



**WILD**  
**EUROPE**

# Conference for protection of old growth forest in Europe

**Biography List**

13/09/2017

## **Biographies of speakers, session chairs and workshop coordinators**

**Hanna Aho** is a climate and forest campaigner at Brussels based environmental NGO Fern and works on forest climate impacts and climate policy. She has formerly worked on climate policy in Finland for the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation. Before that she worked on environmental communications and research. Her background is in ecology and evolutionary biology and she is a Master of Science from the University of Helsinki.

**Isabelle Anatole-Gabriel** is Chief of the Europe and North America Unit at the World Heritage Centre since January 2016. She is Alumna of the Ecole Nationale du Patrimoine and holds a Ph.D. in history of international heritage and three M.A., in Museums Studies, Archaeology and History. A curator by training, she joined UNESCO in 1990. She served as Program Specialist in the Culture Sector, Liaison officer of UNESCO Culture Office in Venice, and as author and coordinator for the World Culture Reports. She also held positions with the Governing Bodies as Secretary of the Culture Commission at the General Conference and the Special Committee of the Executive Board. She was a scholar of the Rockefeller Humanities Residencies for Research, New York University (1999), and Guest Scholar at the Getty Conservation Institute (2003). She is a member of ICOM since 1982.

**Toby Aykroyd's** background prior to 2002 involved economic development, political lobbying and business management. He is founder of the Wild Europe initiative; co-founder and former chairman of the Population and Sustainability Network. He was chairman of the Funding Support Group for the BBC Wildlife Fund, which financed 87 projects worldwide from broadcasts fronted by David Attenborough (disbanded). He was Chief Executive of the UK Small Firms Lead Body and Co-Founder of the Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative, under contract to the UK government to develop national standards for SME business management and counseling. He initially worked with the United Nations Development Programme in Central America. Educated at Cambridge University (MA in geography and economics), with an MSc in Business Administration.

**Annemarie Backstrup-Birk** has more than 20 years of professional experience on forests and forestry issues. She has been strongly involved in the assessments of forest resources, coordinating the monitoring of forest habitats and ecosystems. She is currently responsible for the development of indicators of naturalness and high nature forest area (incl. old growth forest) and forest assessments related to biodiversity, the mapping and assessment of forest ecosystem services and impacts of environmental pressures on forest ecosystems (e.g. climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation).

**Luc Bas** is the Director of the IUCN European Regional Office in Brussels representing IUCN to the EU Institutions and providing leadership and guidance for all activities with IUCN Government and NGO members in the European context. This includes informing decision making through IUCN Red Lists, Protected Area management, Natural Capital. Prior to this, he was European Director of The Climate Group in Brussels, working with business and government to reach more ambitious EU climate policies. As International Director of The Climate Group's States and Regions Alliance, he established one of the most significant networks of sub-national governments on tackling climate change. He holds a Masters degree in industrial engineering and postgraduate degrees in both environmental science and international politics. Luc also worked as adviser on international sustainable development policies for both the Belgian Federal and Flemish Governments

**Kees Bastmeijer** is Professor of Nature Conservation and Water Law at Tilburg University (The Netherlands) and has been appointed as Visiting Professor at the School of Business, Economics and Law at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden (2016-19). His research focuses on the role of international, European, and domestic law in protecting nature. He has a special interest in nature conservation in the Polar Regions, relationships between law and philosophical human-nature attitudes, property rights and nature, and the role of law in protecting wilderness. His most recent book resulted from a collaboration project of 30 experts on the legal protection of wilderness in Europe: Kees Bastmeijer (ed), *Wilderness Protection in Europe: The Role of International, European and National Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

**Roby Bewer**, born in 1957, he has been a member of the municipal council of Bettembourg since 1994 until now, and Mayor of Bettembourg from 2004 to 2011. Since 2000 he has been President of SICONA (a association of municipalities active in nature conservation and management of Natura 2000 sites). Since 2012 he has been President of natur&mwelt (nature and environment), the largest national nature protection NGO. Since 2002 he has also been President of "Bettembourg helps", an NGO active in cooperation and development in developing countries. He has been a member of the Committee of the regions since 2014 (member of the Bureau, the ENVE and NAT commissions and since July 2017 1rst vice-president of the ENV commission)

**Neil Birnie** is the CEO of Conservation Capital, a specialist organisation focused on building commercial businesses that actively support nature conservation. Working with partners, Conservation Capital has mobilised and structured more than \$240 million of finance into business-driven conservation projects across 25 countries. Conservation Capital helps governments, local

communities and private landowners to build sustainable business plans for critical conservation areas. Conservation Capital also supports the design, development and management of conservation impact investment funds – including the first in both Europe (Rewilding Europe Capital) and Africa (Umiliki Investments). Prior to joining Conservation Capital, Neil worked in European law and environmental policy within various EU institutions. He then co-founded the multi-award winning nature travel company Wilderness Scotland, twice recognised as the 'World's Best Green Tour Operator'.

**Michael Brombacher** heads the Europe Department of the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) since 2011. The work of FZS in Europe focuses on safeguarding large-scale wilderness areas in the temperate part of Europe. Before he he joined FZS Michael Brombacher worked for ten years in Central Asia where he was leading the work on BirdLife Partner support and development in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as well as the identification of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in these countries. Michael Brombacher graduated as a Geo-Ecologist (Diplom Geoökologe) at Potsdam University in Germany.

**Daniel Calleja** has been Director General of DG Environment since September 2015. He was previously Director General of DG Enterprise and Industry, Special Envoy for SMEs and Deputy Director General of DG Enterprise and Industry, in charge of internal markets for goods, competitiveness and innovation, SMEs and entrepreneurship, international negotiations and tourism. As Director for Air Transport at the European Commission he successfully negotiated, on behalf of the E.U., the EU-US Open Skies Agreement. Between 1999 and 2004, he was Head of Cabinet of the Vice-president of the European Commission, Mrs. Loyola de Palacio. Between 1995 and 1999, he was the Head of Cabinet for Commissioner Marcelino Oreja. In 1995, he was the legal adviser in the Cabinet of the President of the European Commission. Between 1993 and 1994, he advised the Transport Commissioner. Between 1986 and 1993, he was Member of the Legal Service of the Commission. He is the author of several publications. He has lectured in European Law in several universities and institutes of various Member States, and has a degree in Law and in Business Administration from the University of Comillas, Madrid.

**Ben Delbaere** is an ecologist with an eye for business. Love for nature is in his genes and approaching it with a creative twist is what he likes. Ben has an MSc in Botany/Conservation (University of Antwerp), and an MSc in Human Ecology/ Environmental Impact Assessment (Free University of Brussels). After some years as research assistant he worked for over 20 years at ECNC – European Centre for Nature Conservation. Here he developed his broad range of skills and interests in biodiversity-related policy, science-policy-

practice interaction, communication, indicators, project management, information platforms, stakeholder engagement (certified facilitator), and desk studies. Ben contributed to 80 publications, gave over 100 presentations and chaired and facilitated international groups, ranging in size from 5 to 700 participants. Since 2017 Ben works as a self-employed professional at Delbaere Consulting.

**Sini Eräjää**, EU Bioenergy Policy Officer with BirdLife Europe, works on EU policies for more sustainable use and production of bioenergy with BirdLife Europe, based in Brussels and engaging in advocacy, research and campaigning on bioenergy. BirdLife Europe is a Partnership of 48 national conservation organisations and a leader in bird and nature conservation. She holds a degree in ecology and environmental management and has researched the ecological impacts of wood fuel harvesting. She has previously worked for environmental organisations in Finland in the fields of forest conservation and management, climate change and communications projects, as well as for the Taiga Rescue Network and for the Ministry of Environment in Finland.

**Viktar Fenchuk** currently runs a conservation programme at Bielaviežskaja pušča National Park (Belarusian part of the famous Bialowieza Forest). It is a joint programme financed by Frankfurt Zoological Society and implemented jointly with APB-BirdLife Belarus and the National park. Viktar is the former CEO of the largest nature conservation NGO in Belarus – APB, the BirdLife International national partner, and has a long-term commitment to rewilding and wilderness conservation.

**Eladio Fernandez-Galiano**, ecologist and environmentalist by training, graduated in Biology in June 1976 and for nine years occupied different teaching and research positions in the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, where he obtained a PhD in Ecology in 1980 and was appointed lecturer in Ecology from 1980, obtaining in 1985 a post as research fellow and assistant professor in Ecology. In May 1985 he joined the Council of Europe where he has worked since mainly on environment, disaster risk reduction and inter-cultural issues, starting as Secretary of a European Wildlife Convention (Bern Convention) and Head of the Division of Biological Diversity. Among the instruments he helped prepare in his Council of Europe career were the European Landscape Convention and over a hundred recommendations and policy documents on risk management and environmental protection. His main fields of competence are conservation and management of biological diversity, protection of threatened species and ecological networks,

**Theresa Frei** is a researcher at the Resilience Programme of the European Forest Institute in Bonn, Germany. She holds a Bachelor's degree in forestry and graduated from the University of Freiburg with a master's degree in

environmental governance in 2017. Since 2013, she worked in different research projects on Natura 2000, illegal logging politics and the use of wood for energy in the EU. In 2017, she joined EFI where she works on land abandonment and natural expansion of forests in Europe.

**Steffen Fritz** is the Leader of the Earth Observation Systems (EOS) Group in IIASA's Ecosystem Services and Management (ESM) Program. He joined IIASA in 2007, and since then he has become the initiator and driving force behind the Geo-Wiki.org and the Geo-Wiki mobile, a global land cover validation tool that aims to investigate and reduce the uncertainties in global land cover data using crowdsourcing. He is the Principal Investigator of the ERC funded "CrowdLand" and EC-H2020 funded LandSense projects. His research interests include wild land mapping, citizen science, earth observation, crowdsourcing, serious games, volunteered geographical information, land-use and land cover, food security, global and regional vegetation monitoring and crop yield and crop acreage estimations of agricultural crops.

**David Gehl** is Eurasia Program Coordinator of Forest Campaigns For the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) based in Washington DC. He is responsible for developing and implementing strategies to halt illegal logging and associated trade in the Eurasia region (China, Japan, Russia, and Romania) and collaborating with civil society partners to document illegal logging and forest conversion. His work includes conducting analyses of forest, land and agricultural policy and designing policy reform strategies with civil society organizations in the region to address these issues. Since joining EIA in 2011, David has coordinated investigative work around the world on illegal logging and chemicals, gathering, analyzing, and processing evidence and drafting and presenting policy recommendations.

**Bernhard Kohler**, born in 1960 in Vienna, Austria, studied Zoology & Botany at Vienna University with a focus on ornithology. He has worked with WWF Austria since 1991, and is currently leading the Protected Areas and Forest Team of WWF Austria, with a special focus on wilderness and non-intervention management.

**Zoltán Kun** studied forestry and graduated as landscape architect in 1996. He then worked at WWF Hungary as a coordinator of field project and was

responsible for reintroducing beaver in Hungary. He subsequently worked for PAN Parks Foundation as its conservation manager, developing its verification. In 2002 Zoltan was appointed director. His main achievements included the successful lobby for the European Parliament's special resolution on wilderness. Zoltan currently works for VTK Innosystem Ltd a Hungarian consultancy company specialised on water management, Natura 2000

assessment and environmental advising. He is currently also working with the Wild Europe initiative and a co-founder of the European Wilderness Society.

**Ana Marin** holds a European-mention PhD in Environmental Science, an MSc in regional planning and a BSc in Environmental Sciences. Her academic career is focused on environmental assessment and protection issues. Since 2012, she has been a member of the European Topic Centre of the University of Malaga (ETC-UMA) that is partner of the European Topic Centre on Urban, Land and Soil Systems (ETC-ULS). She has been involved in EEA activities with the ETC supporting the European Environment Agency with Pan-European ecosystem assessment, focusing on indicator development and territorial assessment at European scale. Additionally, she has written several scientific papers and has co-authored EEA and MAES technical reports

**Matthew McLuckie** is a partner at Conservation Capital and specialises in the fields of conservation finance, protected area revenue planning and associated enterprise governance. Over the past five years he has worked in natural contexts across 11 European countries and raised direct enterprise financing into over 19 businesses for forestry, habitat restoration, tourism, natural products and livestock sectors. He recently co-led and completed a Euro 6 million loan from the European Investment Bank, the first through the Natural Capital Financing Facility which works to implement EU Birds and Habitats Directives and other LIFE Environment objectives. One of his roles is as investment manager of Rewilding Europe Capital, a debt fund mandated to finance selective forestry and the protection of natural forests.

**Ladislav Miko** is Deputy Director-General for Food Safety of the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission, since January 2011. His portfolio covers issues of food safety throughout the whole food chain, including e.g. plant and animal health, pesticides, biotechnology, food hygiene, nutrition, or food sustainability. From 2005 – 2010 he was Director for Nature, in the Directorate-General for Environment of the European Commission, responsible for the Directorate-General's work on nature and biodiversity, agriculture, soils and forests. He initiated, among others, policies related to economic valuation of ecosystem assets (TEEB), green infrastructure, invasive alien species, wilderness protection (chair of Wild Europe initiative), and a special program to support biodiversity conservation and solve climate change impacts (BEST) in European Overseas Territories. During the Czech Presidency to EU Council in 2009 he was Minister of Environment of the Czech interim government. Before that, he was Deputy Minister in the Czech Ministry for Environment and prior, he worked as a soil biologist in Slovak Academy of Sciences. He has published over 50 scientific papers, and his scientific work is ongoing and he is published broadly in popular press. He holds a doctorate in zoology and

ecology and is Associate Professor of Prague University of Life Sciences and Guest Professor at University of Antwerp. He is former member of the Board of Charles University in Prague.

**Martin Mikoláš** Ph.D (1986) grew up under the Fatra Mountains in Slovakia and since his childhood has spent a lot of time in the Carpathian wilderness. During his studies he established Prales, an NGO focused on forest conservation under which a full inventory of old-growth forests in Slovakia was conducted. Currently he is active on several research projects and conservation activities across Central and Eastern Europe, specialized on mountain forests and capercaillie. Currently he is a researcher at the Department of Forest Ecology, Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences, Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague

**Bill Murphy** was the Head of Recreation, Environment and Public Goods with Coillte, the Irish State Forest Agency, until June 2015 with responsibility for the company's recreation and environmental programmes. In that role he initiated the Wild Nephin Wilderness project and was the first Chair of the Wild Nephin Management board. Bill is a professional forester with a masters degree in forest recreation from University College, Dublin and now works as a free lance recreation consultant and wilderness advocate. Bill is pursuing an Master of Literature in wilderness at the National University of Ireland. Bill's other interests include volunteer trail work, hiking, painting and splitting and stacking firewood!

**Stephen Prior** is the former head of an independent secondary school in Zimbabwe who discovered a second vocation through his Durham University MBA dissertation. During his research into the potential for a domestic forest carbon market Stephen met James Hepburne Scott, who had submitted the original research idea to Durham, and the pair co-founded Forest Carbon in 2006. The company has gone on to enable the planting 5.7 million trees in the UK through its corporate partners' carbon mitigation programmes, and has lead the way in developing, trialling and implementing the UK government backed Woodland Carbon Code assurance standard. Stephen is also using his experience in the UK's voluntary carbon market to support the government in the development of further domestic payment for ecosystem services activities – including currently a quality assurance standard for peatland restoration carbon projects.

**Humberto Delgado Rosa** is the Director for Natural Capital, DG Environment, European Commission. Previously he was Director for Mainstreaming Adaptation and Low Carbon Technology in DG Climate Action. He is experienced in European and international environmental policy, particularly in biodiversity and climate change issues. He served as Secretary of State for the Environment of the Portuguese Government from March 2005 to June

2011. Between 1995 and 2002 he was an advisor for environmental matters to the Prime-Minister of Portugal. He holds a PhD in Evolutionary Biology. H. Delgado Rosa was born in Lisbon in 1960.

**Francesco Maria Sabatini** is a Marie-Sklódowska Curie Research Fellow in the Conservation Biogeography lab at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. He graduated with his PhD in Ecology in 2014 at Sapienza, University of Rome. His research focuses on understanding the relationships between forest structure and vegetation biodiversity especially in undisturbed, old-growth forests. He is currently working on the EU-funded project FORESTS and CO: 'Co-Benefits and Conflicts between CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration and biodiversity conservation in European Forests'. He has recently established an informal network of forest researchers aimed at mapping old-growth forests in Europe, and is currently working on the assessment of the trade-offs and benefits among biodiversity conservation and the provisioning of different ecosystem services in European forests. He authored 13 scientific articles in peer-reviewed, international journals.

**Katharina Schabasser** studied Political Science and International Development at the University of Vienna. She started to work in the field of development cooperation and was employed at the NGO Kindernothilfe Österreich, where she was responsible for the department for donor relations. Since November 2016 she has worked at JAF-Group. She is the Corporate Social Responsibility Officer, in charge of the development of JAF-Groups sustainability strategy as well as FSC and PEFC certification of the Group. She also coordinate their stakeholder strategy

**Matthias Schickhofer**, campaign and communications consultant, journalist and photographer, was born in 1967 (Northern Austria), grew up in "Waldviertel" (forest county), studied at University Vienna (psychology). His early activism opposed road construction, traffic born pollution from 1988 to 1991. He then spent 17 years with Greenpeace (AT, CEE, Int'l), as campaigner, campaign/communications director (1996 - 2002), as programme director (2002-2007) and as international communications manager and campaign unit head (GMO-campaign, 2007 - 2008). Since 2008 he has been busy with supporting numerous NGOs in different countries, as campaign / communications consultant. He has published books about primeval forests in Austria, and in the Heart of Europe ("Unser Urwald", 2015), both with Brandstaetter Publishing House (Vienna). In October 2017 a new book "Schwarzbuch Alpen" will be published. Websites: [supportingchange.org](http://supportingchange.org), [schickhofer-photography.com](http://schickhofer-photography.com), [saveparadiseforests.eu](http://saveparadiseforests.eu)

**Erika Stanciu**, with a forestry background and 12 years of experience in this domain in Romania, worked in the past twenty years mainly in the field of nature conservation, focused on protected areas and forests. In 2016 she was

part of the Romanian technocratic government, acting as State Secretary of Forests and, for a short time State Secretary for Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Areas in the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests. She is fighting for the protection of old growth and primeval forests and for the responsible management of forests in and outside protected areas. As part of the ProPark Foundation, where she is now working, Erika is involved in projects and activities aiming to improve the professional competencies of protected area managers, foresters and others directly or indirectly involved in nature conservation. Protection of primeval forests, old growth forests and wilderness is on the top of her list of "to do"s since the very early stages of her professional life.

**Bart Steen** was educated at the European School in Bergen, where he specialized in science. His subsequent BSc in Utrecht was in Biology, with a strong emphasis on Ecology. After this, he continued my studies as MSc in Conservation and Systems Biology. He has lived in the Netherlands, Finland (where I learned about Old Growth Forests), South Africa, Sweden, Canada and Italy. At the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, he mapped and modelled the distribution patterns of Invasive Alien Species. His other working experiences are on ecosystem services at Wageningen University and Wetlands International, focusing on NGO capacity to guide large companies in accounting for the value of nature in their activities.

**Daniel Vallauri**, PhD in Forest Ecology, is forest program officer of WWF France. He deals at national and international levels with forest conservation, responsible and close-to-nature forestry (Europe) and forest landscape restoration (Mediterranean basin, Madagascar, New-Caledonia). Old-growth forests of Europe and primary forests of the tropics were an inspiring reference for his work. Among recent achievements is the development of a method to evaluate ecological qualities of ancient forest of the Mediterranean region. He is author of more than 20 international scientific publications, editor or co-editor of 5 books and organised 3 francophone conferences on related topics (on deadwood conservation, 2004; on relationship between biodiversity and naturalness, 2008; on management of forest & river naturalness, 2013).

**Nikolay Vasilev** is Chief Expert on strategic planning, projects, monitoring and reporting for the Executive Forest Agency of Bulgaria Born on 5th of April 1978, he graduated from the University of Forestry in 2003 with an MSc in Forest utilization and forestry economics. After a short period in the private sector, Mr. Vasilev worked in the state forest administration, being junior, senior, chief expert and head of department. His main responsibilities are connected with strategic planning, forestry science, the development implementation and reporting of EU projects, etc. He is a Member of the

Union of the Bulgarian Foresters with internships in Spain and China. He speaks English, Russian and German.

**Catherine Weller** is head of the Biodiversity programme for ClientEarth, a non-profit environmental law organisation, which includes projects relating to marine and terrestrial conservation as well as work on chemicals regulation. She previously led the work on various aspects of the implementation of the EU Habitats Directive. She is a qualified solicitor in England and Wales and is based in London. Catherine joined ClientEarth in 2011 as a lawyer in the Climate & Forests team where, among other projects, she followed the revision of the EU Directive on public procurement. She transitioned into the Biodiversity team in late 2014. Before joining ClientEarth, Catherine was an associate in the environmental law team at Allen & Overy.

**Virginia Young** is currently Director of the International Forests and Climate Programme for the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society (ARCS) and a member of the steering committee of an international, science based collaborative initiative called IntAct – focused on increasing global attention on the imperative to protect Earth’s primary forests. She has led innovative conservation programs in Australia and was awarded the Wild Magazine ‘Environmentalist of the Year’ in 2001 for her work to protect Australia’s forests and recognized as one of 20 global visionaries by the Wild Foundation in. Until recently Virginia was the Managing Director of Forests Alive Pty Ltd, an Australian company that helped landowners deliver a financial return from the carbon value of protecting natural forests for their climate and biodiversity benefits.

**Marcus Waldherr** runs the project coordination for the European Beech Forest Network, working since 2011 at the Faculty of forest and Environment, Centre for Econics and Ecosystem Management in Eberswalde University. There he has also undertaken studies on management of the World Heritage Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Ancient Beech Forests of Germany. He has a BSc in International Forest Ecosystem Management and an MSc in Global Change Management.