



PLENARY SPEAKERS



Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius

European Commission

Virginijus Sinkevičius is the present Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, at the European Commission. Mr Sinkevičius was from 2017 to 2019 Minister of Economy, and before he was leading the Committee of Economy at the Parliament of Lithuania. Mr. Sinkevičius was elected to the Parliament in October 2016. Prior, he was a Team Lead for Regulatory Affairs at Invest Lithuania. Mr. Sinkevičius holds BA in International Relations and Affairs from Aberystwyth University and Master's degree in European International Affairs from Maastricht University.



Pierre Karleskind

MEP

Pierre Karleskind is a French oceanographer and a Member of the European Parliament since 2019 in the Renew Europe group. In Parliament, Karleskind is Chair of the Fisheries Committee and Member of both the Transport and Tourism and Budgetary Control Committees. Before being elected, he has held several positions in the maritime field like Vice President in charge of the Sea for the Brittany Region or special councillor on maritime issues to the President of the national assembly.



Jutta Paulus

MEP

Jutta Paulus is a German pharmacist and politician who has been serving as a Member of the European Parliament for Alliance 90/The Greens since 2019. Paulus became a Member of the European Parliament in the 2019 elections. She has since been serving on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. In this capacity, she is the Parliament's rapporteur on CO2 emissions in the maritime sector.



Hans Bruyninckx

European Environment Agency

Hans Bruyninckx is the Executive Director of the European Environment Agency, since 1 June, 2013. In 1996 Dr Bruyninckx completed a PhD in international environmental politics at Colorado State University. From 2010 until his appointment at the EEA, he was head of the HIVA Research Institute in Leuven, Belgium, a policy-oriented research institute associated with the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, where he was also head of the Political Science department from 2007 to 2010. Over the last 20 years, he has conducted research in more than a dozen countries, in areas including environmental politics, climate change, and sustainable development. He has taught on global environmental politics and global environmental governance in relation to the European Union (EU), publishing extensively on EU environmental policies and its role as an actor in global environmental governance. Throughout his career Dr Bruyninckx has worked with governmental agencies, civil society and businesses, often in an advisory role.



Patrick Child

European Commission

Patrick CHILD is currently Deputy Director-General in DG Environment at the European Commission with particular responsibility for the EU's zero pollution strategy, chemicals legislation, research and innovation for environment and communication. From 2016-2021, he was Deputy Director-General in DG Research and Innovation (R&I) at the European Commission. As member of the Board of DG R&I, he followed in particular research and innovation in clean energy and climate technologies as well as the R&I dimension of the post-COVID recovery and resilience strategy and Horizon Europe mission on Cancer. His international roles included Commission representative and chair of the steering committee of Mission Innovation (a coalition of 24 countries and the EC working to accelerate global clean energy innovation) and lead co-chair of the Group of Earth Observations (GEO). Until April 2016, Patrick Child was Managing Director of the European External Service with responsibility for administration and finance, covering human resources policy, security and the budget. Before he took up this post in 2011, he was director in the EC External Relations Directorate-General in the responsible for managing the network of Commission delegations. He has previously served as head of cabinet for External Relations Commissioners Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Chris Patten. With a background in the UK Finance Ministry, he joined the European Commission in 1994, where he started in the Economic and Monetary affairs Directorate General before becoming Commission press spokesman for economic and monetary union from 1995-1999. Mr Child studied mathematics at Cambridge University. He is married with two children.



Alexandra Cousteau

National Geographic Emerging explorer and environmental activist

Alexandra Cousteau, granddaughter of Jacques-Yves Cousteau, is an award-winning ocean activist and advocate for ocean restoration and abundance. As head of Oceans 2050, and as a senior advisor to ocean conservation organization Oceana, Cousteau collaborates with world leaders across sectors to influence, convene and mobilize action to achieve measurable outcomes that will make the oceans more biodiverse and abundant.



Veronica MANFREDI

European Commission

Veronica Manfredi is the Director for Zero Pollution (former Directorate Quality of Life) in DG Environment since February 2018. Her Directorate plays a pivotal role in leading Europe towards Zero-Pollution and securing an effective management of Water – it thus significantly contributes to tackle the Climate, Biodiversity and Circular Economy challenges. It is indeed responsible for EU policies on Clean and Well-Managed Water (including the protection all EU Freshwater and Marine environments, water reuse, prevention from Floods, compliance with high health standards for Drinking Water), Clean Air, control on Industrial Emissions and prevention of Industrial Accidents. Internationally, her team leads the EU negotiations within the UN Minamata Convention on Mercury and the UN Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution. It also provides steady support to the work of the four Regional Sea Conventions (notably the HELCOM – Baltic Sea, OSPAR – North Atlantic Sea, Barcelona – Mediterranean Sea, and the Bucharest Conventions – Black Sea) and the International Commissions for the Protection of the Rhine and Danube rivers. In particular, until 2022, Veronica is the Chair of the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine. A lawyer by background, Veronica deepened her knowledge of International and EU law in Rome, Turin, Kiel, Bruges and Brussels.



Monica Verbeek

Seas at Risk

Dr Monica Verbeek is the executive director of Seas At Risk, the Brussels-based umbrella organisation of environmental NGOs from across Europe that promotes ambitious policies for marine protection at European and international level. Seas At Risk has over 30 member organisations spanning 17 countries, representing millions of citizens that care deeply about our seas and ocean. Dr Verbeek also serves as steering group member for the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, and was founding and steering group member of Ocean2012 and vice president of the South Western Waters Advisory Council for fisheries. Before joining Seas At Risk, she worked as a biodiversity campaign coordinator for Greenpeace Netherlands, and as an independent marine environmental consultant and a researcher. During her extensive experience with marine environmental campaigns, stretching back to the early 1990s, Monica Verbeek was successful in pushing for marine environmental protection policy decisions at national, European, regional (North East Atlantic) and UN level. She holds a MSc degree in biology (received with honours) and a PhD degree in behavioural ecology from Wageningen University in the Netherlands.



Charlina Vitcheva

European Commission

Charlina Vitcheva was appointed Director General of DG MARE, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries in June 2020. Prior to this, she became Deputy Director General of the JRC in September 2016. She was acting DG for the JRC from the 1st November 2019 to the 30th April 2020. Previous to this, she was Director of Smart and Sustainable Growth and Southern Europe at DG Regional and Urban Policy, and also held a Director's position on Inclusive Growth, Territorial and Urban Development and Northern Europe. Before joining the Commission, Charlina spent 15 years in the Bulgarian public administration including at the Permanent Representation in Brussels, dealing mainly with agricultural and fisheries issues. During this period, she was actively involved in the accession negotiations of Bulgaria and headed, between 2000 and 2004, the negotiations teams in the area of agriculture and rural development, food safety and fisheries.



PANELISTS



Catherine Chabaud

MEP

Catherine Chabaud is a French journalist and sailor, born on 29th November 1962 in Bron (Rhône). During the third edition of the Vendée Globe (1996-1997), she became the first woman to complete a round-the-world sailing race, single-handed, racing and non-stop. It was during her races that her commitment to protecting the environment was born, after witnessing the state of pollution in the ocean. Her interest in sustainable development was first expressed through her work as a journalist, then through associative activities and finally through her political commitment. She co-founded the Ocean and Climate platform and launched an initiative to recognize the ocean as a “common good of humanity”. She was advisor to the Economic, Social and Environmental Council and then delegate for the sea and coastline at the French Ministry of the Environment, Energy and the Sea from 26 February 2016 to 13 November 2017. On 26 May 2019, she was elected as a Member of the European Parliament on the Renaissance list, affiliated with the MoDem. She is active in the European Parliament in the Committees on Development, Environment and Fisheries and works on maritime topics.



Caroline Roose

MEP

Caroline Roose is a Greens-EFA member of the European Parliament. Since her election in 2019, she sits in the Fisheries Committee and in the Development Committee. She works on issues related to preserving marine ecosystems and defends artisanal fishers against the excesses of industrial fishing, not only in Europe but also in third countries where European vessels are brought to fish. Originally from the French “Côte d’Azur”, she works closely with small-scale fishers to promote low-impact fisheries. She was the rapporteur on an own-initiative report “More fish in the seas? Measures to promote stock recovery above the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), including fish recovery areas and marine protected areas”.



Katrine Nissen

Marine Director, Denmark

Katrine Nissen is Marine Director within the Ministry of Environment of Denmark. She is heading a department for Nature and Biodiversity and is responsible for implementation of EU Biodiversity Strategy, the Convention on Biological Diversity and for marine issues, including implementation of the MSFD as well as regional sea conventions, HELCOM and OSPAR. For the last years, a focus area has been to designate a network of Marine Protected Areas. Katrine Nissen holds a master degree in law from University of Copenhagen and has worked as a diplomat. She has extensive experience as a civil servant working with marine related issues as she has previously worked with shipping, offshore oil and gas, offshore renewable energy as well as research and innovation.



Angel Borja

AZTI

Dr. Ángel Borja PhD Marine Ecology (1984); Doctor in Sciences (Honoris Causa) (Hull University, 2015). Principal Investigator at AZTI (Spain) and Distinguished Adjunct Professor at King Abdulaziz University (Saudi Arabia). His main work is making marine ecology research useful for policy-makers and managers, especially in integrative assessment (e.g. WFD, MSFD, MSPD). Member of the Scientific Committee of the EEA (2013-2020). Author of >285 papers (Hindex: 72), Highly Cited Researcher 2018, 2020, 2021 (Web of Science). Editor of three journals.



Mitja Bricelj

Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning Republic of Slovenia

Mitja Bricelj, Ph.D. geographer specialized for water, coastal and marine resources planning and management, member of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning Republic of Slovenia. From 1992 national Focal point for UNEP/MAP Barcelona convention, Slovenian member of Permanent Commission for Protection Adriatic Sea, chairman of the Pillar Environmental Quality/TSG 3 EUSAIR, president of Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable development/MCSD. Author of the Handbook for recognising and Planning Green Infrastructure and the book River Sava - man and the river and of the article Ecosystem Approach for Sustainable use of Coastal and Marine resources, International Environmental Law: Contemporary Concerns and Challenges, First Contemporary Challenges of International Environmental Law Conference, Ljubljana/Slovenia, 2012. Coorganiser of the international conferences for the teachers of geography : Live with water (2019), Climate Change (2020), Landscape and sustainable development (2021) and author of numerous articles.



Vera Coelho

Oceana

Vera Coelho is Oceana's Senior Director, Advocacy in Europe. She leads the organisation's campaigns and Oceana's policy, communications and science work in Europe. Vera is a political scientist with 14 years of experience working with national, European and global environment NGOs to protect freshwater and saltwater ecosystems. She is intimately familiar with EU decision-making processes and what it takes to successfully implement EU campaigns to achieve measurable conservation impact. Before joining Oceana, Vera worked with The Pew Charitable Trusts to secure EU support and leadership relating to marine conservation and fisheries management. Before that, Vera worked with Wetlands International and with Seas At Risk to develop and implement advocacy strategies regarding the adoption of EU environmental legislation, fisheries policy and regulation, and international treaties and agreements on climate and biodiversity.



Friel Colm

European Court of Auditors

One of the priorities of the European Court of Auditors is to target audits on Europe's environmental policies. Colm Friel has led several of the Court's performance audits in this area. These include audits dealing with pollution, air quality, climate action mainstreaming, and the marine environment.



Gheorghe Constantin

Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests of Romania

Gheorghe Constantin is director for water resources management within the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests. In this position he is in charge with the coordination of implementation of the EU water and marine directives in Romania, particularly, Urban Waste Water Directive, Nitrate Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Directive.

For more than 25 years he is involved in the cooperation developed within the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River and Black Sea Commission. Within the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region he is co-coordinator of the Priority Area 5 –Management of the Environmental Risks.



Richard Cronin

Irish Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Richard Cronin is Principal Adviser for the marine environment in the Irish government. He and his team are responsible for, amongst other things, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the expansion of Ireland's network of marine protected areas and the implementation of the OSPAR Convention. He represents Ireland as Marine Director under the directive and is the current Chairman of the OSPAR Commission. Richard holds a degree in civil engineer from University College Cork and has extensive experience including environmental protection, international negotiations and multilateral cooperation; policy design and implementation; and systems analysis and governance.



Roberto Danovaro

Università Politecnica delle Marche

Roberto Danovaro (PhD) is professor of Marine Biology and Ecology at the Polytechnic University of Marche and President of the Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn, Naples, Italy. Past-president of the Italian Society of Ecology, and of the Italian Society of Limnology and Oceanography and of the European Federation of Scientific Societies. President of the Scientific Council of WWF Italy. Member of several international panels (IUCN, UNEP), he is currently coordinator of 3 EU project (Horizon2020, DG ENV, EASME). Member of the EU Academy of Science. RD is a marine biologist, working on deep-sea biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, and on the impact of climate change on deep-sea ecosystems and is author of ca 450 ISI papers, and of 3 books. RD received the Prize BMC Biology (London, 2010), the Award of French Society of Oceanography (2011), and the ENI Award "Protection of the Environment" (2013). In 2020 has been recognised by ExpertScape as the top World Scientist in the Category "Ocean and Seas" in the decade 2010-2020.



Mark Dickey-Collas

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

Mark has 25 years' experience in providing fisheries and marine science advice having previously worked as a national fisheries science expert in Northern Ireland and the Netherlands. Mark liaises with regional and international organisations across the north Atlantic and Arctic on issues such as fisheries science, ecosystem assessment, ocean health, biodiversity, data provision, Good Environmental Status (MSFD), vulnerable species and impacts of fishing. His scientific expertise is in ichthyoplankton, population dynamics, ecosystem modelling, ecosystem approach and the policy/science interface. He regularly reviews national and international research programmes and projects, and is well versed in the marine research infrastructure in Europe and North America.



Francois Galgani

IFREMER

Francois Galgani is project manager at IFREMER, France, and -board member of the EU Horizon Europe mission on healthy oceans and rivers. He specialized in marine environmental Sciences and marine litter, with over 175 peer reviewed articles and reports to the EU commission. F. Galgani is Chairman of the European DG Env./ MSFD group on marine litter (115 experts), and has co chaired the UN /GESAMP group on plastic pollution (2017-2021), and the ICES WG on Marine litter (2018-2021). He also participates in various international initiatives (UNEA/Science Advisory Committee, G7 and G20, OSPAR and UNEP MAP expert groups), and is editor in chief of the scientific journal Marine Pollution Bulletin.



Tatjana Hema

UN Environment Programme/ Mediterranean Action Plan-Barcelona Convention Secretariat

Tatjana Hema is the Coordinator of the UN Environment Programme/ Mediterranean Action Plan-Barcelona Convention Secretariat, based in Athens, Greece, since July 2021, after serving for 5 years as Deputy Coordinator. She has strong experience of inter-governmental processes, especially in the area of marine and coastal environment and related sustainable development issues, backed by solid scientific knowledge on chemical engineering and marine pollution issues, including marine litter. A national of Albania, Tatjana Hema graduated in Chemical Engineering and specialized in Environmental Management and Technologies. She joined UN in 2003, after twelve years of service as a professor in Tirana University and five years as a Senior Manager in the National Environment Agency of Albania and Deputy Minister of Environment. Since then, she has covered UN assignments of different roles in MAP Barcelona Convention Secretariat addressing policy, governance and institutional aspects of the MAP system, as well as marine pollution assessment and control. She has been member of the Steering Committee and/or Advisory Board in several research and scientific projects funded mainly by the EU and GEF, focusing on ocean science, management and governance and on marine environmental knowledge and assessment. She holds a PhD from the University of Tirana obtained in 1994 and a Masters' degree on Environmental Management and Technologies from the Federal Polytechnic University of Lausanne, obtained in 1995.



Nils Höglund

Coalition Clean Baltic

Nils Höglund, from Sweden, is the Marine and Fisheries Policy officer at the NGO network Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB). Nils is currently the Chair of the Baltic Sea Advisory Council working group on ecosystem based management, has acted as CCB representative in the MSFD related working groups such as MSCG since 2010, and acts as a representative for CCB in regional foras such as HELCOM. His educational background is in political sciences and environmental law and he has 20 plus years of experience in environmental advocacy work and has dealt with specific issues, such as: climate change, environmental education, aquaculture, EU marine and fisheries policies issues.



Emma Nohrén

European Committee of the Regions

Emma Nohrén is a marine biologist who ended up in politics. She is the Vice Mayor of Lysekil Municipality in Sweden and member of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) since 2020 and vice president of the CoRs Green group. She has held many positions in the Swedish Greens and elected office at local, national and EU levels. She also chairs the Swedish cross-party Committee on Environmental objectives (Miljömålsberedningen). Her main political focus areas are environment and climate policy, limnic and marine water issues, international development cooperation, and rural development.



Itziar Martín

Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, Directorate General for the Coast and the Sea

Ms. Itziar Martín. Born in Madrid, she has a degree in Nautical studies and also a degree in Law. Merchant marine by profession, with experience for several years as a deck officer in oil, gas and container ships mainly. Civil servant for Spanish Maritime Administration since 2004, she shifted to the Ministry of Environment in 2009. Currently Deputy Director General for the Protection of the Sea. Her unit is competent in matters of protection of the marine environment, including marine strategies and maritime spatial planning, as well as the protection of the coastline against accidental marine pollution events.



Noelia Ortega Ortega

CEO, CTN- Marine Technology Centre

Expert in innovation and technological cooperation projects for a blue economy with an intrinsic intrapreneurial mindset. Automation and electronics engineer with advanced studies in Digital Technologies. She is currently the director of CTN, a private non for profit making association to support the competitiveness and sustainability of maritime companies and organizations. In her role of Director of CTN she leads a team of researches and technologists to make things happen. She is the coordinator of quietmed1& 2 and quietseas projects to support the implementation of the Marine Directive on underwater noise by boosting the cooperation and the use of digital tools. Her main goal is to promote high level impact projects that deliver results to create differentiation and growth for the blue economy.



Dominic Pattinson

OSPAR

Dominic Pattinson is the Executive Secretary of the OSPAR Commission. He was appointed in June 2020 with the remit to support the 16 OSPAR Contracting Parties to deliver the objectives of the OSPAR Convention for the protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic. Prior to joining OSPAR, he worked for the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) where he worked on domestic and international policy development and implementation. For the last eight years of his career with Defra he focussed on marine environment protection policies at a national, European, and international level. This included development of the UK's Marine Strategy, which implemented the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, marine litter policies, environmental aspects of deep-sea mining and the UK's Global Ocean Alliance and 30by30 initiatives.



Rudiger Stempel

Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission – Helcom

An international lawyer by training, Rüdiger Stempel has been the Executive Secretary of HELCOM since August 2019. He looks back on many years of experience in environmental law, policy, and diplomacy at the national and international levels, with a particular focus on international marine conservation. He has previously held the posts of Executive Secretary of the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North-East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (UNEP/ASCOBANS) and of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) and has also worked for a number of other United Nations agencies. Moreover, Rüdiger has a background as a journalist and professional communicator and he is the author or co-author of numerous articles and several books.



Jan Terstad

Ministry of Environment of Sweden

Jan Terstad is since 2018 Deputy Director General and head of the Division for Natural Environment, at the Ministry of Environment in Stockholm. This Division handles issues on biodiversity, marine, water and outdoor recreation. He has a long background as civil servant in Sweden, working with nature conservation and biodiversity, at the Swedish EPA, Swedish University for Agricultural Sciences and at a County Administration. He has also worked for several NGOs, among those the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation. Jan took part in the CBD negotiations between 1993 and 2006. He has also worked intensively with the implementation of the Habitats Directive in Sweden.



Wim van Urk

Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management in the Netherlands

Wim van Urk works at the Marine, North Sea and Wadden Sea division of the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. His role within this division is Team Coordinator Marine Affairs: this team covers MSFD, OSPAR and SDG 14/ocean governance as well as international coordination and cooperation on Integrated Maritime Policy and MSP. In the past Wim led the first integrated maritime policy plan for the North Sea including MSP and the first implementation cycle of the MSFD. More recently he acted i.a. as Head of Delegation in OSPAR and coordinated the involvement of the Dutch ministries in the formation of a North Sea Agreement (Noordzee Akkoord) with stakeholder organisations.

Carlo Zaghi

Ministry of Ecological Transition, Italy