

Boosting and mainstreaming the bioeconomy - Science and governance for the green transition, 2 December 2025

Setting the direction: Launching Europe's New Bioeconomy Strategy – opening session



Andreas de Neergaard, dean for Science, University of Copenhagen

Andreas de Neergaard is Associate Dean for Education at SCIENCE, University of Copenhagen.

He holds an MSc in Biology (Aarhus University, 1997) and a PhD in Agroecology (2001).

He specializes in agroecology, sustainability, and education leadership with extensive international program experience.



David Dreyer, Rector for University of Copenhagen

On 1 March 2025, David Dreyer Lassen took office as the University of Copenhagen's Rector number 260. Born in 1973, he graduated with an MSc in Political Science in 1998 and a PhD in 2002, both degrees from the University of Copenhagen.

He is Professor at the Department of Economics and has previously served as Centre Director of the Centre for Social Data Science (SODAS), Deputy Centre Director at DG Centre for Economic Behavior and Inequality, Chair of Independent Research Fund Denmark and Prorector for Research and Innovation.



Ekaterina Zeharieva, Commissioner Startups, Research and Innovation

As Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation, Ekaterina Zaharieva's task is to drive the EU's ambition to put research and innovation, science and technology at the centre of our economy.

She will foster investment and cooperation, creating the right conditions for researchers to thrive and develop new skills, and the innovation needed for the EU's competitiveness, security and sustainability goals.



Jeppe Bruus

Jeppe Bruus is minister for Green Transition. The Ministry of Green Transition plays a key role in implementing and bringing the agreement on a greener Denmark to life.

As part of the Agreement on a Green Denmark, the Minister and the Danish Government have launched a Growth Team on the Future of Food, Agriculture and Biosolutions. The Growth Team is tasked with providing recommendations on how Denmark can continue to maintain and develop a strong, competitive, and development-oriented agricultural and food sector.

An important part of the team's work is, among other things, to strengthen the bioeconomy by focusing on how to increase investments and infrastructure development, as well as by fostering greater market demand for bio-based products.



Eric Mamer – DG ENVI

Eric Mamer was appointed Director-General for Environment on 1 July 2025.

He brings more than 30 years of experience at the European Commission, having served as Chief Spokes-person from 2019 to 2024, Director for Competitiveness in the Directorate-General for the Internal Market and Deputy Head of Cabinet to Commissioner Günther H. Oettinger.

He has extensive experience with EU policies and their implementation.



Dr. Christian Patermann – Retired Director from European Commission

Dr. Christian Patermann studied law, languages and economics in Freiburg, Munich, Bonn, Lausanne and Santander. He served for many years in the German Federal Government, including as Science Counsellor in Washington, spokesperson, Director of Cabinet and Deputy Director General in the Ministry of Research and Technology.

From 1996 he was Director for Environment, Climate and Marine, and from 2004 Director for Agriculture, Food, Forestry, Fisheries and Biotechnology in DG RTD, where he helped launch the Knowledge-Based Bioeconomy in 2005.

Since retiring, he has advised public and private organisations on European affairs and the circular bioeconomy and co-founded the first German Bioeconomy Council in 2009.

The bioeconomy generation: Building a future we can believe in



Nanna Koefoed – EU Bioeconomy Youth Ambassador

Nanna Koefoed is one of the EU Bioeconomy Youth Ambassadors, ensuring young Europeans have a real voice in shaping the future of Europe's bioeconomy. She is a biotechnology engineer with experience focused on microbial cell factories and sustainable bioproduction.

Today, she works as a research scientist within biosolutions, driven by a belief that science, when communicated clearly and used wisely, can help create a fair and regenerative future.

As a Bioeconomy Youth Ambassador, Nanna brings urgency, creativity and a long-term perspective to policy discussions, emphasizing that decisions made today will define the conditions under which her generation will live, work and raise their families.

How do we boost the long-term competitiveness of the EU bioeconomy?



Agata Kotkowska – DG ENVI

Agata Kotkowska is Deputy Head of Unit at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment, where she leads work on the bioeconomy, sustainable materials and circular industry value chains.

With more than 20 years of EU policy experience, she has shaped major Green Deal initiatives at the intersection of competitiveness, sustainability and finance.

She is also a Senior Fellow at UC Berkeley's Institute of European Studies, focusing on transatlantic cooperation.



Dirk Carrez, Executive Director of the Bio-based Industries Consortium

Dirk Carrez is the Executive Director of the Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC).

BIC brings together actors from different sectors to establish a pan-European bio-based industry. BIC also represents the private sector in a PPP with the European Commission, the CBE JU.

BIC's mission is to connect industry, academia, regions and citizens to transform bio-based feedstocks into novel sustainable products and applications, and to create circular bioeconomy ecosystems through investments, innovation and know-how.



Michael Brandkamp – European Circular Bioeconomy Fund

Michael Brandkamp is one of the three founders and General Partners of the European Circular Bioeconomy Fund (ECBF).

Michael and his team's goal are to speed up the transformation from a fossil-based to a bio-based circular economy in Europe.

The German entrepreneur wrote and executed the business plan of High-Tech Gründerfonds (HTGF), the most active early-stage fund in Europe, investing in innovative technologies and business models since 2005. As the first managing director, he led HTGF until 2019. Michael has 25 years of experience in investment and management in the venture capital industry.



Marzano Carmine, Senior Expert of the Bioeconomy Division at the European Investment Bank

Carmin is currently working at the European Investment Bank on Bioeconomy projects, including innovative biobased technologies for the production of sustainable chemicals, materials and Advanced Biofuels.



Kristian Hundebøll, Chair the Growth Committee appointed by the Danish Government

Former CEO at DLG, Current Board member at The National Bank of Denmark; Board member of DLF Seed, global company within forage; Board member of BioMar, Global Company within the fish Industry.

Previous Chairperson of the Danish and The European branch organisation within the Agri- and Food Industry

Session A: Can Europe produce more biomass while supporting sustainability and biodiversity goals? (Small auditorium)



Uffe Jørgensen, professor

Professor in sustainable intensification of crop production and its use for bioenergy, feed, food and materials.

This includes research on genotypic variation in yield and biorefining quality, environmental and climatic aspects of biomass crop production and national inventories of biomass resources.

Former head of Centre for Circular Bioeconomy and member of National Bioeconomy Panel.



Alessandra Zampieri, Director for Sustainable Resources, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

Since 1 October 2022, Alessandra is the Director for Sustainable Resources of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the science and knowledge service of the European Commission.

Alessandra joined the European Commission immediately after graduating in Economics from the University of Genoa. She contributed to the definition of transport policies, in the Directorate-General for energy and transport and then in the Cabinet of Vice President Loyola De Palacio. In 2009, Alessandra joined the JRC as Head of the Maritime Affairs Unit and was subsequently appointed Head of the Demography, Migration and Governance Unit. Her current research portfolio is instrumental to highlight the contribution of natural resources for a sustainable and competitive Europe. In crucial areas like water and oceans, biodiversity, land resources including soils, circular economy and raw materials, food systems, food security and nature conservation.



Barna Kovacs – BIOEAST Initiative

Mr. Barna Kovács serves as a Counsellor at the Permanent Representation of Hungary to the EU, where he spearheads Hungary's engagement in EU bioeconomy policy.

He holds several key leadership positions, including Secretary General of the BIOEAST Initiative and Vice-Chair of the FACCE JPI.

He also represents Hungary in the SCAR, and on the State Representative Groups of the CBE JU, focusing on advancing research and innovation in the bioeconomy sector.



Tobias Nielsen – European Environment Agency (EEA)

Tobias Nielsen is a circular economy expert at the European Environment Agency (EEA).

His work focuses on the environmental benefits of the circular economy, circular bioeconomy, and plastics.

Before joining the EEA, he worked in consultancy at IVL and in research at Lund University.



Steen Bitsch – Vestjyllands Andel

Steen Bitsch is the CEO of the agricultural cooperative Vestjyllands Andel, owned by approximately 4,000 Danish farmers.

Steen Bitsch has represented the agricultural sector in several national forums — including the Committee for Cascade Utilisation of Biogenic CO₂, and most recently, the Growth Team for the Future of Agriculture, Food and Biosolutions, appointed by the Danish Government.

Session B: How do we prioritise and optimise the use of biomass in Europe?



Peter Wehrheim, Head of Unit Directorate-General for Research and Innovation

Peter Wehrheim is the Head of Unit for Bioeconomy and Food Systems within the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission in Brussels. He has played a significant role in implementing the EU Bioeconomy Strategy and in shaping the EU's Food2030 research and innovation approach.

While working with Phil Hogan, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Areas, he was responsible for environment and climate within the CAP. From 2010 to 2018, he led the Unit for Land Use and Climate Finance in DG Climate Action. Before joining the European Commission, Peter held academic positions at Faculties for Agriculture at the Universities of Bonn, Maryland, and Kiel. He earned his doctoral degree in agricultural economics from the University of Gießen, Germany.



Nelly Azaïs – Agora Energiewende

Nelly Azaïs joined Agora Energiewende's Brussels office as Project manager EU energy & climate policy in January 2021. She previously worked as a consultant and researcher on various aspects of the European energy sector.

Nelly has an academic background in economics, international relations and energy & the environment. At Agora she has focused on showcasing best practices for the energy transition, circularity in energy intensive industries and, lately, biomass use for energy and materials.



Jukka Kantola – World Bioeconomy Association

Jukka Kantola (M.Sc., eMBA) is a visionary leader in the global circular bioeconomy with 30+ years of experience across Europe and Asia. As Founder of the World Bioeconomy Forum and Chair of the World Bioeconomy Association, he drives sustainable growth and innovation worldwide.

He has contributed to G20, COP, and EU bioeconomy dialogues and co-authored Financing a Sustainable Global Bio-economy (2024).



Michael Losch – DG AGRI

Michael Losch is a bioeconomy specialist in DG AGRI



Jacob Bagge Hansen, KMC

Jacob Hansen holds a master's degree in political science from Aarhus University in Denmark. He came to Brussels in 1997 as Director of Danish Agriculture and Food Council's EU-office representing the Danish farmers and food industry. In 2011 he became Director General of Fertilizers Europe, the industry association for the EU fertilizer industry.

In 2023 he returned to Denmark as Director for Industrial Relations at KMC amba.

Jacob Hansen is presently serving as vice-chairman of the COPA-COGECA Working Party on Potatoes and member of the Executive Committee of Starch Europe.

How do we build a sustainable market for bio-based products in Europe?



Rosalinda Scalia – DG RTD

Rosalinda Scalia is Deputy Head of Unit for Bioeconomy and Food Systems in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. She previously served in the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety as a policy officer for plant health.

Before moving to Brussels, she spent almost a decade as a Food Inspector for the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and one year with the Spanish Food Safety Agency, investigating fraud and irregularities in the food market.

She holds a PhD in Environmental Agronomy from the University of Palermo and has been a visiting scientist at the University of California, Davis, and the University of Alabama.



Kristin Schreiber – DG GROW

Kristin Schreiber leads Directorate F: Chemicals, Bioeconomy and Retail in DG GROW. From 2015 to 2021 she was Director for SME policy and the COSME Programme and maintains a strong interest in SMEs.

She sits on the management boards of the European Chemicals Agency, the Innovative Health Initiative, the Circular Bio-Based Europe Joint Undertaking and the Global Health Joint Undertaking.

Her previous Commission roles include Head of Cabinet to Commissioner Vladimír Špidla and Deputy Head of Cabinet to Commissioner Michel Barnier.

Kristin studied economics, international relations and European law, graduated with honours from Sciences Po Paris and holds master's degrees from the University of Kent and the College of Europe.



Agata Kotkowska – DG ENVI

Agata Kotkowska is Deputy Head of Unit at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment, where she leads work on the bioeconomy, sustainable materials and circular industry value chains.

With more than 20 years of EU policy experience, she has shaped major Green Deal initiatives at the intersection of competitiveness, sustainability and finance.

She is also a Senior Fellow at UC Berkeley's Institute of European Studies, focusing on transatlantic cooperation.



Dr. Evelyn Reinmuth – University of Hohenheim

Dr. Evelyn Reinmuth heads the Bioeconomy Office at Hohenheim University and manages the S-TEC Center for Biointelligent Value Creation.

Evelyn specializes in modelling integrated systems for bioeconomy solutions, focusing on quality parameters of biobased intermediates. She coordinates Hohenheim's activities in the European Bioeconomy University Alliance core working group, co-chairs the BRAG-FOST 25/26 Symposium for Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, and is active on the BMW Dialogue Platform.

Through transfer, policy advice, and stakeholder cooperation, she advances industrial-scale bioeconomy and food system transformation.



Peep Pitk – Fibenol

Peep Pitk holds a Ph.D. in environmental chemistry and bio-process engineering from TalTech, specializing in optimizing protein-rich side streams and anaerobic digestion processes.

In 2016, he joined the Fibenol team and has been leading the company's development journey. Starting with the concept of wood valorization on paper, he has guided the Fibenol team to the completion of a globally unique industrial demonstration plant for wood fractionation. The commissioning and ramp-up of this plant were completed in 2024, paving the way for the scale-up to an industrial-sized plant by 2030.

How does the EU support the upscaling of the bioeconomy?



James Morrison – CMG

James Morrison has been Director for Healthy Planet in DG Research and Innovation since 2025. He co-chairs Horizon Europe Cluster 6 and chairs both the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking and the All-Atlantic Ocean Alliance.

He previously served as Director of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board, Head of Cabinet to the Commissioner for the Security Union and Policy Director in the Secretariat-General.

A former British diplomat, he holds an MBA and is a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George.



Ben Durham – Department of Science, Technology, and Innovation

Ben Durham is Chief Director of Bio-innovation at South Africa's Department of Science and Innovation, where he oversees implementation of the national Bioeconomy Strategy and innovation across agriculture, health, industry, the environment and Indigenous Knowledge Systems. His work strengthens the National System of Innovation to deliver socio-economic and environmental benefits.

He serves as Deputy Chair of the GMO Act Executive Council, sits on the Bioeconomy Metrics Committee and several research infrastructure steering committees. Internationally, he is a member of the International Advisory Committee on Global Bioeconomy and leads the Bioeconomy Initiative under South Africa's G20 presidency in 2025.



Nicoló Giacomuzzi-Moore – CBE JU

Nicoló Giacomuzzi-Moore has been working in European affairs for more than 20 years, with a focus on research and innovation policy, programme implementation and support to enterprises.

Before joining BBI JU (now CBE JU) as Head of the Administration and Finance Unit in 2016, he worked for the European Commission's Research Executive Agency and for an Italian business association. He holds a degree in economics and international trade.



Randi Wahlsten, MATR Foods

CEO & co-founder of MATR Foods.

Has previously held executive positions in Arla Foods, McKinsey & Company and Dalberg Group.

The New Normal: Mainstreaming the Bioeconomy for a Green Future



Christine Lang – IACGB

Christine Lang's academic background is in the field of biology. In 2001, she established Organobalance GmbH, a company specialising in new microbial agents and strains, and served as its managing director until 2018.

From 2012 to 2019, she served as co-chair of the German Bioeconomy Council. She co-chairs the International Advisory Council on Global Bioeconomy (IACGB) think tank.



Claus Felby – Novo Nordisk Foundation

Claus joined the Foundation in 2019 to lead activities in the bio-technology area, which encompasses biological solutions for agriculture, food systems and energy, drawing on nearly two decades of experience as Professor of Biomass and Bioenergy at the University of Copenhagen.

He brings a long academic and industrial career as both re-searcher and professor, having led major research programmes and contributed to several patents. His work ranges from fundamental studies of enzymes and microorganisms to industrial process development and scale-up, international advisory roles and environmental impact assessment.



Karl Walsh – Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine Ireland

Dr Karl Walsh is the Head of the Research, Bioeconomy & Codex Division in the Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. He grew up on a mixed dairy and beef pasture farm in the west of Ireland. He graduated from University College Dublin (UCD) in 2003 with a degree in Agricultural Science. He then went on to complete a PhD at the Teagasc Grange Beef Research Centre in Co. Meath and UCD, supervised by Dr. Pádraig O'Kiely, Prof. Frank O'Mara and Prof. Tommy Boland. He also holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Policy Analysis from the Institute of Public Administration.

Karl joined the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in 2007. He has worked in a variety of areas, including Livestock Breeding, Production and Trade, Animal Feed and Fertiliser, Research, Economics, and as the Agricultural Attaché in Ireland's Embassy to France as well as its multilateral Mission to the OECD. He was appointed Head of the Research, Bioeconomy and Codex Division in 2021.

The next chapter of the bioeconomy in Europe



Jeccika Roswall, Commissioner Environment, Water resilience and competitive Circular Economy

As Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy, Jessika Roswall's task is to lead the work on protecting our natural world and boosting our circular economy, focusing on incentives, investment and implementation.