

## Speaker Biographies

**Olivier Onidi, deputy director-general Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission**



Olivier Onidi has been deputy director-general for security in DG Migration and Home Affairs since 1 December 2016.

Previous to this, he was deputy director-general for migration in the same DG. Mr Onidi joined the European Commission in 1993, where he held several positions, like director of innovative and sustainable mobility or deputy head of cabinet of Commissioner Günther Oettinger. He holds a master of science in international political economy from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

**Charlina Vitcheva, deputy director general of the Joint Research Centre (JRC)**



Charlina Vitcheva was appointed deputy director general of the JRC in September 2016.

Previous to this, she was director of Smart and Sustainable Growth and Southern Europe at DG Regional and Urban Policy, and also held a position in Inclusive Growth, Territorial and Urban Development and Northern Europe.

Before joining the Commission, Charlina spent 15 years in the Bulgarian public administration including at the Permanent Representation in Brussels, dealing mainly with agricultural and fisheries issues.

**Colleen Thouez, Open Society Foundations - International Migration Initiative**



Dr. Colleen Thouez is division director of Welcoming and Integrated Societies at the Open Society International Migration Initiative. Since 2015, she has served as chair to the capacity building portfolio of the World Bank's knowledge partnership on migration. Thouez is also a senior fellow at Columbia University and an adjunct professorial lecturer at American University's School of International Service. In 2018, she helped establish the University Alliance for Refugees and At-Risk Migrants, based at Rutgers University.

Prior to joining the Open Society Foundations, Thouez served for 17 years at the United Nations in various leadership positions in the fields of adult education and international migration. She headed the United Nations Institute for Training and Research from 2004 to 2010. Before working at the United Nations, Thouez served as deputy director of policy research for the Global Commission on International Migration. Since 2013, Thouez has championed the role of cities and universities in welcoming migrants and refugees, which included creating an annual global mayors summit on migration.

**PANEL DEBATE 1:**

**Pierfrancesco Majorino, deputy mayor of Milan for social affairs**



In June 2016, Pierfrancesco Majorino was elected for the third time as member of Milan city council, and was appointed deputy mayor for social affairs, health and rights. During his different mandates as councillor, he worked on fighting poverty and homelessness, developing services for people with disabilities and for elderly people, temporary social residency, protection of people against all forms of discrimination and against gender-based violence, and organisation of the reception of migrants.

Previous to this, in 1998 he was appointed director of the Department of Social Affairs of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

He is the national vice president of the Healthy Cities Network.

**Andreas Germershausen, Berlin Senate commissioner for integration and migration**



Since October 2015, Andreas Germershausen has been appointed by the Berlin Senate as Commissioner for Integration and Migration. He is also leading the Integration Department in the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs.

Previously, Mr Germershausen was involved in questions of international migration and global refugee movements at social science research institutes in Bangkok and Berlin. From 1997 to 2001, he worked at the Asian Research Centre for Migration at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok.

**Giuseppe Mattina, Palermo deputy mayor for integration and participation**



Giuseppe Mattina is the deputy mayor of the city of Palermo, responsible for the areas of integration, solidarity citizenship, right to housing, participation and commons. He is an expert in actions and strategies of social inclusion and in social economy. He worked for the 'Don Calabria' Institute and for the Italian Federation of Organisations for Homeless People. He has worked in the field of social inclusion of vulnerable people, the prevention of addictions and the fight against serious adult exclusion. He is the author of numerous publications on welfare, suburbs, young people and the juvenile penal system. His last publication was 'Entrepreneurship, work and social innovation - Paths to exit from marginality and pathological addictions' published by Carrocci, 2017.

**Lola Lopez, commissioner for immigration, interculturality and diversity of the city of Barcelona**



Born in 1957, Lola Lopez has a degree in history and geography. She is specialist in cultural anthropology and expert on interculturality, coexistence and migrations.

She has been the director of the Centre for African and Intercultural Studies and has worked as a researcher in the same centre since 1990. She is a member of the Board for Diversity in Broadcasting in the framework of the Broadcasting Council of Catalonia and founding member of the Stop Islamophobia (SAFI) group.

She has carried out training and consultancy activities for county councils and municipalities. She is an activist of the Unit Against Fascism and Racism. She has been a member, from the beginning, of the executive commission of the Anti-rumour Network of Barcelona and she has worked in various programmes of the Barcelona city council about coexistence, within the framework of the Barcelona Interculturality Plan. She has extensive experience in research on migration issues and is a member of the Multiculturalism and Gender Group of the University of Barcelona (UB).

**Asher Craig, deputy mayor with responsibility for communities, events and equalities**



Asher has over 30 years' experience as a community activist, leader, management consultant and now politician. She has championed the needs of the voiceless, with a particular emphasis on the social-economic development of black, minority, ethnic and under-represented communities. She has led and chaired a number of major partnerships and organisations at local, regional and national level and has worked in the field of employment & training, education & skills, recruitment, advocacy, equality & diversity within local government and third sector.

Asher was elected as the Labour Councillor for the ward of St George West, Bristol in May 2016 and was appointed to the Cabinet with the wide-reaching portfolio of Neighbourhoods in August 2016.

In March 2017 Asher was asked to step into the newly created role of deputy mayor for communities, bringing into & elevating the issue of public health as part of this new portfolio.

**Michel LeVoy, director of Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)**



Michele LeVoy joined PICUM in 2002 and became director in 2006. She serves on several boards and advisory committees, including Social Platform; Global Coalition of Migration; Civil Society Days of the Global Forum on Migration and Development; and the Women in Migration Network. In the past 14 years, Michele has supported and helped undocumented women in Belgium who are struggling to have basic access to healthcare, are victims of home abuse or have faced exploitation at work places. She holds a bachelor's degree in French and justice and peace studies

and a master's in applied sciences (Housing and Development Programme).

**Namarig Abkr, European Migrant Advisory Board**



Born in Darfur in 1992, Namarig Abkr studied water and environmental engineering. During her study she was politically active and participated in different students' movements. She also worked on the empowerment of women and youth in Darfur. Now a refugee in Germany, she is part of the European Migrants Advisory Board, and is still involved in anti-racism activism and women empowerment through football.

**PANEL DEBATE 2:**

**Eleftherios Papagiannakis, Athens deputy mayor for migrants, refugees and municipal decentralisation**



After the completion of his studies in France, Eleftherios worked in the European Parliament as a parliamentary assistant. Since then he has also worked on the education of the Muslim minority in Greece (in Thrace) and as a legal counsellor for the political party Ecologist Greens and the special secretariat on environmental inspection. He was elected to the municipal council of Athens in September 2014 and named vice mayor on migrant and refugee affairs in March 2016. He is the chair of the working group migration and integration of EUROCITIES and vice president for refugee issues of ECCAR (European Coalition of Cities against Racism) and president of the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant & Refugees issues.



**Thomas Fabian, Leipzig Deputy Mayor for social affairs**

Prof Dr Thomas Fabian was born in 1955 in Bonn, Germany and spent his childhood in Beirut, Kabul and Porto before graduating from secondary school in Osterholz-Scharmbeck near Bremen, Germany. He worked as a community work assistant in Renfrew (near Glasgow, Scotland) in 1977-78. In 1985 he received his Diploma in Psychology and in 1992 his PhD at the University of Bremen. From 1994 - 2006 he was professor of psychology at the Department of Social Work of the Leipzig University of Applied Sciences. From 2004 - 2006 he was a city councillor, for the city of Leipzig before being elected deputy mayor of the city of Leipzig (Department of Youth, Social Affairs, Health and Schools) in 2006, a position

to which he was re-elected in 2013. From 2012-2016 he served as vice-chair and chair of the Social Affairs Forum of EUROCITIES.

**Anna Terrón, director of the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies and expert on migration**



Anna Terrón Cusí is currently director of the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies and expert on migration. She has been appointed Special Advisor to Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom on migration and Mediterranean issues. She previously served as secretary of state for immigration of the government of Spain and secretary for the European Union of the Generalitat de Catalunya and the Catalan government delegate to the European Union. She has also been a member of the Committee of the Regions, as spokeswoman in the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs. For two terms, she was a member of the European Parliament, serving as spokeswoman for the Socialist Group in the Committee on Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home

Affairs.

**Laura Corrado, head of unit Legal Migration and Integration, Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission**



Laura Corrado has been working since 2001 at the European Commission, where she has been dealing with a variety of issues related mainly to justice and home affairs policies (Schengen, borders and visa policies, data protection, immigration). She is currently the head of the Legal Migration and Integration Unit in DG Migration and Home Affairs. She graduated from International Law at the University of Perugia (Italy) and afterwards obtained a master's in European political and administrative studies at the College of Europe in Bruges (Belgium). Before joining the Commission, she worked as assistant in international law and international organisation at the University of Perugia and then as researcher and lecturer on EU-related matters at the

European Institute of Public Administration in Maastricht (The Netherlands).

**Raquel Cortes Herrera, deputy head of unit Disability & Inclusion, Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission**



Raquel Cortes-Herrera is a lawyer working for the European Commission since 2003. She is currently deputy head of unit in DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, where she is mainly responsible for the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups (which includes people with migrant background, Roma communities, children in a situation of poverty, and homelessness and housing exclusion) and for civil dialogue on social policy issues. Previously, she worked in the Commission's Secretariat-General (2009-2016) and in DG Competition (2003-2009). Before joining the Commission, she worked as assistant professor of International Public Law, International Economic Law and European Union Law at the Balearic Islands University (Mallorca, Spain) and in the

European Affairs office of the Balearic Islands Government. She is fluent in Catalan, Spanish, English and French and has basic knowledge of Italian and German.

**Roland Schilling, regional deputy representative, UNHCR Regional Office Italy**



Roland Schilling took up his post as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) deputy regional representative for Southern Europe in Rome in September 2014. He arrived in Italy after five years in London as the Refugee Agency's representative for the United Kingdom. Before that he served as deputy representative in Ankara, Turkey where he supported the government in the establishment of a refugee status determination system.

As senior programme officer for UNHCR in Sri Lanka from 1998-2002, Roland Schilling supported the coordination of the UN humanitarian work following the tsunami. Before that he worked for UNHCR as deputy

representative in Berlin, Germany, Head of Office in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, and held positions in Sana'a, Yemen and Hong Kong.

**Sandra Paola Alvarez, project development officer, International Organisation for Migration**



Sandra Paola Alvarez Tinajero, is currently project development officer for the Mediterranean at the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). In this capacity she develops and strengthens collaboration and partnerships with numerous stakeholders for the design and development of regional, inter-regional, and international projects in a wide range of thematic areas. She also coordinates research conducted in Italy under various IOM initiatives; strengthens cooperation with multilateral agencies based in Rome; and provides technical support to relevant government counterparts on migration and development issues. Previously, she was migration and development specialist at IOM headquarters in Geneva.

Sandra Paola has a background in anthropology and sociology of development and education.