

## "Seeds of Change: Pioneering Innovation and Collaboration for Europe's Sustainable Food Systems"

**November 20, 2024 17h00 – 19h00**  
**European Parliament Brussels, Room ASP 06D128 (hybrid)**

### **Keynote Address:**



Since 1 January 2023, **Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle** has been Director Strategy and policy analysis at DG AGRI (European Commission). From 1 September 2020 to 31 December 2022, she was Director at the General Secretariat of the Council, responsible for Veterinary and Plant Health Questions, Food and Forestry. Between December 2019 and August 2020, she was Deputy Head of Cabinet of the EU Commissioner responsible for agriculture and rural development. Between 2013 and 2018, she was responsible for the implementation of the CAP in France, in her capacity as Director general for Economic and Environmental Performance of Enterprises. Between 2006 and 2013, she was Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Prior to that, she was Director General of the Food Department within the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. She also worked at the European Commission from 1991 to 1993.

## Panel Discussion 1: Sustainability Benchmarking Tool for EU Farms:



**Peter Meedendorp** is a young farmer from The Netherlands. He works in a partnership with his parents and brother on their arable family farm, where they grow starch potatoes, sugar beets, barley, onions, fiber hemp, and corn. They also provide contract work in the dairy sector and are involved in agricultural nature management. Peter has aspirations of taking over the farm fully in the future. With a background in International Relations (Groningen) and Agricultural Economics (Wageningen), along with a passion for farming, he

has been actively engaged in national and EU agricultural policy. In 2021, he was appointed to the national board of NAJK, becoming a national delegate in CEJA. He was elected President of CEJA in June 2023.



**Bart Vandewaetere** is member of Nestlé's Zone Europe Executive Team. Bart has been in charge of Corporate Communications and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) Engagement for Nestlé Zone Europe since 2018. As part of his role, he heads Nestlé's European Affairs office in Brussels. He leads and coordinates Nestlé's contributions and communications on policies and societal debates with stakeholders and citizens across the region. He is also actively contributing to identify and engage with partners to progress Nestlé's

nutrition and sustainability strategy that aims to achieve regenerative food systems at scale. Bart continues to be part of the Steering Group that launched the successful "Nestlé needs YOUth" program in Europe in 2013. Bart is active in key European trade associations such as FoodDrinkEurope (chairing the Board Sherpa Meeting) and the European Brands Association AIM.



**Dominik Klauser** serves as Director, Regenerative Agriculture, SAI Platform. His expertise in strategy and programme development, structure and implementation allowed him to direct multinational programmes with diverse partners. A particular objective was to integrate farmers into regenerative value chains and to deliver innovation to increase their productivity and resource-use efficiency. This included the development of carbon credit schemes to monetize a shift to more sustainable farming, value-chain partnerships to diversify agricultural production into more resilient crops, and methodologies to better quantify the impact of farming across the main pillars of sustainability. Dominik holds a PhD in Crop Sciences from the Basel-Zurich Plant Science Center and a management degree from IMD Business School, Lausanne. He lectures on Sustainable Agriculture in various Swiss Universities and acts as an advisor to several multilateral organisations to direct their investment towards creating more regenerative and resilient farming systems.



**Alex Datema** serves as the Director of Food & Agri Netherlands at Rabobank, where he spearheads the bank's agrifood vision. His role involves collaborating with Food & Agri sector networks to promote sustainability in the industry, partnering with agricultural organizations, provincial authorities, government entities, and value chain stakeholders. Alex is also a member of the Scientific Council for Integral Sustainable Agriculture and co-initiator of the Dutch Deltaplan Biodiversity Restoration, highlighting his dedication to environmental advocacy. Additionally, he is a hands-on dairy farmer, managing a farm with 120 cows alongside his partner.

## Panel Discussion 2: Farming & Food in Europe: Sustainable Solutions:



**Nicu Ștefănuță** is a progressive Romanian politician who has been serving as a Member of the European Parliament since 2019. Running as an independent for the 2024 European elections, Nicu Ștefănuță is now part of the Greens Group, serving also as Vice-president of the European Parliament. He is a full member of the Committee on Budgets (BUDG) and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), and a substitute member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI).

Furthermore, he serves as a full member of the Delegation to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly and is a substitute member of the Delegation to the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee and the Delegation for relations with the United States.

Among his areas of interest as a MEP are youth rights, climate change, housing, energy efficiency, mental health, foreign policy, European budget, and European rights. Nicu Ștefănuță is a member of GLOBE EU and the European Parliament's LGBTI Intergroup.



**Veerle Vandeweerd** has over 40 years of experience in global, national, and local sustainable development policy, program development, and implementation. Her extensive career includes more than two decades of service within the United Nations system.

Veerle is a co-founder of the Global Sustainable Technology and Innovation Conference Series (G-STIC) and served as its Policy Director from 2017 to 2019. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, she established the COVID Education Alliance (COVIDEA) in 2020, as well as the

Platform for Transformative Technologies (P4TT), both of which foster collaborative platforms to bring innovative, integrated industrial solutions to market to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Veerle served as the Principal Sustainability Advisor for the Global Entrepreneurship Centre, an organization that invests in transformative companies with the potential to significantly impact the achievement of the SDGs. She also co-founded the Kenyan Entrepreneurship Centre and continues to serve on the boards of several sustainable development organizations.

During her tenure at the United Nations, Veerle held several senior positions at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and directed the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Environment and Energy Group for eight years. She also served as Special Advisor to the UN Global Compact, facilitating responsible corporate policies and practices worldwide.

Before joining the United Nations, Veerle taught at the University of Zambia, conducted research on African sleeping sickness, and led the environmental reporting department within the Flemish Government in Belgium.

Veerle holds a Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of Antwerp (cum laude), a master's degree in chemistry, and bachelor's degrees in both biology and chemistry from the University of Gent, Belgium.



**Dorothy Shaver** is a food system changemaker dedicated to creating a world where nutritious food is accessible and desirable to all. As a Registered Dietitian and food sustainability expert, she uses her 20 years' experience on the frontline of the food system – product innovation, research and development, marketing, retail, healthcare, and personalized nutrition – to drive positive health and environmental outcomes.

Dorothy is currently the Global Food Sustainability Lead for Unilever's €13 billion Food Business Group and founding board member of non-profit [Food for Climate League](#). She spearheads the sustainability agenda

from farm to fork for some of the world's largest food brands including Knorr, Hellmann's, and Horlick's, putting it at the core of innovation and communications strategy. She led the creation of Knorr and WWF's [Future 50 Foods report and Cookbook](#) to deliver seven billion earned media impressions in over 95 countries with 700m media pieces. Dorothy conceived and leads Unilever's regenerative agriculture transition strategy, proven to have [significant impacts on nature and climate](#).

She is an influential spokesperson with the ability to resonate with diverse audience groups, from marketing experts at [Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity](#) to climate experts at COP28 and food entrepreneurs at fTalks Food Summit. She is frequently quoted and interviewed by media including [TIME](#) , [NPR](#) and [Food Navigator](#) and is an expert contributor and talented food writer for various outlets, using her persuasive communication style to get people to fall in love with food that is good for people and planet.

Dorothy received her undergraduate degree in dietetics from Framingham State University and her master's degree in public health education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.



**Nicolas Verschuere** is a farmer with over 15 years' experience in agronomy. He specializes in the management, acquisition and technical support of agricultural exploitations located in various regions and climate conditions. He is currently working on projects in Africa, Eastern Europe, South America, and Asia, for various investors and farmers willing to develop agricultural systems that perform from a triple economic, agronomic and environmental standpoint. He previously worked as an agronomist manager and consultant for several multinationals.

Nicolas holds a master's degree in Agronomy from the Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium.