

# Laila Pinheiro – advocating for a resilient agriculture

Laila Pinheiro is a public affairs and communications leader with over 20 years of experience in multinational companies across Latin America and Europe. Based in Brussels, she serves as Director of Public Affairs for Europe at Syngenta, where she delivers the company's EU advocacy strategy and government engagement. Before that, she led external affairs for Latin America and Brazil, advising senior executives on public policy, reputation, sustainability and strategic advocacy. Her broader career includes senior roles at Dow and Ericsson, with expertise spanning policy campaigns, stakeholder engagement, regulatory strategy and communications in highly regulated sectors.

Laila holds a degree in Public Relations, an MBA from FGV, and advanced training in EU policy and diplomacy from the College of Europe and The Graduate Institute Geneva. In 2024, she was named to Forbes' "50 Women Who Take Agriculture from Brazil to the World".



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Director of Public Affairs, Europe, Syngenta

### Share one approach you have tested that delivers real results. Why would you recommend it?

What has worked consistently for me is keeping engagement simple: people talking to people. This is valid in Brussels, in Latin America—everywhere. Being authentic, showing genuine interest, and taking time to understand different perspectives builds trust. In complex and fluid policy environments, resilience is essential, but it is the ability to connect perspectives and find common ground that ultimately allows you to move from positions to solutions.

### A pivotal moment that changed your path

A defining moment for me was moving with my family from Brazil to Brussels. Beyond the personal transition, what stood out was how the international community embraces diversity—it's an everyday learning experience. It reinforced the importance of navigating across cultures and perspectives. It also showed me that opportunities often come from those connections, and that being open and adaptable is as important as any technical expertise.

### What very concrete issue in agriculture is most on your mind at the moment, and why?

A key challenge today is ensuring that simplification efforts in EU policy work across the full agricultural toolbox and support sustainable productivity. Farmers need access to the best available tools — from advanced crop protection and seed innovation to digital solutions — to produce more with less environmental impact. At Syngenta, this is precisely what drives our work: developing solutions that help farmers improve yields, reduce inputs and build resilience against climate pressures, while meeting the sustainability expectations of society and regulators.

In practice, this means engaging closely with policymakers and partners to connect innovation, sustainability, and competitiveness in a coherent way. The risk of fragmented or inconsistent policy is real — if simplification only addresses administrative burdens without preserving access to innovation, farmers lose options precisely when they need more of them. Getting that balance right is what keeps me most focused right now.