







Speakers of the Bioregions workshop: Unlocking regional bioeconomy transitions

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|  A portrait of Dr. Leire Barañano, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue and white patterned top, smiling. | <p>In her 20 years of professional career, Dr. Leire Barañano has been able to get to know the agri-food value chain as a whole, which has provided her with a valuable cross-cutting vision to detect the challenges it faces. Since 2017 she has been CEO of the NEIKER technology centre, which offers innovative solutions to help the agri-food and forestry sector. Also, from NEIKER, she promotes the forestry bioeconomy strategy of the Basque Country, to generate added value opportunities based on the use of biological resources and sustainable production processes. She is vice-chair of the board of the European Forest Institute (EFI) and in 2021 she joined the Basque Council for Science, Technology and Innovation. She holds a PhD in Business Management, Innovation and Knowledge from the University of the Basque Country.</p> |
|  A portrait of Alberto Bezama, a man with dark curly hair and a beard, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light purple shirt, smiling. | <p>Alberto Bezama is a Chemical Engineer from the University of Concepcion (Chile), with a doctoral degree on Industrial Environmental Protection from the University of Leoben (Austria). Since 2012 he is a Researcher at the Department of Bioenergy at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research in Leipzig, leading the Working Group on “Systems Analysis of the Bioeconomy”. Main focus of his research is assessing the effects of implementing bio-based technologies in a regional life cycle perspective, under the framework of the bioeconomy and circular economy strategies.</p> |


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|  A portrait of Karen Deprie, a woman with short brown hair, wearing glasses and a dark blazer over a light-colored collared shirt. She is smiling at the camera. | <p>Karen Deprie is Coordinator of Knowledge & Technology Transfer at DBFZ, a staff unit position with the DBFZ's scientific managing director. She holds a BSc in Forest Sciences & Forest Ecology (University of Göttingen) and an MSc in Resource Management (University of Edinburgh). After about 10 years in research funding, mainly coordinating networks in the European Research Area and organising joint calls for R&D proposals, she switched her focus to transfer, and supports scientists in getting their R&D results into practice.</p> |
|  A portrait of Laura García, a woman with long dark hair, smiling at the camera. | <p>Laura García, Environmental Engineer from Universidad de Los Andes (Colombia), and Master of Science on sustainable development from Leipzig university is a researcher since 2018 in the German Biomass Research Center (DBFZ) in the department of Systemic contribution of biomass. Main topics of her research are regional bioeconomies, the challenges and strategic solutions driven by regional stakeholders to facilitate a transition towards circular bioeconomy.</p> |

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|  A portrait of Stephanie Kirchmayr-Novak, a woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a blue top. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. | <p>Stephanie Kirchmayr-Novak (ÖIR) studied spatial planning at the Vienna University of Technology (Austria) and the Technical University of Lulea (Sweden). She started working at ÖIR in 2001 and became a fixed member of the scientific researcher team in 2006. Her project work focuses on European urban and regional policies as well as the analysis of freight transport. Among others she conducted the analysis for DG Research Mapping of EU Member States'/regions' Research and Innovation plans & Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) on Bioeconomy for 2014-2020.</p> |
|  A portrait of Mr Barna Kovacs, a man with short grey hair and a beard, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a striped tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. | <p>Mr Barna Kovacs is currently working as counsellor at the Permanent Representation of Hungary to the EU. He has been appointed as the Secretary General of the BIOEAST Initiative. Between 2009-2017 he worked as scientific and policy officer in the European Commission. His responsibilities covered research project management and policy definition, contributing to conceptual reflections of the work programmes, strategic documents and new approaches for the implementation of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy, the Bioeconomy Observatory. In 2016 Mr. Kovacs was appointed as Secretary for the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research. He was a focal point for relations with the EU Member States, coordinated foresight exercises in the field of bioeconomy. In the period of 2004-2009 he worked in Brussels in the European Parliament. His scientific background covers management and business administration, focusing on the socio-economic aspects of agriculture, localized agri-food systems.</p> |

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|  A portrait of Danka Moravčíková, a woman with short reddish-brown hair and glasses, wearing a green textured zip-up jacket over a light-colored top. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. | <p>Danka Moravčíková – since 2016 she has been coordinating transfer activities and projects and at the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra. She is a member of several thematic working groups (TWG on EIP, WG for AKIS, WG of the Partnership for Cohesion Policy 2020+, BIOEAST Food Systems WG and BIOEAST TWG on Education). On behalf of the university she cooperates with the Nitra regional and local government in the preparation of the Integrated Territorial and Investment Strategy 2021-2027.</p> |
|  A portrait of Francesca Natali, a woman with long dark hair, smiling broadly. She is wearing a dark blazer over a white collared shirt. The background is a blurred office setting. | <p>Francesca Natali is board member at META Group (MG). and Managing Director of META Ventures (MV), the financial company of META Group managing in Italy Poland and Slovenia co-investment risk capital funds. She seats in the board of directors of a number of MV portfolio companies. She has a deep experience in the design and implementation of ESIF financial instruments for SMEs with particular focus on equity-based ones. She is member of the screening committee of Women 4 Angels, the leading Italian female business angel club.</p> |

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Marco Rupp The Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC)
Marco manages public affairs and sustainability activities at BIC. He graduated as economist. Marco has over 20 years of private and public sector expertise in various management functions. He is a member of several expert groups and advisory boards in the field of the bioeconomy. Marco coordinates the Public Affairs Working Group.



Katri Rusanen holds a Master's degree in Agriculture and Forestry from the University of Helsinki. She is currently working as a project researcher in the University of Eastern Finland while developing an open collaboration platform GreenHub for bioeconomy actors. Her doctoral thesis focuses on sustainable value creation in the forest-based bioeconomy networks.

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Dr. Gerd Unkelbach studied chemistry at the Bonn-Rhine-Sieg University of Applied Sciences after his training as a chemical laboratory technician. He wrote his diploma thesis at Fraunhofer ICT and began his career as research assistant at the Environmental Engineering department, where he has led the Reactions- and Separation Techniques working group since 2008. 2010 he changed to the new Fraunhofer-Center for Chemical-Biotechnological Processes CBP, whose leadership he has taken at the beginning of 2012. Parallel to his work, he obtained his PhD at the University of Stuttgart. From 2019 onwards he was also coordinating the business area “Sustainable Chemistry” at Fraunhofer IGB. Since June 2022 he is the director of corporate research for Polymers and Molecular Bioproducts at UPM.