

4 DECEMBER 2023 UfM TRADE AND INVESTMENT FORUM BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Biographies of Speakers and Panelists



Mr. Nasser Kamel
Secretary General
Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

A career diplomat for the Egyptian government, Nasser Kamel held the position of Ambassador of Egypt to the United Kingdom from 2014 to 2018. He was also Ambassador to France in the period 2006-2012, during which he took part in the drafting of the Joint Declaration of the 2008 Paris Summit that marked the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean. Furthermore, between 2012 and 2014, he was Assistant Minister for Arab and Middle Eastern Affairs. From 2004 to 2006, he was the Director of Egypt's Public Information Service. Prior to this position he served in various embassies, including Washington (1984-1988), Lisbon (1990-1994), Tunis (1994-1998), Brussels (1999-2001) and Paris (2001-2004).



Mr. Leopoldo Rubinacci
Deputy Director General
European Commission, DG TRADE

Leopoldo Rubinacci currently serves as the Deputy Director General in the Directorate-General for Trade of the European Commission. In this role, he is responsible for overseeing EU trade relations with the Americas and neighboring countries to the EU, as well as handling trade aspects related to agriculture, food safety, trade in goods (including raw materials and energy), regulatory cooperation, and trade aspects of public procurement. Mr. Rubinacci joined the European Commission in 1995, initially in what is now known as DG Environment, before transitioning to DG Trade in 1997, where he held various positions. From 2015 to 2020, he served as the Director for Trade Defence, and subsequently took on the role of Resources Director between 2020 and 2022.



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Ms. Ines Rocha

*Managing Director of Impact & Partnerships at EBRD
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)*

Ines currently serves as the Managing Director for Impact and Partnerships at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). With over 20 years of experience in the financial industry and capital markets, she brings a wealth of expertise to her role. In her previous positions, Ines worked as a senior banker in the Financial Institutions team at EBRD, focusing on structured products and capital market investments in both bank and non-bank financial institutions across the EBRD's Countries of Operations. She later assumed the role of Director of Financial Products in the SME F&D team. Before joining EBRD, Ines worked in the Equity Capital Markets division of UBS Investment Bank in London, where her responsibilities covered the EMEA region. Prior to her international roles, she contributed to the Central Bank of Portugal, concentrating on ECB/Eurosystem matters.



Mr. Léon Delvaux

*Director for Neighbouring Countries, Industry, Goods, Regulatory Cooperation and Public Procurement
EU Commission, DG TRADE.*

Léon Delvaux is currently the Acting Director of Directorate E in the European Commission's DG TRADE. Before this role, he served as a Member of the Cabinet of the President of the European Commission, advising on matters related to the development and implementation of trade policy. Prior to joining the Commission, Delvaux had a distinguished diplomatic career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, holding positions such as Ambassador to Kosovo and Montenegro and Counsellor to the Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the European Union in Brussels. In the latter role, he coordinated activities, including Coreper I and subsequently Coreper II, and represented Luxembourg in the Intergovernmental Conference leading to the Lisbon Treaty.

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Mr. Bernd Lange

Chair

International Trade Committee, European Parliament.

Bernd Lange has been the Chair of the Conference of Committee Chairs (CCC) in the European Parliament since 2022. He is a Member of the COVID-19 Vaccines Contact Group and chairs the Fair-Trade Working Group since 2019, concurrently serving in the Delegation for relations with Southeast Asia and ASEAN. As the Chairman of the Committee on International Trade since 2014, he focuses on EU-USA trade relations. Bernd Lange, a former Trade Policy Spokesman for the Socialist Group, has been an MEP since 2009, actively contributing to key committees. Prior roles include heading the "economic, environmental, and Europe" unit of the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) from 2005-2009. As an MEP from Lower Saxony (1994-2004), he received notable awards, including the Automobile Association Award (1998), Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (2001, 2018 - first class), EU Parliamentarian of the Year (2012), and Fair Politician of the Year (2012/13).



Mr. Yahya Elwathik Bellah Ahmed

First Undersecretary of State

*Head of the Egyptian Commercial Service, Ministry of Trade and Industry
Egypt*

Yahya Elwathik Bellah Ahmed has more than 27 years of international career experience working in several countries including Australia, Canada, Spain, Belgium, and Egypt in the field of Business Development and Economic Development. Prior to his current position, he was Minister Plenipotentiary, Director of the Trade Mission of Egypt at the Embassy of Egypt to the EU, Belgium, and Luxembourg. He also served as Commercial Counsellor and Director of Africa and COMESA Department in Cairo and was a Consultant of Economic Development Programs and Strategic Initiatives in Canada. Between 2008 and 2010 he was the First Secretary of ECS and served as Consul of Economic and Commercial Affairs in Montreal between 2004-2008.



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Ms. Şahika Aşkıner

Vice President of Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Izmir and President of Egikad (Aegean Businesswomen Association).

Türkiye

Ms. Şahika is a distinguished textile entrepreneur. Founder of Özsimge Textile since 1992, she specializes in ready-made garments for top European brands, emphasizing gender diversity with 80% female employees. A trailblazer, Ms. Aşkıner also established Libra Textile (1992-1998) and co-founded Vela Textile Ltd. (2005-2020), importing, and distributing Slam SPA sailing wear in Turkey. Her enduring influence extends to successful flagship stores along the Aegean coast and a 12-year partnership with major Turkish department stores. As the president of Aegean Businesswomen Association, Ms. Sahika has represented Egikad in three EU Projects to help women improve their management, financial, marketing, and digital skills as well as helping them to be more aware of their creativity to become entrepreneurs in their own countries. In all these EU projects international partners were mostly from the Mediterranean zone.



Mr. Matthias Knappe

Head of Fibres, Textiles and Clothing Unit, Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness.

International Trade Centre (ITC).

Matthias Knappe has over 30 years of diversified professional experience in international trade and development. He has worked at the enterprise, institutional and governmental levels. Matthias is presently leading the fibres, textiles, and clothing programme of the International Trade Centre. Over the last 20 years, he has been working with the T&C sector around the world to increase its export competitiveness. Understanding the needs of the market, he designed ITC's Global Textiles and Clothing programme and created the ITC African Cotton Development Initiative. He holds two master's degrees, in economics and development economics.

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Ms. Regine Qualmann
Head of Department North Africa
GIZ

Regine Qualmann is currently Director of the North Africa Division at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Formerly, she served as Country Director for GIZ in Tanzania and held various managing positions in GIZ's Sector Department. Before joining GIZ, she worked as an adviser to the SADC Secretariat in Botswana and was a Research Fellow at the German Development Institute.

Ms. Qualmann is an economist with a master's degree from Tübingen and a PhD from the University of Leipzig. Her professional interests are in Private Sector Development, Employment Promotion and achieving a Green Economy, and her geographical focus has been on the African continent.



Mr. Ramy Boujawdeh
Chief Operating Officer
Berytech, Lebanon.

Ramy Boujawdeh, Berytech's Chief Operating Officer since 2014, leads initiatives in entrepreneurship and innovation, with a focus on supporting SMEs. He has particularly emphasized industry verticals like Agri-Food and Cleantech Innovations across the MENA region. Ramy is dedicated to promoting the circular economy, addressing climate change, and fostering citizen engagement. Besides his role at Berytech, he actively supports various social causes in Lebanon, including education, sustainability, agriculture, environment, gender equity, and economic development. Ramy holds positions such as Vice President of the NGO Rural Entrepreneurs, External Advisor for the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science at the American University of Beirut, and Council Member at the Order of Engineers and Architects. Additionally, he serves as a Board member representing Non-EU Members, including Lebanon, in the European Business & Innovation Centers Network (EBN).



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Mr. Mohamed Magdy
*Executive Director
Esperanza, Egypt.*

A Supply Chain Consultant with 24 years of experience in the Textile & readymade garments field. This long Journey started by obtaining the bachelor Engineering Degree in Textiles, then a significant career in Merchandising in reputed Garment Manufacturers in Egypt, in addition to successful journey as a senior in Macy's Egypt office. Magdy has a proven record of accomplishment of accelerating revenue growth, cost savings and market development. Proven ability to drive corporates to revenue growth with a high customer comfort level.



Mr. Nayef Stetieh
*Former Minister of Labour
Founder Business Development Center-BDC
Jordan*

With a vision to help boost the economic development of Jordan through empowering the Jordanian youth and entrepreneurs. An innovator in organizational development, he brings over 30 years' experience in creating, implementing, and managing diverse and ambitious projects amid to fostering lasting jobs creation and enterprise development, and providing technical assistance services to youth, women, private sector companies, government officials and civil society organizations in Jordan and the Middle East.



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Mr. Sangheon Lee
Director of Employment Department
International Labour Organization

Sangheon LEE is the Director of the Employment, Job Creation and Livelihoods Department (EMPLOYMENT), which leads the ILO's action for promoting full and productive employment by developing integrated employment, development, and skills policies. He is currently leading the ILO's work in monitoring the labour market impacts of multiple crises (ILO Monitor on the World of Work)

Prior to becoming the Director of EMPLOYMENT, he was the Special Adviser to the Deputy Director-General for Policy on Economic and Social Issues (2014-18), and an acting director for Research Department (17-18).



Mr. David Dion
Acting Director
Directorate for international Affairs, EU Commission, DG EMPL

Mr Dion is Acting Director for Labour Mobility and International Affairs and Head of the Social Security Coordination Unit of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission. Previously, he had been: the Head of the Task Force for the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan; the Head of the Social Dialogue Unit; and the Head of the unit responsible for general coordination, strategic planning and inter-institutional relations. Between 2008 and 2012, he was the policy assistant to three successive Directors-General of DG EMPL. He holds a master and a doctoral degree in economics prepared at the universities of Paris Dauphine (France) and Mannheim (Germany), as well as a master's degree in legal and political sciences from the University of Paris Descartes, and has produced several academic publications, including a book on European economic integration. He is a French national.



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Ms. Lamia Chaffai
Chief Executive Officer
Education for Employment EFE, Tunisia

With over 25 years of experience in social impact, politics, technology, and e-commerce in Tunisia, Lamia Chaffai is the founding CEO of Education for Employment-Tunisie (EFE-Tunisie). EFE-Tunisie, established post the Tunisian Revolution in 2012, is a leading civil society organization addressing youth unemployment. Lamia also served as a Senior Advisor for the Tunisian Ministry of Employment, overseeing Information Technology projects. Her background includes roles as Secretary of State for Information Technology and CEO at the Tunisian Internet Agency and the National Digital Certification Agency. Lamia holds an Executive MBA from South Mediterranean University (SMU) and degrees from Université de Technologie de Compiègne and the National Engineering School of Monastir.



H.E. Valdis Dombrovskis
Executive Vice-President and Commissioner for Trade
An Economy that Works for People
the European Commission

H.E. Valdis Dombrovskis currently holds the position of Executive Vice-President of 'An Economy that Works for People' and Commissioner for Trade at the European Commission. With a career spanning key roles such as Prime Minister of Latvia, Finance Minister, and Member of the European Parliament, he brings a wealth of experience in shaping economic policies. Notably, his leadership as EC Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, coupled with responsibilities for Financial Stability and Capital Markets Union, underscores his commitment to fostering economic growth and stability in both national and European contexts.