

21 March – Belgian Parliament Speaker CVs

Wouter Vermeersch

Wouter Vermeersch is currently the Vice President of the Chamber of Representatives of Belgium and has an extensive career in the clean technologies sector. He is the owner and managing director of Cleantec Trade Ltd. and Cleantec Trade BVBA, companies specializing in the trade of technologies that contribute to a cleaner environment, improving efficiency while reducing energy consumption, pollution, and waste. Previously, he was an Associate Director at Green Earth Energy & Technology and a Senior Auditor at Deloitte. He graduated with the highest distinction in Commercial Engineering with a major in Accountancy from the University of Antwerp, and his thesis and publication on corporate governance demonstrate his expertise in the Lippens Code.

Jerone Soete

Jerone Soete is currently a Federal Member of Parliament in Belgium and has extensive experience in local and regional politics. He has been a city councilor and faction leader in Oostende since 2016, and was a member of the OCMW council. He also served as Chief of Staff for Deputy Jurgen Vanlerberghe in West Flanders from 2017 to 2024. His background includes roles as a staff member and parliamentary assistant to John Crombez at the Flemish Parliament. With a Master's degree in Political Science from VUB, he has been actively involved in shaping local and national policies for over a decade.

Yolanda Garcia Mezquita

Yolanda Garcia holds a PhD in Economics from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. From June 2001 to April 2009, she worked as an economic advisor at the Spanish National Regulatory Authority, focusing on regulation and competition issues in the electricity and gas sectors. Since May 2009, she has been with the European Commission in the Directorate General for Energy, where she currently serves as Head of Unit TF2, overseeing "Relations with the Member States and the Energy Community" within the Energy Platform Task Force.

Teresa Ribera

Teresa Ribera is currently the Third Vice-President of the Government of Spain and the Minister for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, a position she has held since July 2021. She previously served as the Fourth Vice-President and Minister for Ecological Transition from January 2020 to July 2021. Ribera has a long history of leadership in environmental policy, having been Minister for Ecological Transition from 2018 to 2020, and State Secretary for Climate Change from 2008 to 2011. She has also held academic and advisory roles, including Director of the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) from 2014 to 2018, and has served as an advisor on energy and climate at IDDRI in Paris. She is a member of several global climate organizations, including the Advisory Board of the UN's Momentum for Change initiative and the Global Advisory Council on Climate of the World Economic Forum. Ribera is also an Associate Professor at the Autonomous University of Madrid.

Tom Howes

Tom Howes is currently an Advisor to the Director, Mr. Lukasz Kolinski, in the European Commission's energy department, focusing on the green transition and market regulation. His work covers energy system integration, renewables, electricity markets, grids, and bioenergy. From 2020 to 2022, he led the Energy and Environment Division at the International Energy Agency (IEA), where he worked on energy sector resilience and supported the IEA's "net zero" initiatives at COP. Previously, Howes has

worked on renewable energy market and grid integration, energy modeling, and energy finance, for both the European Commission and the UK and Australian governments.

Giles Dickson

Giles Dickson is the Chief Executive Officer of WindEurope, a position he has held since 2015. WindEurope is the leading voice of the European wind industry. He also serves as Chairman of the independent advisory council for the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E). Prior to his role at WindEurope, Dickson was Vice President for Global Public Affairs at the French engineering company Alstom from 2008 to 2015. He also worked as a civil servant in the U.K. government from 1992 to 2008, primarily focusing on European affairs. Dickson holds a Bachelor's degree from Brasenose College, Oxford.

Seda Orhan

Seda Orhan is the Renewable Energy Program Manager at Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, a role she has held since February 2024. Previously, she served as the Renewable Energy Campaign Coordinator and Network Development and Outreach Coordinator at CAN Europe. She is also a Board Member of the Renewables Grid Initiative, and has extensive experience in advocacy and network coordination, including as Partnership Manager at Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe and EU Coordinator for Naturefriends International. Orhan holds a Master's degree in Peace and Development Studies from the University of Innsbruck and a Master's in Human Rights from the University of Malta. She is an active advocate for the transition to renewable energy and sustainable development.

Matt Hinde

Matt Hinde is the Head of EU Affairs at National Grid, a position he has held since September 2019. He also serves as a Board Member of the British Chamber of Commerce | EU & Belgium. Prior to joining National Grid, Hinde was Director and Senior Vice-President for Energy at FleishmanHillard in Brussels. He has also worked in senior roles at the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change, including Head of EU Strategy, and as 1st Secretary for Energy at the UK Representation to the EU. Hinde's extensive career also includes experience as a Senior Policy Adviser at the Department of Trade and Industry and as a diplomat for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He studied at Newcastle University and the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

Janina Habethal

Janina Habethal is a Senior Advisor for Political Affairs at TenneT, a role she has held since October 2021. Previously, she served as a Referentin for Bürgerbeteiligung at TenneT from 2016 to 2021. In addition to her work at TenneT, she is a lecturer at Hochschule Osnabrück, where she has been teaching since 2019. Habethal has a background in sustainability and strategic development, having worked at Bremer Energie Konsens GmbH, where she held positions as both a Project Manager and Head of the Corporate Department. She holds an MBA in Sustainability Management from Leuphana University of Lüneburg and a Master's in Media Culture from the University of Bremen.

Anca Cimpeanu

Anca-Iulia Cimpeanu is currently the Deputy-Head of Unit at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy (DG ENER), focusing on Infrastructure and Regional Cooperation. She has been with the European Commission for over 11 years, having previously worked as a Policy Officer and Case Handler in the energy sector. Before joining the Commission, she worked as a Senior Associate at Rubin, Meyer, Doru & Trandafir and has experience as an EU Law Consultant. She holds a Master's degree from the University of Bucharest and a Bachelor's degree from the same

institution. Anca is also a published author on various legal topics, including merger control and competition law.

Rene Tammist

Rene Tammist is currently a Member of the Board at Utilitas Wind, a leading wind energy producer and developer in the region. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration from Tartu University (2001) and a Master's degree in Public Policy and Administration from the University of Manchester. Tammist has extensive experience in the energy sector, having served as a policy advisor to the S&D Group at the European Parliament's Industry, Research and Energy Committee. He was also the Executive Director of the Estonian Renewable Energy Association from 2011 to 2018 and a Board Member of the European Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators. Between 2018 and 2019, he was the Minister of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology in Estonia.

Inna Sovsun

is a Member of Parliament for the "GOLOS" Party in Ukraine, serving in the Verkhovna Rada since 2019. She is also a Senior Lecturer at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. Previously, she was Vice President at the Kyiv School of Economics (2016-2019) and First Deputy Minister of Education and Science (2014-2016), where she led higher education policy and EU cooperation. She holds a Fulbright scholarship from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Master's in European Studies from Lund University. Recognized as one of Ukraine's most successful women, she has been featured in rankings by Novoe Vremya and Focus magazine.

Julian Popov

Julian Popov is a Senior Fellow at Strategic Perspectives and former Minister of the Environment of Bulgaria (2013, 2023-2024). He has served as Bulgaria's Goodwill Ambassador for energy and climate policy, energy security adviser to the President, and Chairman of the Building Performance Institute Europe. Julian is also a Senior Fellow at the European Climate Foundation, a founding Vice Chancellor of New Bulgarian University, and co-founder of the Tunisian School of Politics.

Voted one of the most influential voices in European energy and energy efficiency by EurActiv, his articles have appeared in major outlets like the Financial Times, Project Syndicate, and Al Jazeera. He is the author of two books, including "The European Supergrid" and "Energy and Climate Diplomacy." Julian's experience in energy and climate policy helps shape strategies for tackling global challenges.

Susanne Nies

Susanne is currently the project lead for the Green Deal Ukraine project at Helmholtz Center Berlin. With expertise in electricity, energy, and climate policy, her focus is on Europe, including both the EU and neighboring countries. She holds a PhD and qualifications from the University of Bonn, Sciences Po Paris, and Berlin Free University, along with two economics degrees from the London School of Economics.

Previously, Susanne served as General Manager for Smart Wires, leading operations in Germany and Ukraine, and as Managing Director of Strategy and Communication at ENTSO-E. She has also held key roles at EURELECTRIC and IFRI. Additionally, she has an extensive academic background and has authored several publications. Susanne speaks German, English, French, and Russian fluently and is active in multiple advisory roles, including Fraunhofer IEE and PRO BAHN.

Liron Spindel

Liron Spindel is currently the Head of European Public Affairs at Enel Group, a position he has held since June 2024. He also serves as the Head of Portfolio and Quality Management at Enel's Global Customer Operations, and previously worked as Executive Assistant to the CEO of Enel Group.

Before joining Enel, Liron gained experience in various roles, including in European Affairs and at NSC (an AudioCodes Company), and worked at the Israeli Embassy in Rome. He has been with Enel since 2013 and is active in various industry developments, particularly in energy, and has contributed to several key initiatives in public affairs and energy innovation.

He is an advocate for clean energy and has participated in notable events like the Clean Industrial Deal presentation in Antwerp. Liron is also involved in promoting advancements in solar technology, including the new efficiency record for 3SUN's perovskite-silicon solar cells.

Raquel Mendes

Raquel Mendes is the Head of European Affairs at EDP and a Corporate Diplomacy teacher at ISCSP - Universidade de Lisboa. With over 28 years of experience, she specializes in European Affairs, Political Affairs, Stakeholder Management, and Corporate Communication. She has gained valuable insights into EU-level energy policy, particularly in renewable energy and climate policy, through her work with European institutions.

Raquel has worked across multiple sectors, cooperating with over 20 countries and EU-level networks, and has taught MSc-level students on renewable energy and corporate diplomacy. Her career includes roles as Head of Corporate Affairs at Eurelectric and Director of Corporate Communication & Stakeholders at EDP Renováveis. Raquel is committed to bridging her corporate expertise with academia to address complex, multinational issues in the energy sector.

Christian Zinglensen

Christian Zinglensen is the Director of the European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) since January 2020. ACER plays a critical role in the integration of European power and gas markets, particularly in the context of technological change and the ongoing decarbonization of the energy sector. Christian is passionate about leading high-performance teams and empowering individuals to contribute to the agency's mission.

Before his current role, Christian served as the first Head of the Clean Energy Ministerial Secretariat at the International Energy Agency in Paris. He also held senior positions at the Danish Ministry of Energy, Utilities, and Climate, including Deputy Permanent Secretary and Head of the Department responsible for global climate negotiations. Christian has a background in EU law, having taught it at the University of Copenhagen and worked in the Danish Foreign Service. He holds a Master's in Law from the University of Copenhagen and has completed executive programs at prestigious institutions like IESE Business School and Harvard Kennedy School.

Oyvind Vessia

Øyvind Vessia is the Head of Strategic Regulatory Projects at Ørsted in Denmark. With a strong background in sustainability, engineering, and economics, he has led various multidisciplinary projects and policies aimed at creating a sustainable energy system in Europe. He has worked in roles such as Head of Regulatory Affairs and European Affairs at Ørsted, and Policy Officer at the European Commission, where he focused on renewable energy and climate policies.

He holds an MSc in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). Øyvind is skilled in socio-economic impact assessments, technical

evaluations, and EU policy-making. He is passionate about sustainability and enjoys tackling challenges with an analytical, team-oriented approach.

Christelle Verstraeten

Christelle Verstraeten is the Head of Policy, Communications, and Stakeholder Management at ENTSO-E in Brussels, Belgium, where she leads the organization's policy and communications strategies. She has extensive experience in energy policy, having worked in various roles, including Senior Director of Public Policy at ChargePoint and Director of Government Affairs & Policy at GE, focusing on renewables policy, electricity market design, and energy security.

She has also served as Chair of the Transport, Energy, and Climate Committee at the American Chamber of Commerce to the EU (AmCham EU). Christelle's career has involved working at the International Energy Agency, GE Power Conversion, and Barabino&Partners, among other organizations, contributing significantly to energy policy development across Europe.

Michael Villa

Michael Villa is the Executive Director of smartEn - Smart Energy Europe, a leading association for the Flexible Demand Management Industry. He has over 15 years of experience in EU energy policies, with expertise in energy efficiency, flexibility, electricity market design, smart buildings, and e-mobility. He also serves as the Chair of the Electrification Alliance, a member of the European Commission's Smart Energy Expert Group, and has been involved in various Steering Committees of European clean tech stakeholders. Before joining smartEn, he worked as a Senior Consultant, advising clients across the EU and the Middle East on energy policy and advocacy.

Throughout his career, Michael has held key positions, such as Policy Advisor at the European Alliance to Save Energy and Public Affairs Advisor for Knauf Insulation in Italy. He also contributed to the European Parliament and the Embassy of Italy in Copenhagen during COP15. Michael holds a Master's degree in European Studies from the Institute for European Studies, ULB, and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Relations from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore.

Heymi Bahar

Heymi Bahar is a Senior Analyst at the International Energy Agency (IEA), where he specializes in renewable energy markets and policy. He has been with the IEA for over a decade, contributing to reports on renewable energy market trends and policy developments. In addition to his role at the IEA, Heymi is a lecturer at Sciences Po in Paris, where he shares his expertise in energy and environmental policy. He previously worked as a Policy Analyst at the OECD and a Consultant at The World Bank, focusing on environmental and energy issues.

With a background in Energy, Resources, and Environment from Johns Hopkins University, Heymi has held various roles, including Government Relations/Public Affairs Trainee at Vestas and Research Assistant at the Global Research Institute of International Affairs. He has authored and co-authored several reports and publications, including the "Medium-Term Renewable Energy Market Report" and studies on domestic incentive measures for renewable energy. Fluent in English, French, and Turkish, he brings a global perspective to his work in the energy sector.

Matthieu Ballu

Matthieu Ballu is a Policy Officer at the European Commission, focusing on renewable energy and climate action within DG ENER. He has extensive experience in EU environmental policy, having previously worked at DG CLIMA and the French Permanent Representation to the EU. Matthieu also worked as a consultant at STEFAN SCHEUER Consulting, advising on energy efficiency and

environmental policy. He is actively engaged in the energy transition debate and advocates for sustainable energy solutions.

Karin Thelen

Dr. Karin Thelen is the Managing Director of Regional Energy Transition at Stadtwerke München, where she focuses on decentralized renewable energy, climate, and sustainability. She also serves as the President of the Bundesverband Geothermie e.V. With over two decades of experience in energy, utilities, and life sciences, Dr. Thelen has expertise in business transformation, team leadership, and driving innovation. She has a strong background in quality assurance, R&D, and consulting, and holds advanced degrees in Business Administration and Microbiology from the Technical University of Munich and Tsinghua University.