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ANNIVERSARY

**CONGRESS**  
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# GUEST SPEAKERS



TOGETHER FOR A  
**FAIR DEAL**  
FOR WORKERS

# SPEAKERS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)



## Olaf Scholz

Olaf Scholz is the Federal Chancellor of Germany. He was Germany's Federal Minister of Finance between March 2018 and December 2021, and was Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs from 2007 to 2009. He was the First Mayor of Hamburg between 2011 and 2018 and served as an Interior Senator in Hamburg from May 2001 until October 2001. He has held several senior positions in the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and its Parliamentary Group. Chancellor Scholz's official CV is available [here](#).



## Yusra Mardini

Yusra Mardini is an Olympic swimmer, UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador, and the subject of the critically acclaimed Netflix film *The Swimmers*. Born and raised in Damascus, Syria, Yusra Mardini and her sister Sara Mardini reached Germany after fleeing the civil war in 2015. She participated in the 2016 Olympics and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as part of the Refugee Olympic Team. Yusra Mardini was appointed the youngest-ever UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador in 2017 and, in this role, she advocates for over 90 million refugees and internally displaced people around the world. Her memoir *Butterfly: From Refugee to Olympian – My Story of Rescue, Hope and Triumph* was published in 2018. She recently established the Yusra Mardini Foundation, a charitable organisation, which will support young people and refugees through sports programmes and humanitarian assistance.



## Pedro Marques

Pedro Marques is a Member of the European Parliament and Vice President of its S&D Group. He is a full member of the Parliament's Committees on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Foreign Affairs, and a member of its Sub-Committee on Fiscal Affairs. He was the Portuguese Minister of Planning and Infrastructure between 2015 and 2019 and was previously an advisor to the Portuguese Minister for Labour and Solidarity.



### **Terry Reintke**

Terry Reintke is Co-President of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament, where she has been a member since 2014. She sees the green transition of the European economy as the most important goal, including a massive boost in renewable energies to slow down climate change and become independent of autocratic regimes. She wants to link this to social justice and to put strengthening of workers' rights and protection at the centre, especially in low-wage sectors.



### **Martin Schirdewan**

Martin Schirdewan is Co-President of DIE LINKE and was previously Co-President of THE LEFT in the European Parliament. He has been a Member of the European Parliament since November 2017 and was previously the head of the office of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Brussels and the Liaison Office in Athens, with responsibility for the establishment of the Liaison Office in Madrid. Between 2008 and 2014 he was Coordinator of the Action Group EAST of the Conference of Parliamentary Party Chairs of DIE LINKE.



### **Markus Beyrer**

Markus Beyrer has been Director General of BusinessEurope since 2013. Prior to that he was Chief Executive of the Austrian Industry Holding ÖIAG, Director General of the Federation of Austrian Industries (IV) and Director for Economic Affairs with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber. Before this, he was Chief Economic Advisor to Wolfgang Schüssel, the Federal Chancellor of the Republic of Austria.



### **Evelyn Regner**

Evelyn Regner is Vice-President of the European Parliament. She is a representative of the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) and has been a Member of the European Parliament since 2009. As a trade unionist, Evelyn Regner's main focus has always been on labour-related affairs, namely the improvement of workers' rights and the reduction of unemployment. She dedicates her work to fighting for more tax justice and to reduce inequalities in Europe with special attention to achieving gender equality.



### **Oliver Röpke**

Oliver Röpke was elected President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in April 2023. He has been a member of the EESC since 2009 and was President of its Workers' Group, a member of the EESC Bureau, and rapporteur of many EESC resolutions and opinions. Oliver Röpke headed the Brussels office of the Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB) where he held several senior positions including representative to the EU institutions, member of the ETUC Executive Committee, and advisory member of the ÖGB federal executive board.



### **Lucie Studničná**

Lucie Studničná is the President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Workers' Group since 2023, having been its Vice President since 2020 and member of the EESC since 2010. She has been International Secretary of ČMKOS for nine years. Before that, she was the International Secretary of OS KOVO (1999-2014) and was head of the union's International Department from 1992 to 1996.



### **Nicolas Schmit**

Nicolas Schmit was appointed European Commissioner responsible for Jobs and Social Rights in December 2019. Prior to this, and following a long career of public service in his native Luxembourg, he took up a six-year term as Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the EU in 1998. In 2004, he was appointed Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs and Immigration. From 2009 to 2018, he held the position of Minister for Labour and Employment in the Luxembourgish Government. He served as a Member of the European Parliament for the social-democratic Lëtzebuurger Sozialistesche Aarbechterpartei following his election in May 2019.



### **Dennis Radtke**

Dennis Radtke became a member of the European Parliament for the CDU (Christian Democratic Union of Germany) in 2017. He is a member of the Committee for Employment and Social Affairs and a deputy member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy. Since July 2019, he has been coordinator of the European People's Party (EPP) for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. He is a member of the Christian Democratic Employees' Association and is deputy district chairman of the CDU Ruhr. In March 2023 Dennis Radtke was elected President of the European Union of Christian Democratic Workers (EUCDW).



### **Agnes Jongerius**

Agnes Jongerius is a Dutch Member of the European Parliament and a former trade union leader. She is employment and social affairs spokesperson for the parliament's Socialist and Democrats (S&D) group. Agnes Jongerius has been a strong voice for workers' rights, focussing on issues like social dumping, fair minimum wages, and the gig economy. She has pushed for stronger protections for workers across the EU. She has also been a proponent of social dialogue, and has worked to ensure that workers and their representatives have a seat at the table when important decisions affecting their lives and livelihoods are being made.



### **Stefan Löfven**

Stefan Löfven was Prime Minister of Sweden between 2014 and 2021, and Leader of the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP) from 2012 to 2021. He led SAP to victory at both the 2014 and 2018 Swedish general elections and was elected President of the Party of European Socialists in October 2022. As Prime Minister, he was the driving force behind the proclamation and signing of the European Pillar of Social Rights at the Gothenburg Social Summit in 2017. He worked as a welder before becoming a trade union representative. He was President of the Swedish union IF Metal from 2006 to 2012.



### **Sara Matthieu**

Sara Matthieu is a Belgian Member of the European Parliament. Elected in 2020, she is coordinator of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, and is an active member in the Committees of International Trade and Environmental Affairs. She works mainly on circular economy issues including eco-design and social themes like protection against asbestos, protection of workers, minimum income and due diligence. She has held positions at Natuurpunt and the cabinet of Brussels Mobility Minister Bruno De Lille. An active member of the Belgian women's movement, she has been a city councillor in Ghent, where the Greens are in the majority, since 2013.



### **Hubertus Heil**

Hubertus Heil has been Germany's Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs since March 2018. Having studied political science, he is particularly committed to using his office to give everyone the chance to lead a self-determined life, while providing protection and security in times of change. Since December 2019, he has been Deputy Chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), of which he has been a member since 1988. Since 1998, he has also represented the Gifhorn-Peine constituency in Lower Saxony with a direct mandate in the German Bundestag.



### **Gilbert F. Hougbo**

Gilbert F. Hougbo is the first African to be elected Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO). He took up the role in October 2022. He previously served as President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and Deputy Director-General for Field Operations and Partnerships at the ILO. Between 2008 and 2012, Gilbert F. Hougbo was Prime Minister of Togo. Prior to that he held several posts at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) following several years in the private sector and three years serving as Director of Finance at the International Bank of Mali. He chairs UN-Water, the UN coordination mechanism for water and sanitation, and IS Chair of the Board of the Natural Resource Governance Institute.



### **Noureddine Tabboubi**

Noureddine Tabboubi was elected Secretary General of the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) in January 2017 and re-elected in February 2022. He is a member of the ITUC executive board. He was formerly Secretary General of the Trade Union Confederation of Arab Maghreb Workers, a member of the ITUC Africa General Council, and President of the National Council for Social Dialogue. He has held senior positions in the Regional Union of Tunis and the Federal Section of Agriculture of Greater Tunis.



### **Ursula von der Leyen**

Ursula von der Leyen was elected as President of the European Commission in 2019. As the head of the European executive, she has defined six headline ambitions for Europe for her mandate: a European Green Deal, a Europe fit for the digital age, an economy that works for people, a stronger Europe in the world, promoting our European way of life, and a new push for European democracy. Before 2019, Ursula von der Leyen was Minister at federal level in Germany for more than 14 years and was responsible for family, then labour and social affairs, and later defence.



### **Rafael Freire**

Rafael Freire is General Secretary of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA). A sociologist, Rafael Freire has worked as TUC's Secretary for Economic Policy and Sustainable Development before he was first elected as General Secretary in 2019. He held a range of senior posts in the Central Workers Union (CUT), including National Secretary for Organization and International Affairs, and with the National Confederation of Education Workers of Brazil (CNTE). He was General Secretary of the Coordinator of the Southern Cone Trade Union Coordinating Body between 2003 and 2005.



### **Maxim Poznyakov**

Maxim Poznyakov became a youth trainer and deputy chair of the Belarusian Independent Trade Union of miners and chemical workers (BITU) in 2012 and was elected as the union's chairperson in 2019. In May 2022, the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) Council elected Maxim Poznyakov as its Acting Chairperson after the detention of more than 20 BKDP leaders and activists by the State Security Committee. He is also currently the Executive Director of Association Solidarnast, which was founded by trade unionists forced by State repression to leave Belarus.



### **Shafer Saed**

Shafer Saed is Secretary-General of Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions. He has been engaged in trade union work since 1978 and has extensive experience and skills in the areas of social protection, collective negotiations and elections, drafting collective agreements, occupational safety and health, trade union management, conference preparation and crisis management, as well as trade union education and training, management and leadership in the Palestinian labour movement. His role has a legitimate political dimension and goals that seek to enable the Palestinian people to achieve their national rights, especially the right of return, self-determination, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.



### **Mélanie Vogel**

Mélanie Vogel has been Co-Chair of the European Green Party since June 2022. She is one of the youngest senators in France, representing French abroad. She sits on the committee for social affairs. Prior to her Senate mandate, Mélanie Vogel was an advisor to the Green Group in the European Parliament's Committee on Constitutional Affairs. She is an expert in European democracy, feminism and LGBTIQ+ rights.



### **Walter Baier**

Walter Baier is an Austrian politician and economist based in Vienna. He was elected President of the Party of the European Left in December 2022. He was the National Chairman of the Communist Party of Austria (KPÖ) from 1994 to 2006. He was an editor of the Austrian magazine Volksstimme. From 2007 to 2022, he was a political coordinator and board member of the transform! Europe EUPF.



### **Gabriele Bischoff**

Gabriele Bischoff was elected as a Member of the European Parliament in May 2019. She has been Vice-President of the Socialist and Democrats Group (S&D) since December 2021. Gabrielle is Vice-Chair of the parliament's Committee for Constitutional Affairs and a member of its Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. She was formerly head of equality at the German Metal Workers Union (IGM) and has worked as a senior advisor for the EU Presidency in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Germany. Between 2008 and 2014, she was head of the European policy department at DGB and was President of the Workers' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee between 2015 and 2019.



### **Mikael Leyi**

Mikael Leyi is the Secretary General of SOLIDAR, a European network of more than 50 progressive civil society organisations working to advance social justice through a just transition in Europe and worldwide. A political scientist he has worked with European and international organisations of the trade union and popular education movements in five continents, and in collaboration with the institutions of the EU, OSCE and the UN. His work has centred on supporting democracy, human rights, social justice, sustainability, citizens' participation, inclusion and equality, peace, and dialogue.



### **Veronica Nilsson**

Veronica Nilsson was appointed Acting General Secretary of the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD in May 2022. She previously served as the head of the OECD Global Deal Support Unit, as Project Manager at the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung office in Singapore, and with the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU). She started her career as a researcher at the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) before moving to TUAC in 2009. She was elected ETUC Confederal Secretary in 2011 and Deputy General Secretary in 2016.



### **Valeria Ronzitti**

Valeria Ronzitti is the General Secretary of SGI Europe, the European association for enterprises carrying out services of general interest that was formerly known as CEEP. She joined the SGI Europe general secretariat as a legal advisor in 2003 after having practiced labour and civil law in Italy. Her priorities including positioning high-performing public services as a key ingredient for EU post-COVID recovery and as a trigger for a new paradigm for the future of the European project.