



The **European Landowners' Organization** (ELO), created in 1972, is a unique federation of national associations from the 28 EU Member States and beyond, which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level.

Independent and non-profit making, the ELO is the only organisation able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. Our aim is to promote a prosperous countryside through private property dynamism. In order to achieve all of this, we rely on the organisation's ability to bring together rural actors, NGOs and political decision makers at local, regional, national and European levels. In this way, the voices and opinions of a large number of stakeholders from all over the EU can be heard.

**Follow-up of the conference**

**[www.europeanlandowners.org/events/biodiversity-conference](http://www.europeanlandowners.org/events/biodiversity-conference)**

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# European Biodiversity Conference

Belowground life & biodiversity for a healthy soil

Kindly hosted by  
**MEPs Franc BOGOVIČ  
& Alvaro AMARO**

**10 December 2019  
14h30-18h00**

**European  
Parliament  
P4B001**



Knowledge grows



**JOIN US after the conference  
for the European Bee Award  
Ceremony & Cocktail at 18h00  
Members Salon**



## Welcoming Speech



**FRANC BOGOVIČ** became an Agricultural Engineer in 1984. His professional career constitutes of several different posts, such as agricultural extension expert, agricultural trade entrepreneur, Mayor of Krško municipality, member of Slovenian National Assembly and Minister of Agriculture and Environment. In 2013, Mr Bogovič was elected President of the Slovene People's Party. Mr Bogovič is currently serving his second term as a Member of the European Parliament,

where he is engaged in topics related to agriculture, rural and regional development, cohesion policy, as well as environment and energy. Mr Bogovič is also leading the Smart Villages initiative in the European Parliament. With ensuring EU funding of pilot projects and preparatory actions on Smart villages in the last few years, Bogovič is working closely with the European Commission to make Smart Villages a significant part of the future EU regional and rural development policy.

## Opening



**JOANNA DRAKE** has been the Deputy Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for the environment since March 2016. As such, she is in charge of the coordination of Resource-efficiency policies and other legal instruments. By training, Ms Drake is a Doctor of Laws from the University of Malta, where she also lectured full time in the Department of European and Comparative Law. She held various legal and management posts in the private

and public sector before joining the European Commission as Head of the European Commission Representation in Malta in 2005. Between 2010 and 2015, she was director for SME's and Entrepreneurship in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs. During her tenure in DG GROW she also led the Commission's Task Force on The Collaborative Economy, New Business Models and SME's.



**ALAIN SCRIBAN** is currently Special Adviser of the European Landowners' Association (ELO). He is a former high-ranking official of the European Commission and previously a civil servant of the French Ministry of Agriculture. He was responsible for the negotiations of the agricultural component of the enlargement of Spain and Portugal and then Head of the Bureau of Economic Relations of the Community, mainly in connection with the Uruguay Round negotiations, the Blair House

agreement and the Cairns Group countries. he is also an Honorary General Engineer of Bridges, Waters & Forests. More recently (2016-2018), he was seconded by the European Commission to the Vice President for Policy and Partnerships of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in London. Previously, he was Senior Advisor on Migration Crisis to the Director-General for Migration and Home Affairs at the European Commission.

## Keynote Speaker



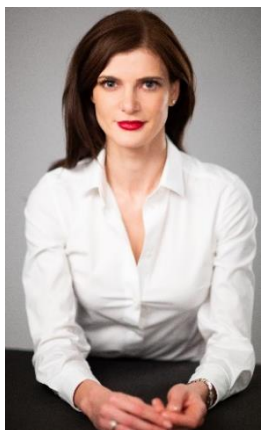
**PROFESSOR GERARD GOVERS** has been director of the Arenberg Doctoral School – the doctoral school of Science, Engineering and Technology group– since 2010. He obtained his licentiate's degree in science (geography) in 1981 and his PhD in geography in 1986. In 1989 he was hired as a member of the permanent research staff at what was then called the NFWO and, one year later, he became a part-time lecturer at KU Leuven. He has been full professor at KU Leuven since 2001.

## Biography of Panellists

### Panel 1: Driving forces that influence biodiversity in agricultural soils



**CHRISTINE MULLER** is the DG CLIMA policy officer managing the Carbon Farming Study. She entered the European Commission, DG AGRI, in 2004, working on strategy and quantitative assessment. Ms Muller has been covering agriculture and land use issues in DG CLIMA, from the 2011 “Roadmap for moving to a low carbon economy in 2050” over the reference and policy scenarios underlying the 2030 EU climate and energy package, to ongoing LULUCF policy implementation and conception. For sustainable food and biomass, she is developing a harmonised knowledge system on land and soil management, to feed into robust GHG inventory and Carbon Farming methodology, useful for carbon market piloting for EU agriculture and forestry.



**GALINA PEYCHEVA-MITEVA** studied Econometrics and Statistics in New York and graduated in 2005, when she joined the family farm and business. She started her active agricultural activity in 2007 by managing 1650 ha of land. Ms Peycheva-Miteva changed the method of farming from conventional to minimum disturbance and has made numerous efforts to preserve and improve soil fertility, fight water and wind erosion and has, in the process, certified as biologic over 580 ha of arable land. For those efforts, she was awarded the prestigious Soil Award in Brussels, in 2017. She was named businesswoman of the year in 2017 by the prestigious Agri-Business Magazine of Bulgaria. Ms Peycheva-Miteva is the vice-chairwoman of the Bulgarian Landowners Association, holds a seat at the Board of the Association of Agricultural Producers in Bulgaria and is a member of the National Grain Producers Association.

## 2019 Belleuropa Award

The Belleuropa Award aims to improve the environmental quality of European lands. It was created by Giuseppe NATTA, a noted environmental figure and son of Nobel laureate Giulio NATTA. It honours every year a Wildlife Estate Label territory that has demonstrated exceptional commitment to maintaining, protecting or improving land for the benefit of biodiversity. The Wildlife Estates Label is dedicated to the development and support of initiatives by private land managers, companies or institutions for the protection, conservation of wildlife and sustainable land use.

### Selection criteria:

1. Environmental impact in line with the EU Policy
2. Economic impact by creation of activity and employment in rural areas
3. Sustainability of actions in land management and wildlife conservation
4. Innovation and creativity
5. Reproducibility of initiatives



## Panel 2: Policy and strategic framework for soil quality



**CELIA NYSENS** works on agricultural policy at the European Environmental Bureau, a network of 160 environmental organisations in Europe. In that role, she advocates for a reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and of food system governance to improve its sustainability in Europe. She holds a B.Sc. in Political Sciences from KU Leuven and an M.Sc. in Global Environmental Politics from the University of Edinburgh. Before joining the EEB, Ms Nyssens worked on food, agriculture, and climate change policy in Scotland.



**ANDREA VETTORI** is Deputy Head of the Land Use & Management Unit in the Directorate-General (DG) for the Environment of the European Commission. Before that, he has been part of the team who prepared and conducted the negotiations on the 7<sup>th</sup> EU Environment Action Programme. In the same DG, he worked also on strategic planning and policy coordination, on resource efficiency, and on an environmental program. Before joining the European Commission, he worked at the European Parliament and for a European NGO.



**RONALD VARGAS** is the Secretary of the Global Soil Partnership, Land and Water Officer. He is a soil scientist with over 15 years of working experience in natural resources management with a focus on sustainable soil management for food security and ecosystem services. He joined FAO in 2011 as a Land and Water Officer and is the Secretary of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) since its establishment in 2012. Mr Vargas leads technical and scientific cooperation within and among regions, coordinates and facilitates the establishment of joint actions between governments, research institutions and NGOs for the achievement of soil-related SDGs.

## Panel 3: Innovation to improve soil health



**KOEN VAN KEER** is a Sustainability Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Expert (6 years) with Yara International - a global crop nutrition company. He focuses on EU policy and regulatory affairs relating to circular economy, the new Fertilizing Products Regulation, the CAP, precision agriculture, and soils. He previously held various academic research and fertilizer sales and marketing positions in SE Asia and the Middle East. Mr Van Keer holds a PhD degree in agronomy and soil science from Leuven University and has a broad grasp on the sustainability nexus of soils, crop nutrition, and agri-food systems.



**MAAIKE PERNEEL** is a Business Developer for Ghent University. She coordinates CropFit, a research network of professors with expertise in biostimulants. Her task is to facilitate the collaboration between industry and university. Ms Perneel worked for 9 years for a substrate producing company, Peltracom, now called Agaris where she held the position of Business Development Manager. Ms Perneel holds a degree in Bioscience engineering and obtained her PhD on the biocontrol of soilborne pathogens using biocontrol agents.

### **Concluding remarks**



**ÁLVARO AMARO** became a MEP in July 2019 and is an effective member of the AGRI Committee and a substitute in REGI Committee. In 1985, he was appointed Head of Office of the Deputy Minister and for Parliamentary Affairs. From 1987 to 1995 he was Secretary of State for Agriculture in Portugal. He occupied several positions in Coimbra city where he joined the Central Region Planning Commission, the Administrative Council of Social Services of the University and was Secretary-General of the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities, and an instructor at the Centre for Studies and Municipal Training. He was also elected Deputy-Chairman of the PSD Coimbra District Political Committee (DPC), and President of the PSD DPC of Guarda.