silvia Console Battilana](#)

 [Silvia Console Battilana](#)



MANUEL COSTESCU

Romania

Secretary of State for Foreign Investments and Public-Private Partnerships (2016-2017) & 2017 European Young Leader

Manuel was until recently Romania's Secretary of State for Foreign Investments and Public-Private Partnerships. In this position, he headed the directorate in charge of implementing infrastructure projects and stimulating foreign investment and public-private partnerships in Romania. Before joining the government, he was an executive director at J.P. Morgan, a multinational banking and financial services holding company, where he was responsible for the relationship with various public sector clients in Europe, including central banks, debt management offices, development banks and government agencies. Manuel also worked as an independent consultant on business and development projects in Australia, South Africa, Tanzania and Peru, as well as at the Brattle Group, where he was a research analyst with a focus on risk management and strategies in the energy sector. He holds an MBA from the MIT Sloan School of Management.

 [Manuel Costescu](#)

 [Manuel Costescu](#)



MUNA DUZDAR

Austria

Secretary of State for Diversity, Public Service and Digitalisation & 2017 European Young Leader

A lawyer by training, Muna is passionate about politics. During her studies, she was the international secretary of Socialist Youth Austria and worked for the French Socialist Party. After graduation, she became a local councillor in the Vienna-Donaustadt district at the age of 23. In 2010, she joined the Austrian Federal Council where she became the Social Democrat spokesperson on foreign policy. Six years later, she was nominated as Secretary of State in the Office of the Federal Chancellery. Muna is also the President of the Palestinian-Austrian Society, a group that aims to deepen exchanges between Austrians and Palestinians and play an active part in Austrian society by promoting anti-racist, democratic and transnational programmes.

 [Muna Duzdar](#)



LUKASZ DZIEKONSKI

Portugal

Member of the Management Board of the Marguerite Fund 2020 & 2015-2016 European Young Leader

Lukasz is a Senior Manager responsible for European structured finance at the Warsaw-based PKO Bank Polski, where he works on projects related to energy, transport and the environment with budgets ranging from €50 million to €1 billion. He is also a member of the management board for the Marguerite Fund 2020 for Energy, Climate Change and Infrastructure in Luxembourg. There, Lukasz oversees the formulation of financial and operational strategies. He is also on the supervisory board of Pomeranka Development, InvestGas and Energa Operator in Poland, and of PZU Ukraine Insurance Company and Kredobank, also in Ukraine. Lukasz began his career as an adviser in the European Parliament, focusing on energy policy and security as well as EU relations with Russia and Ukraine.

 [Lukasz Dziekonski](#)

 [Lukasz Dziekonski](#)



ADIL EL ARBI

Belgium

Film Director and Screenwriter & 2017 European Young Leader

Adil co-directed three movies, one TV series and two award-winning short movies. His two first feature movies, 'Image' (2010) and 'Black' (2015), co-directed with his friend Bilall Fallah, are set in run-down districts of Brussels. 'Black', which features non-professional young actors, premiered at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival. The plot brings a 'Romeo and Juliet' love story to street gangs in modern-day Brussels. Adil became a celebrity by winning 'The Smartest Person in the World' quiz on Flemish television. In 2016, the renowned American producer Jerry Bruckheimer entrusted him and Bilall Fallah with the direction of 'Beverly Hills Cop 4', the latest in a series of movies starring Eddie Murphy.

 [@adilelarbi](#)



AARON FARRUGIA

Malta

CEO of Malta Freeport Corporation & 2017 European Young Leader

Aaron runs the Malta Freeport, which was established in 1988 as the first transshipment hub in the Mediterranean. The company has experienced remarkable growth and currently ranks twelfth among the top European ports. Aaron served as president of the Labour Youth Forum and was elected deputy mayor of Ta' Xbiex in 2005. During the international financial crisis, he was appointed to a team of economic experts set up by the Young European Socialists and was elected as Education Secretary in the Maltese Labour Party's Central Administration. Aaron also chaired the progressive think tank IDEAT, the party's political foundation. In 2014, he founded the Anton Buttigieg Foundation, which seeks to promote social awareness in Malta, focusing on education as the primary tool for economic and social development.

 [Aaron Farrugia](#)

 [Aaron Farrugia](#)

 [@farrugiaaaron](#)



MARY FITZGERALD

Ireland

Libya Analyst, Award-Winning Journalist and Columnist for the Irish Independent & 2013 European Young Leader

Mary is a journalist and analyst specialising in the Euro-Mediterranean region with a particular focus on Libya. She has worked on Libya since 2011 and lived there throughout 2014. Her work has appeared in publications including the Economist, Foreign Policy, the New Yorker, the Washington Post, the Financial Times and the Guardian. She has conducted research on Libya for the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMED) among others. She is a contributing author to an edited volume on the Libyan revolution published by Oxford University Press. In her previous role as Irish Times foreign affairs correspondent, she reported from 40 countries across the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe. She is a member of the Global Women's Forum 'Rising Talents' network.

 [Mary Fitzgerald](#)

 [Mary Fitzgerald](#)

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MYRIAM FRANÇOIS

United Kingdom

Columnist for the New Statesman & 2017 European Young Leader

Myriam is an academic, broadcaster and writer specialising in issues related to the Middle East. As correspondent for the Huffington Post, she broke a headline story on an exclusive 36-page document written by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the Al-Qaeda militant behind the 9/11 attacks. In 2015, she presented a BBC documentary on the Srebrenica massacre, which was nominated for a Sandford St Martin Award for best religious programming. She is currently working at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, where her work focuses on issues related to integration and racism. Myriam also teaches Middle East politics at the Oxford University Department for Politics and International Relations and is writing a doctoral thesis on Islamic political movements in Morocco.

 Myriam François-Cerrah  Myriam François-Cerrah  @myriamfrancoisc



MARKUS FREIBURG

Germany

Founder & Managing Director of FASE & 2017 European Young Leader

Markus is the founder of the Financing Agency for Social Entrepreneurship (FASE), a leading financial intermediary that helps social enterprises scale their social impact by helping them raise hybrid growth capital. FASE has built an open pipeline of investment-ready social enterprises and closed sixteen transactions leveraging around €6m in impact investments. Markus is also a member of the Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship (GECES), a consultative multi-stakeholder group on social business that examines the progress of measures foreseen by the European Commission. He has experience of working with many social enterprises in finding appropriate financing solutions and scaling-up the impact of proven business models. Markus worked for seven years as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company, where one of his roles was providing pro-bono consulting for social entrepreneurs.



ALESSANDRO FUSACCHIA

Italy

Head of Cabinet at the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (2014-2016) & 2013 European Young Leader

Alessandro served until recently as Head of Cabinet at the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research. Previously, he worked as Adviser to the Italian Economic Development Minister on European Affairs, Innovation and Youth, and was Head of Office at the Italian Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport. He also worked for the Italian Prime Minister's office in Rome as part of the G8 team, as well as for the Italian Ministry of International Trade. In addition, he was President of RENA, the Italian association of young professionals promoting innovation, merit, youth empowerment and a new generation of local public policies. Alessandro teaches at the LUISS Guido Carlo School of Government in Rome and at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris. He holds a PhD in Social and Political Sciences from the European University Institute in Florence.

 Alessandro Fusacchia  Alessandro Fusacchia  @FusacchiaA



JOSEP-MARIA GASCÓN

Spain

Director for Strategy and Competitive Intelligence (ACCIÓ) in the Ministry of Business and Knowledge at the Government of Catalonia & 2014 European Young Leader

Prior to his current position with the Ministry of Business and Knowledge, Josep-Maria was one of Solvay's leading tax lawyers with dual responsibility: he was both International Tax Manager at the global chemical and plastics group's European headquarters in Belgium, and Head of Tax for Spain and Portugal. Josep-Maria is a frequent author and lecturer on tax issues, and was appointed as a Business Ambassador by the Government of Catalonia in recognition of a career that contributes to making the region known around the world. In September 2011, he received one of the legal publication Iberian Lawyer's "40 under Forty" awards, which recognises the achievements of a new generation of lawyers shaping the future of law in Spain and Portugal.

 Josep-Maria Gascon  Josep-Maria Gascon  @GasconJM



EDVARD GLÜCKSMAN

Sweden

Senior Environmental and Social Specialist at Wardell Armstrong LLP & 2015-2016 European Young Leader

Edvard is a Chartered Scientist specialising in understanding environmental and social impacts of development projects around the world. His most recent work has focused on mitigating negative impacts to align mining projects in Kazakhstan with international standards. Edvard is also affiliated with the University of Exeter's Environment and Sustainability Institute, where he lectures on sustainability issues and corporate social responsibility. He has previously held a number of roles at the interface of science and society, having worked at the European Geosciences Union and the UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. He holds MSc and PhD degrees from the University of Oxford and undergraduate degrees from the University of St Andrews and McGill University.

 [Edvard Glücksman](#)

 [Edvard Glücksman](#)

 [@edglucksman](#)



JAKOB HAESLER

Germany

Co-Founder of Project Alloy & 2013 European Young Leader

Before co-founding Project Alloy, Jakob was CEO and Co-Founder of Tynyclues SAS, a Paris-based software start-up with the objective of industrialising datamining on Big Data with the help of advanced machine learning algorithms in a Cloud Computing environment. Previously, he was a partner and consultant at McKinsey & Company in Germany and France where he worked on topics ranging from Banking to Public Sector Reform to Global Public Health issues, notably the creation and distribution of child HIV treatments. Prior to McKinsey, he briefly worked at the World Bank. He holds a Master's in Public Administration from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and a Bachelor of Science from the University of St. Gallen. Jakob is also a founding partner of the "Cercle du leadership".

 [Jakob Haesler](#)

 [Jakob Haesler](#)



MEHDI HASAN

United Kingdom

Broadcaster, Journalist and Presenter at Al Jazeera International & 2017 European Young Leader

Mehdi is an award-winning journalist and political commentator. He is the presenter of 'The Café', 'Head to Head' and 'UpFront' on Al Jazeera English. He was previously political director at Huffington Post UK. Mehdi was named as one of the 100 most influential Britons on Twitter and was included in the annual global list of the 500 most influential Muslims in the world. In 2013, his debate-winning speech in an Oxford Union debate on Islam and peace went viral online, winning more than two million views. He is also the author of two books: a biography of former Labour Party leader Ed Miliband and an eBook on debt and the financial crisis.

 [Mehdi Hasan](#)

 [@mehdirhasan](#)



KLEN JÄÄRATS

Estonia

Director for EU Affairs at the Office of the Prime Minister & 2015-2016 European Young Leader

As Director of the EU Secretariat in the Estonian government, Jäärats coordinates and develops all EU policy and acts as the chief European affairs adviser to the Prime Minister. A career civil servant, Jäärats started out in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, rising quickly to the position of Head of the Refugees Department. In this capacity, he dealt with a variety of NGOs and international organisations including the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). He later moved to Brussels where he spent six years working at the Estonian Permanent Representation to the EU during which time he dealt with many issues related to the preparation, ratification and implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon.

 [Klen Jäärats](#)

 [@KlenJaarats](#)



OWEN JONES

United Kingdom

Columnist for the Guardian & 2017 European Young Leader

Owen is an author, commentator and political activist. He writes a weekly column for the Guardian, having previously written for the Independent. He has made several television appearances on the BBC, Channel 4 and Sky News as well as on ITV's Daybreak and BBC One's 'Question Time'. His work also appeared in several publications, including the Sunday Mirror and Le Monde diplomatique. In 2011, Owen published his first book, 'Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class', which received favourable critical reviews, including from the New York Times. He was named one of the top 50 Britons of the year by the Independent on Sunday in 2011 and was awarded the Young Writer of the Year prize at the Political Book Award in 2013.

 Owen Jones

 @owenJones84



KAJA KALLAS

Estonia

Member of the European Parliament & 2017 European Young Leader

Kaja started her career as a lawyer in Estonia. In 2011, she was elected Member of the Estonian Parliament and Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs. In 2014, she was elected to the European Parliament, where she sits on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy. A member of the ALDE Group, Kaja is also part of the European Parliament Intergroup on the Digital Agenda, an informal network of MEPs interested in digital technologies and how they can benefit society. She is a proponent of innovation and frequently emphasises that regulations should not hinder the technological revolution. Kaja has been the author of five reports in the European Parliament, including of an own-initiative report on the Digital Single Market.

 Kaja Kallas

 Kaja Kallas

 @kajakallas



ZANDA KALNINA-LUKASEVICA

Latvia

Parliamentary State Secretary for European Affairs & 2017 European Young Leader

Zanda started her professional career at Jurmala's city council in 1998. She then worked at the Ministry of Regional Development before joining the Strategic Analysis Commission, where she advised Latvian President Valdis Zatlers on strategic planning. She was elected to the Latvian Parliament in 2011. During her mandate, she chaired the Committee on European Affairs and the Reform Party parliamentary group. In 2014, Zanda was appointed Parliamentary State Secretary in the Latvian government. Her role is to ensure cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Latvian Parliament and the European Parliament – a crucial role during Latvia's Presidency of the EU Council in 2015.

 Zanda Kalnina-Lukaševica

 @zklukasevica



NEŽA KOGOVŠEK ŠALAMON

Slovenia

Director of the Peace Institute & 2017 European Young Leader

Neža is a human rights advocate working at a national and international level. Since 2012, she has been the Director of the Peace Institute, a non-profit research body that aims to create and preserve an open society capable of critical thought and based on the principles of equality, human rights, responsibility, solidarity and the rule of law. Her work at the institute includes lecturing, legal analysis, project management and research. Neža is a member of several legal expert networks advocating for anti-discrimination, social inclusion and the promotion of better representation of immigrants. She was voted as one of the ten most influential lawyers in Slovenia in 2016.

 Neža Kogovšek Šalamon

 Neža Kogovšek Šalamon

 @neza_ks



JUHÁN LEPASSAAR

Estonia

Head of Cabinet for EU Commission Vice President for Digital Single Market Andrus Ansip & 2014 European Young Leader

In his current role, Juhán is responsible for strategic planning for the European Commission Vice President for Digital Single Market. Previously, he was a Member of Cabinet for Commissioner for Transport Siim Kallas, where he was responsible for coordinating policy in the fields of rail and road transport. He also worked as Director for EU Affairs at the Government Office in Estonia. In this capacity, he acted as the Prime Minister's chief adviser for EU affairs and head of Estonia's inter-ministerial coordination system of EU policy. He conducted the high-level negotiations for the 2014-2020 MFF and participated in the EU's response to the international financial crisis and subsequent reform of the EMU. Juhán holds an MA in Contemporary European Policy from the University of Sussex and a degree in Comparative Politics from the University of Tartu.

 [Juhán Lepassaar](#)

 [@Le_Passar](#)



JOÃO WENGOROVIOUS MENESES

Portugal

General Manager at Discoveries & 2012 European Young Leader

João recently served as Portugal's Secretary of State for Youth and Sports. Previously, he was Head of 'GABIP Mouraria' at the Lisbon City Hall, the department in charge of urban rehabilitation and social development of Mouraria, one of the most traditional and multicultural quarters of Lisbon. He also managed the NGO TESE and was a Financial Officer at Chapito, which is one of the oldest Portuguese NGOs working with vulnerable young people. João is now leading Discoveries, a successful travel and tourism start-up accelerator. He is also a columnist for *Diário Económico* and has co-authored a book on NGO management. Since 2012, he has held assistant professorships at the Catholic University of Portugal in 'Management of Social Projects' and 'Business Models for the Social and Cultural Sector'.

 [João Wengorovius Meneses](#)  [João Wengorovius Meneses](#)



ADOLFO MESQUITA NUNES

Portugal

Partner at Gama Glória & 2013 European Young Leader

Before joining legal strategy company Gama Gloria, Adolfo was Portugal's Secretary of State for Tourism from 2013-2015. Previously, he was a Member of the Portuguese Parliament's Committees on Ethics, Communication and Citizenship; Budget, Finance and Public Administration; and Monitoring Measures of the Financial Assistance Programme to Portugal. He has extensive experience in the legal sector, having served as a lawyer, consultant and adviser to various public institutions and private firms. In 2004, he was Head of Cabinet for the Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning. He holds a Master's degree in Law and Political Science from the University of Lisbon where he defended his thesis on The Urgency in Public Procurement Litigation.

 [Adolfo Mesquita Nunes](#)

 [Adolfo Mesquita Nunes](#)

 [@Adolfo_MN](#)



KATARZYNA ANNA NAWROT

Poland

Assistant Professor at the Poznan University of Economics & 2017 European Young Leader

In addition to her position at the Poznan University of Economics, Katarzyna is a member of the Committee for Future Studies at the Polish Academy of Social Sciences. Her research interests include development and international economics, with a focus on East Asian markets. Katarzyna also explores the challenges to global development. She led several research projects for the National Bureau of Research in Poland and finalised a recent project on the economic potential of developing countries in Africa. Her academic achievements have been recognised by numerous awards, including one for outstanding young scholars from Poland's Minister of Science and Higher Education in 2012. Katarzyna has published numerous articles and books on issues relating to development, governance, integration and regional cooperation.

 [Katarzyna Anna Nawrot](#)



AOIBHINN NÍ SHÚILLEABHÁIN

Ireland

Lecturer at the University College Dublin School of Mathematics and Statistics & 2017 European Young Leader

Over the past ten years, Aoibhinn has promoted mathematics and science with a particular focus on encouraging more girls to study these subjects. She lectures at University College Dublin as part of a programme that addresses the growing need for qualified mathematics and science teachers in post-primary schools. In 2011, she was awarded the prestigious Ussher Fellowship from Trinity College Dublin for her doctoral thesis on mathematics teacher learning. Named as one of the Top 50 Women in Science in Ireland by Silicon Republic, she is renowned for her role as a science communicator and for promoting STEM subjects in Ireland through various media outlets, including radio and TV. In 2005, she won the Rose of Tralee contest, an international festival celebrated by Irish communities all over the world.

 [Aoibhinn Ní Shúilleabháin](#)  [Aoibhinn Ní Shúilleabháin](#)  [@aoibhinn_ni_s](#)



JOÃO RODRIGO PINHO DE ALMEIDA

Portugal

Member of Parliament & 2014 European Young Leader

A former Secretary of State for Home Affairs, João was elected Member of Parliament in the constituency of Aveiro, serving on the Committee on Culture, Communication, Youth and Sport. He is currently the spokesperson for the CDS-PP political party and previously served as Secretary General and President of the People's Party Youth division, of which he is still the Honorary President. With a sound legal background, João was a consultant at PROLEGAL – Moser & Lobo d'Avila and an attorney at Alves Mendes, Jardim Goncalves & Associates. He is also passionate about sports, being the Director and Chairman of the Board of the "os Belenenses" professional football team and sports club.

 [João Pinho de Almeida](#)  [João Pinho de Almeida](#)



EDUARDO PORTAL

Spain

Conductor and Founder of Antares Ensemble & 2017 European Young Leader

Over the last few years, Eduardo has made a great impression on audiences and orchestras alike. Since graduating as conductor and violinist, he has conducted multiple orchestras across Europe and the Americas, such as the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Sao Paulo Symphony Orchestra. In 2015, his presentation with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales included a broadcast on BBC Radio 3. For the third season in a row, he has returned on multiple occasions to the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to conduct concerts all around England. Widely acclaimed by musical critics, Eduardo is particularly committed to the contemporary repertoire and is the founder of the Antares Ensemble in Spain, whose focus is on the performance of new music and research into its links with historical and rarely-performed masterpieces.

 [Eduardo Portal](#)



MICHAEL PRINTZOS

Greece

Programme Director at the Hellenic Initiative & 2015-2016 European Young Leader

Michael is Program Director at The Hellenic Initiative, a global, non-profit, secular institution aiming to mobilise support and investment for sustainable economic renewal in Greece. He is also a Committee Member at the American Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, dedicated to achieving Greek competitiveness through properly informing and adequately motivating business employees. Michael is the co-owner of Green Systems, an engineering procurement and construction company in Athens, and Brainomix, a start-up company that develops medical imaging software to assess the eligibility of acute stroke patients for life saving treatment. He completed his secondary education in Greece before attending the University of Oxford where he gained a degree in mechanical engineering.

 [Michael Printzos](#)  [Michael Printzos](#)  [@MPrintzos](#)



MICHAL ŠTENCL

Slovakia

Founder & CEO of Sygic & 2017 European Young Leader

Michal started programming when he was just seven years old and developed his own operating system by the time he was 20. In 2004, he co-founded Sygic, a mobile navigation company focused on business and holiday travellers. It now has more than 20 million active users worldwide. The company became the first to offer navigation for iPhone and the second for Android. In 2015, Sygic reached the milestone of 100 million downloads of its navigation app. It ranks second in the App Annie Index Travel & Local category, just after Google. Sygic's automotive team cooperates with companies such as Honda, Jaguar and Land Rover to bring the latest connected driving innovation to cars.

[Michal Štencl](#)

[Michal Štencl](#)

[@michalstenc1](#)



MATINA STEVIS

Greece

Africa Correspondent for the Wall Street Journal & 2017 European Young Leader

Based in Nairobi, Matina covers economics and investment across Africa for the Wall Street Journal. She was previously based in Belgium, where she covered the eurozone crisis from the WSJ Brussels bureau. Before joining the WSJ, she wrote for the Economist, where she won the 2010 Marjorie Deane financial journalism award. Matina is particularly interested in migration-related issues in Africa, Europe and the Middle East. In 2015, she was one of the few foreign journalists reporting from Eritrea as part of an exclusive investigation into Eritrean refugees. She has written for other top media outlets such as Eleftherotypia and the Guardian and has appeared as a political commentator on European and Greek affairs on Al Jazeera English and the BBC.

[Matina Stevis](#)

[Matina Stevis](#)

[@matinastevis](#)



KAMILLA SULTANOVA

Denmark

Chairman at Global Dignity Finland & 2015-2016 European Young Leader

Kamilla has had a very successful professional career in corporate sales, having worked for a number of large companies in Scandinavia, including as Equipment Sales Manager at Maersk Line, the world's largest container shipping company. In her current position at Global Dignity Finland, she builds connections between young people and potential role models through high-level speaker events. From a young age, Kamilla was a high-achiever and in 1999 was awarded a full scholarship from the American Councils for International Education to attend a high school in Texas as part of the "Future Leader Exchange". Kamilla regularly makes media appearances and writes on gender equality. In 2013, she was elected to represent Denmark as part of the European Women's Lobby in Brussels. In this role, Kamilla lobbied heavily for the increased participation of women and ethnic minorities in European politics.

[Kamilla Sultanova](#)

[Kamilla Sultanova](#)

[@Gairatiy](#)



MICHAL SZCZERBA

Poland

Member of the National Parliament & 2014 European Young Leader

Michal currently sits on the Committee on Justice and Human Rights in the Polish Parliament. Before he started working for the Sejm, the lower house of the Polish Parliament, in 2007, he was the Representative of the Parliament to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and sat on the State Treasury Committee. Previously, Michal worked as an expert on EU funding for restructuring and modernising agriculture and was on the Wola District Council of Warsaw. In 2011, Michal received the Order of Honour from the President of the Republic of Georgia, and has been part of numerous leadership training programmes. He holds an MSc in Sociology from the University of Warsaw.

[Michal Szczerba](#)

[Michal Szczerba](#)

[@MichalSzczerba](#)



EWA SZMIDT-BELCARZ

Poland

President of the Management Board of Empik & 2017 European Young Leader

Ewa runs the largest entertainment and media retailer in Poland. In this position, she combines her love of books and her managerial experience in consumer goods companies. She previously worked for eight years at McKinsey & Company, where she became the first woman in Poland to be promoted to the position of Global Partner and to lead the retail and consumer goods division. During her career, Ewa has overseen the UK's largest chocolate brand, Cadbury, and developed the Schwarzkopf brand portfolio in international markets. She also worked as a Product Manager in the Polish branch of L'Oréal. She successfully helped companies to develop strategies, improve operational efficiency and optimise sales.

 [Ewa Szmidt-Belcarz](#)





CEZARY TOMCZYK

Poland

Member of Parliament & 2017 European Young Leader

Cezary began his political career on Sieradz's city council in 2006. One year later, he was elected as a Member of the Polish Parliament at the age of 23. He sat in the Committee on National Defence and the Committee on EU Affairs in addition to chairing the Permanent Subcommittee on the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020. In 2010, he was awarded the Medal of Merit for National Defence by the Polish Minister of National Defence in recognition of his services to the development and strengthening of the defence of his country. In 2015, he was appointed as a Secretary of State and spokesperson in the government of Ewa Kopacz. After the 2015 parliamentary elections, he was nominated as shadow Deputy Minister of National Defence for the Civic Platform.

 [Cezary Tomczyk](#)  [@ctomczyk](#)



DAVOR TREMAC

Croatia

General Manager for Southeast Europe at Uber & 2017 European Young Leader

Holding a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Zagreb, Davor co-founded and served as COO of Gourmeo, a web start-up dealing in premium restaurant space, which expanded across Brazil, Germany and the United Kingdom. It partnered with the best restaurants in major cities across Europe, South America and Asia. Davor then worked for a leading consultancy firm where he managed media, technology and telecom projects in Europe and South-East Asia. He is now a General Manager at Uber, where he is responsible for developing the transportation network company across South-East Europe. Davor is also a member of the Board of Governors of the American Chamber of Commerce in Croatia.

 [Davor Tremac](#)  [Davor Tremac](#)



DIMITRIS TSINGOS

Greece

Founder & Head of Entrepreneurship at StartTech Ventures & 2013 European Young Leader

Dimitris is the Founder of StartTech Ventures, a seed fund, incubator and business angel network for the ICT sector. The Group was the first Greek Seed Fund member of the European Business Angels Network (EBAN) and has helped launch more than ten successful IT start-ups. He is President of the Hellenic Start-up Association, a collective effort of Greek start-up entrepreneurs promoting high-growth and innovative entrepreneurship in Greece. Until recently, he was President of YES – the European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs, which is the leading organisation of youth entrepreneurship in Europe. He holds an MBA from the Athens University of Economics and Business and a BSc in Computer Science from the University of Crete.

 [Dimitris Tsingos](#)  [Dimitris Tsingos](#)  [@tsigos](#)



MAX VON BISMARCK

Germany

Chief Business Officer & Managing Director of Deposit Solutions & 2014 European Young Leader

Before taking on his current senior management role at leading financial technology company Deposit Solutions, Max spent 4 years as CEO and Partner of SkyBridge Capital, a research-driven alternative investment firm with 7.1 billion USD under management or advisory. Educated in law, his entrepreneurial spirit first materialised when he co-founded Berlinpolis in 2001, a Berlin-based non-profit think tank. He then went on to co-found and manage Public One Strategy Consulting, which was awarded the McKinsey & Company StartUp Award for the state of Berlin. Between 2005 and 2011, Max was Director of the Investors Team at the World Economic Forum, where he was responsible for all Forum activities and relationships related to hedge funds, private equity, institutional investors and sovereign funds.



YURIY VULKOVSKY

Bulgaria

Country Manager at Reach for Change & 2014 European Young Leader

Yuriy manages the Bulgarian branch of Reach for Change, a non-profit organisation that supports social entrepreneurs aiming to improve the lives of children. Previously, he was the Executive Director of the Bulgarian Festivals Association, an organisation that brings together 20 of the most renowned festivals in Bulgaria. In his career, Yuriy took part in more than 20 projects aimed at giving a voice to the citizens of Sofia and Bulgaria and fighting for government transparency and effectiveness. He teaches courses on cultural management and policy and management of non-profit organisations at Sofia University. He has extensive experience in grant management, organisation development and cooperation strategy, as well as a particular interest in the cultural sector in post-communist countries. Yuri holds an MA in Cultural studies from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky".

 [Yuriy Vulkovsky](#)



OZAN YANAR

Finland

Member of Parliament & 2017 European Young Leader

Ozan is an economist and politician born in Turkey. He is a specialist in labour economics with a focus on issues relating to unemployment and wage differences. He has worked at the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) and conducted research at both the Labour Institute for Economic Research and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. He was elected to the Board of Directors of the Helsinki Greens in 2014 and became Co-Chair of the Federation of Green Youth and Students in 2015. At the age of 29, he was elected as a Green League Member of the Finnish Parliament. As an MP, he campaigns for social equality and spearheads the fight against discrimination.

 [Ozan Yanar](#)

 [Ozan Yanar](#)

 [@yanarozan](#)



FLORIAN ZINOECKER

Austria

Head of Corporate Governance and Internal Policies at the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) & 2014 European Young Leader

Florian is Head of the Corporate Governance and Internal Policies division at the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), where he is responsible for the preparation of decisions and meetings of the Board of Governors (eurozone finance ministers), Board of Directors and Board of Auditors. He has worked in economic and financial affairs in the areas of central banking and monetary policy in various capacities including at the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Central Bank (ECB). He has a Master in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government as well as a Master in Advanced European Studies from the University of Vienna.

 [Florian Zinoecker](#)

SPEAKERS & MODERATORS

GEERT CAMI • @FriendsofEurope

Co-Founder and Managing Director of Friends of Europe

Before co-founding Friends of Europe, Geert was Managing Director of Forum Europe and before that worked for a few years at the European Commission to help set-up the Information and Communications Unit of ECHO to raise the profile of the EU's humanitarian efforts. At the outset of his career, he also worked for two music programmes at Belgian Radio 1, and very briefly as a teacher and TV journalist.

ANTHONY L. GARDNER • @tonylgardner

Visiting Fellow at the College of Europe and US Ambassador to the EU (2014-2017)

Anthony L. Gardner has had a distinguished career occupying high-level positions as the Director for European Affairs in the National Security Council under the Clinton Administration and most recently as the US Ambassador to the EU. He has previously worked for international law firms as well as financial institutions. Gardner is a leading voice in calls and efforts for closer EU-US cooperation and was involved in the launch of the New Transatlantic Agenda, the Transatlantic Business Dialogue and was a principal actor in the negotiations of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

MONTSERRAT GOMENDIO • @GomendioOCDE

Deputy Director for Education and Skills at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Spanish Secretary of State for Education, Vocational Training and Universities (2012-2015)

A biologist by training, Montserrat Gomendio played an active role in the education reform undertaken by the Spanish government as Secretary of State for Education, Vocational Training and Universities from 2012 to 2015. In her current position at the OECD, she focuses on developing strategic orientations in the area of education and skills, aiming to build effective and efficient educational institutions and help countries strengthen employability, inclusiveness and social participation. Montserrat is also a former Vice President of the Spanish Research Council, the third largest public institution dedicated to research in Europe.

LUÍS JERÓNIMO • @FCGulbenkian

Project Manager at the Human Development Programme of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

Luís Jerónimo worked at the UK branch of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation from 2009 and 2010. He is currently involved in the Human Development Programme that focuses on fostering social inclusion of vulnerable groups, including disabled persons, elderly people, unemployed people and youngsters at risk. He manages a portfolio of projects on social innovation and social investment, including “Ideas de Orígem Portuguesa” – a call for proposals for social entrepreneurship projects targeting the Portuguese diaspora, the Social Investment Laboratory and the first Portuguese social impact bond “Junior Code Academy”.

DHARMENDRA KANANI • @FriendsofEurope

Director of Strategy at Friends of Europe

Dharmendra Kanani is Director of Strategy at Friends of Europe. Prior to joining Friends of Europe, Kanani was Director of Policy at the European Foundation Centre (EFC). Previously, he was the England Director at the Big Lottery Fund, the largest independent funder in the UK and fourth largest in the world. He has held senior positions in the public and voluntary sector and adviser to numerous ministerial policy initiatives across the UK.

PHILIPPE LEGRAIN • @plegrain

Founder of the Open Political Economy Network (OPEN) and Author of 'Immigrants: Your Country Needs Them'

Philippe Legrain has established a reputation as a key commentator and forward-thinker on European policies, globalisation, international economics and migration. He is a critically acclaimed author on migration and has recently published a report on the economic benefits that refugees can bring to society through his co-founded think tank, the Open Political Economy Network (OPEN). Legrain has also previously served as an adviser to former EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso.

DENIS MACSHANE • @DenisMacShane

British Minister of State for Europe (2002-2005)

As a former Minister of State for Europe and a delegate to the Council of Europe and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Denis MacShane was at the centre of the UK's relationship with the EU, gaining expert knowledge and insight into their institutional and political dynamics. He has written and published multiple books on the EU-UK relations, with his most recent piece of work, 'Brexit: How Britain left Europe', providing an expert account on the political and social climate that led to Brexit.

CARLOS MOEDAS • @Moedas

EU Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation

Prior to his current position, Carlos Moedas worked for Goldman Sachs and the Deutsche Bank before establishing his own investment management company in 2008. In the midst of the European sovereign debt crisis, Moedas was appointed as lead coordinator of the Portuguese Social Democratic Party in the negotiations to set up the 2011 state budget and later became chief negotiator for Portugal's economic and financial adjustment programme. European Commissioner since 2014, Moedas focuses on the promotion and implementation of Horizon 2020, the biggest EU Research and Innovation programme, aiming to make progress towards promoting international excellence in research and science in the EU.

LUIS MORAGO • @LuisMorago

Campaigns Director at Avaaz

A dedicated and experienced human rights campaigner, Luis Morago has worked as Head of Oxfam's Brussels office, participating in the organisation's advocacy initiatives at the European Institutions. He is now Campaigns Director for Avaaz, the world's largest online platform with over 44 million members dedicated to promoting global activism on issues such as climate change, conflict, corruption, human rights and poverty. Based in Madrid, he is currently engaged in developing Avaaz's presence in Spain, which already includes more than 300,000 members.

TIM OLIVER • @timothyoliver

Dahrendorf Fellow at the London School of Economics

Tim Oliver is a distinguished academic and policy expert on UK foreign and security policies, particularly regarding the implications of Brexit on Europe, on which he has written extensively. He is a go-to expert for news organisations such as Newsweek and journals such as the International Spectator, in which he recently published 'Fifty Shades of Brexit'. Oliver has also gained key political insights working in the European Parliament and the House of Lords, helping to inform his views on British and EU politics.

TIBERIU PFISZTER

Romanian anti-corruption activist

A software developer, Tiberiu Pfişter had never before been politically active until early 2017 when the newly-elected Romanian government submitted an emergency decree decriminalising a series of corruption offences in the country. In response, he organised a Facebook event to mobilise people in his hometown to contest the bill. In a few days, Tiberiu became the leader of the largest protest in Romania since the fall of the Communist regime in 1989. The demonstration that he triggered brought 30.000 people on to the streets of Timisoara and eventually led the government to repeal the decree.

FABIO PIANESI • @EIT_Digital

Research Director at EIT Digital

Fabio Pianesi has more than 20 years of experience as a leader and researcher in the ICT sector and as a professor at various universities. Throughout his career, he has focused on topics such as Natural Language Processing, Independent Living and Human Behaviour Analysis. Pianesi is Research Director at EIT Digital, a leading European digital innovation and entrepreneurial education organisation driving Europe's digital transformation. He is in charge of developing research strategies for EIT Digital's ICT lab programs and advancing relationships with relevant bodies of the EU and national governments.

TAAVI RÕIVAS • @TaaviRoivas

Vice President of the Estonian Parliament and Prime Minister of Estonia (2014-2016)

Before becoming Prime Minister, Taavi Rõivas served as Minister of Social Affairs and chairman of the Finance Committee and the European Affairs Committee. He joined Estonia's Reform Party in 1998, became its leader in 2014 and led the party to victory in the 2015 parliamentary elections. Rõivas is a supporter of a united Europe and an advocate of market liberalism and strong security policies. As Prime Minister, he gained first-hand experience of managing a digital society and leading a government that makes use of innovative technology solutions.

JEAN-PASCAL VAN YPERSELE • @JPvanYpersele

Professor of Climatology and Environmental Sciences at the Université catholique de Louvain (UCL) and Vice Chair of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2008-2015)

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele is a distinguished academic, leading climatologist and experienced science communicator. He has authored many scientific articles, led numerous studies and participated in dozens of UN conferences on climate issues. In 2017, van Ypersele was appointed as one of the 15 eminent scientists to draft the forthcoming UN Global Sustainable Development Report. A recipient of numerous awards and distinctions, he currently teaches climatology and environmental sciences at the Earth and Life Institute at the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) in Belgium.