

Supporting Innovation in Turkey

Speakers' Biographies



Cansen Basaran Symes

President, Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD)

Cansen Basaran-Symes is the Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of Allianz Sigorta A.Ş. and Allianz Hayat ve Emeklilik A.Ş.

Previously Cansen Basaran-Symes was Territory Senior Partner of PwC Turkey (1998-2013). Having joined PwC in 1981 she became partner in 1990. She has assumed various leadership roles and has served in offices in Copenhagen, London and Istanbul. She was Member of the Board of PwC Central and Eastern Europe and PwC Eurofirm. Prior to being elected President of the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD), Cansen Basaran-Symes served on the Board of Directors as Vice President, Treasurer and Chair of the Company Affairs Committee. She is also a Member of the Board of Directors of Endeavour Turkey.

In 2000, she was recognized among “Global Leaders for Tomorrow” at the World Economic Forum and was awarded the distinction of “Most Successful Businesswoman of the Year” by Dünya Newspaper. In 2006 on March 8, International Women’s Day, the International Lions Club recognized her as one of the most successful businesswomen in modern Turkey. In 2014, she received the honor award at the EDUPlus Management Summit.

Cansen Basaran-Symes is a graduate of the Faculty of Business Administration, Istanbul University.



Pim van Ballekom

Vice President, European Investment Bank

Pim van Ballekom is the Vice President of the EIB, a position he has held since January 2012. His responsibilities include funding and treasury of the EIB, financing operations in several countries within and outside of Europe including Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. He is also a member of the EIF’s Board of Directors.

Pim van Ballekom has held many significant roles including Head of Cabinet of European Commissioner Bolkestein responsible for Internal Market, Taxation and Customs Union Head, Netherlands Director at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Head of International Public Affairs at APG Pension Group, Financial Counsellor and Head of the Financial Section at the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands at the EU, and various positions within the Ministry of Finance in the Netherlands.



Flavia Palanza

Director of Central and South Eastern Europe Department, European Investment Bank

Flavia Palanza, who holds a Master's degree in Economics, joined the Bank in 1984 as an economist and senior economist for West Africa and subsequently the Caribbean, in the Projects Directorate. In 1996, she was appointed member of a small team responsible for establishing and launching the Bank's Evaluation Unit. She remained there until 1999, when she became Deputy Head of Coordination in the Projects Directorate. In 2001 she transferred to the Africa Caribbean and Pacific Department as Head of the Policy and Portfolio Management Division and, in 2007, as Associate Director for East and Central Africa and the Pacific. In November 2012, Flavia Palanza was appointed Director of the Middle East and North Africa Department and in January 2015 Director for Lending Operations in Central and South Eastern Europe.

Prior to joining the EIB, Flavia Palanza worked in the Asian Department of the International Monetary Fund.



Marjut Santoni

Deputy Chief Executive, European Investment Fund

Marjut Santoni is Deputy Chief Executive of the EIF since 1 August 2013. Prior to this she worked at the European Commission, Directorate General Economic and Financial Affairs (1996 - July 2013). There she held various roles in the field of SME and infrastructure financing as well as sovereign lending. She dealt with the strategic design and implementation of financial instruments for infrastructure and climate change policies, which also included the management of the Euratom loan facility in

the nuclear sector.

From 2008 until 2010 the balance of payments lending to non-Euro countries or macro financial assistance lending to third countries also fell under her responsibilities. From 2001 until June 2007, she was advisor to the Commission's members on the EIF Board of Directors. She was previously at the Internal Audit Department of Dresdner Bank in Frankfurt am Main (1992-1995) and before this she was in the credit department of Dresdner Bank, Cologne and Leipzig (1991-1992) as a loan officer.

Marjut Santoni has a university degree in Economics and Finance from Hagen University and Augsburg University.



Steve Rogers

Deputy Head of Unit, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission

Steve Rogers, deputy head of unit B.3 in DG Research & Innovation of the European Commission, is helping lead a team responsible for financial instruments, SMEs and state aid. He is currently designing innovative R&I financing facilities based on angel investments and crowdfunding. He has worked in several other parts of the Commission in the fields of enterprise policy, education and cultural policy, the enlargement of the EU, and the digital agenda.

He previously held positions in British Telecommunications plc (new products development) and the International Energy Agency (economic assessment). Before that, he ran a publishing services company in London. He started his career as a science journalist.



Marc D'hooge

InnovFin Programme Manager, European Investment Bank

Marc D'hooge has substantial experience in the financing and structuring of private and public sector projects in a large number of European countries, with a specific focus in recent years on the field of Research, Development and Innovation. Marc was the key person in the process of negotiation and establishment of the InnovFin Financial instruments within Horizon 2020 and he is currently the Bank's InnovFin Programme Manager.

InnovFin is a joint EIB and European Commission initiative, funded jointly by the EIB and the EU's Research Framework Programme Horizon 2020, which supports research, development and innovation (RDI) projects by improving access to debt financing and creating additional funding capacity for the sector. Launched in June 2014, it directly promotes the EU's objective of making Europe the world's most competitive, knowledge-driven economy.



Paul Samsonoff

Structured Finance Manager, European Investment Fund

Paul Samsonoff has worked for almost 15 years in the European debt and capital markets for several large international banks such as BNP Paribas, Société Générale, Merrill Lynch and Commerzbank. Paul has held a variety of roles and has experience in originating and structuring capital market transactions (subordinated debt, synthetic risk transfer and derivatives).

Since 2013, he has worked for the Portfolio Guarantee division at the EIF where he is focusing on guarantee and risk transfer schemes (incl. InnovFin SMEG) with the aim of reducing the risk and capital consumption of SME portfolios.

Paul holds a Masters Degree from the Grande Ecole ESSCA and is CFA Charterholder.



Shiva Dustdar

Head of Innovation Finance Advisory, European Investment Bank

Shiva Dustdar is currently working at the European Investment Bank (EIB) in Luxembourg, where she is heading the Innovation Finance Advisory Services, a new joint initiative with the European Commission (DG R&I). She has been at the EIB since 2003, first in its Risk Management Directorate, then in its EU Lending Directorate where she was responsible for financing of R&D projects using the Risk Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF).

Before joining the EIB, Shiva worked at Fitch as Director of High Yield where she was responsible for developing the agency's European High Yield rating business. Prior to Fitch, Shiva worked from 1993-1999 at the M&A Advisory of J.P. Morgan in New York and then in its Investment Banking Group in London.

Shiva graduated from Columbia University (NY) in Economics with Magna cum Laude and holds an Executive MBA from London Business School (LBS).