



MEET OUR SPEAKERS



Mathias De Clercq

Mathias De Clercq has been Mayor of the City of Ghent since January 2019 and is a member of Open VLD. He obtained his academic education in Law as well as European and International Law at the University of Ghent and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). After working as an apprentice-lawyer at the Bar of Ghent and before becoming Mayor, he held different positions in the municipal government of Ghent, including the positions Deputy Mayor and Senior Deputy Mayor of the Economy, Youth, Work and the Self-Employed, Senior Deputy Mayor of the Port, Economy and Enterprise. He was also a representative in the Flemish parliament between 2014 and 2019, as well as a core member of the liberal think tank Liberales.

Peter Defranceschi

Peter Defranceschi leads the Global Food Program of ICLEI, an international and European organisation of cities and regions committed to integrated sustainable development. He is heading the ICLEI Office in Brussels representing urban sustainability issues vis-à-vis European institutions and other strategic stakeholders. Since he joined ICLEI, Peter has been working on sustainable public procurement, climate change (mitigation and adaptation), biodiversity, water, mobility and urban regional food systems. Peter is Italian and a lawyer by training. Before joining ICLEI he has worked in various organisations in Europe and Latin America, dealing also with human rights issues.



Diana Messa

Diana Messa is Policy Advisor for the Renew Europe Group in the European Parliament. She has been advised Members of Parliament on the Environment Committee for over nine years and on the Fisheries Committee for one year. From 2011-2012 Diana was a Congressional Fellow in the office of U.S. Senator Ron Wyden in Congress in Washington D.C., United States. Before that she worked 3.5 years as a parliamentary assistant in the European Parliament for a German Member of Parliament.

Dr. Bernd Pölling

Dr. Bernd Pölling is a research and teaching assistant at the Department of Agriculture of Fachhochschule Südwestfalen, University of Applied Sciences, Soest, Germany. His main working fields are urban agriculture, green infrastructure, and new entrants into farming. He is actively involved in several European, national and regional initiatives and projects, including H2020 projects proGReg, EFUA, Newbie, and FoodE.



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