



# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## Parliamentary Conference on Envisioning effective public policy to prevent and address cases of missing migrants

23 and 24 April 2025

### Opening address and welcome

#### **Antonio Gutiérrez Limones, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Spain, SOC)** **Gianluca Esposito, Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe**

Gianluca Esposito has been Director General of Human Rights and Rule of Law of the Council of Europe since August 2024. He was previously the Director of the Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Prior to this, he served as Executive Secretary of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), Head of the Crime Problems Department, and Head of the Equality and Human Dignity Department. Mr Esposito started his career at the Council of Europe in 1995 where he was involved in the negotiation of several conventions and other legal instruments, in the areas of nationality, anti-corruption, cybercrime, the efficiency of justice, combating trafficking in human beings, money laundering, terrorism and its financing.

#### **Julian Pahlke, Member of PACE (Germany, SOC), Rapporteur for follow-up on Resolution 2569 (2024)** **“Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers – A call to clarify their fate”**

Julian Pahlke was a Member of the German Bundestag from 2021 to 2025 (*Alliance 90 / The Greens*) and a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (SOC), where he serves as rapporteur on missing migrants. His report “Missing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers - A call to clarify their fate” was adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in 2024. Julian Pahlke has been actively involved in search and rescue efforts in the Mediterranean since 2016 and has held key roles in various civil society organisations, including *Jugend Rettet e.V.* and *SOS Mediterranée Deutschland e.V.* He holds master’s degrees from the University of Southern Denmark and Europa-Universität Flensburg.

### Keynote speeches

#### **Gehad Madi, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants**

Gehad Madi was appointed as the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants in November 2023. Before his appointment, Mr Madi served as a Committee Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011 - 2023). During dialogues with State Parties, Mr Madi provided advice and recommendations concerning the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum-seeking children and their families. He has also collaborated with other relevant UN treaty bodies namely the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Committee against Torture; Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and Human Rights Committee. Before his UN roles, he held various diplomatic positions, including Egyptian Ambassador to the UK and India. Mr Madi holds a bachelor’s degree in German Language and Literature, as well as an LLB in Law from Ain Shams University.



### **Julia Black, Missing Migrants Project of the International Organization for Migration (IOM)**

Julia Black is a Project Officer at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), where she has coordinated the Missing Migrants Project for nearly a decade. Based at IOM's data centre in Berlin, Ms Black has led work to build up the only public-access database on deaths and disappearances on migration routes worldwide. She is frequently cited in the media advocating for an end to migrant deaths through the provision of safe, legal routes for people on the move. More broadly, her work deals with irregular migration, migrant rights, and data collection on hard-to-reach populations. She is also the co-editor of IOM's *Fatal Journeys* reports on migrant deaths and disappearances and has authored many other publications on irregular migration. She holds degrees from the University of California, Berkeley and the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin.

### **Tareke Brhane, President of the Comitato Tre Ottobre**

Tareke Brhane was born in Eritrea and fled at the age of 17 to avoid lifelong forced military conscription. He faced many risks, including death, violence and imprisonment on his journey to Sicily, which he reached in 2005. Since then, he has been committed to helping those who have faced the same fate as him. Mr Brhane worked as a cultural mediator in Lampedusa and southern Italy for Save the Children and Doctors Without Borders. He assists asylum seekers and is the President of the Comitato Tre Ottobre, a nonprofit organisation founded in the aftermath of the tragic shipwreck off of the island of Lampedusa on 3 October 2013, in which 368 people lost their lives. The organisation advocates for the observation at national and European level of a day of remembrance, every 3 October, to honour all migrants who perish at sea and those who risk their lives in order to save them. On 12th December 2014, as part of the XIV World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, Tareke Brhane received the "Peace Summit Medal for Social Activism" for dedicating himself to raising awareness on refugee issues in Italy, after being a refugee himself, and for creating the Comitato so that the victims will not be forgotten.

### **Florian von König, Global Advocacy Lead - Central Tracing Agency, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**

Florian von König is the Global Advocacy Lead of the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency. Prior to ICRC he spent eleven years with the United Nations as a Political Affairs Officer in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and with the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus. Florian also worked as Political Advisor to the European Union Special Representative and the EU Police Mission PROXIMA in Skopje, as a border monitor with the OSCE in Georgia, and with the World Bank and with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo. He holds degrees in International Relations from the Graduate Institute in Geneva (MSc) and the London School of Economics (BSc).



## Speeches

### **Dr Michael O'Flaherty, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe**

Michael O'Flaherty was elected by the PACE in January 2024. He is the fifth Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe. An Irish human rights lawyer, Commissioner O'Flaherty has served as the Director of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (2015-2023), as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (2004-2012), as Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (2011-2013), and in various posts at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, notably in setting up operations in conflict-affected countries such as Sierra Leone and Bosnia and Herzegovina. He has held professorships of human rights at the Universities of Nottingham (UK) and Galway (Ireland), where he has also led their Human Rights Centres. He is currently Adjunct (Honorary) Full Professor at the University of Maynooth and at University College Dublin. He has published widely in the field of human rights.

### **Prof. Cristina Cattaneo, Full Professor of forensic medicine and insurance at the department of biomedical science for health of the University of Milan, Director of LABANOF (Forensic Anthropological and Odontological Lab)**

Cristina Cattaneo is a Full Professor of Forensic Medicine at the University of Milan (La Statale) and Director of LABANOF, its forensic anthropology lab. She is a consultant and expert on forensic medical issues for various courts in Italy and Europe and collaborates with the Office of the Commissioner for Missing Persons in the identification of migrants who died at sea. She also performs medico-legal evaluations of living victims of sexual and domestic violence, and of asylum seekers who are victims of torture. Professor Cattaneo is Co-Editor in Chief of the journal "Forensic Science International", and winner of the Clyde Snow Award of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences for her work and research in forensic and humanitarian sciences. In 2017 she was awarded the title of Commander of the Italian Republic.



## Round Table 1: Investigating cases of missing persons in the context of migration (paragraphs 15-18 of the RES 2569 (2024))

### **Dr Morris Tidball-Binz, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial summary or arbitrary executions**

Morris Tidball-Binz (Viña del Mar, Chile, 1957) was appointed the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on 1 April 2021. He is a medical doctor specialised in forensic science, human rights and humanitarian action, including on behalf of missing migrants. Over the past 40 years, he has conducted fact-finding, technical assessment and capacity building missions to over 80 countries in all regions of the world.

### **Salvatore Vella, Chief Prosecutor, Public Prosecutor's office in Gela, Italy**

Salvatore Vella is currently the Chief Prosecutor of the Gela Public Prosecutor's Office. He has been a public prosecutor since 1999. Mr Vella has dealt with the fight against organised crime, with numerous investigations against Sicily's *Cosa Nostra*. For more than 20 years, he has been involved in the fight against the facilitation of irregular immigration in the Central Mediterranean, coordinating the most important investigations related to the island of Lampedusa in recent years. In 2019, he was rapporteur for Italy at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and Subsidiary Bodies (UNODC).

### **Tania Delabarde, Forensic Anthropologist, Forensic medical institute of Paris (IML)**

Tania Delabarde (PhD, HDR) has been a forensic anthropologist at the Institut médico-légal in Paris since 2013, where she is responsible for coordinating the identification of the unidentified deceased. She previously worked for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the United Nations, the French Institute for Andean Studies and the International Committee of the Red Cross. She is the author of the first book on forensic anthropology in France (2014) and has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals. Her research includes the study of the skeleton for the identification and histological analysis of bone lesions with the CNRS BABEL research team (UMR8045). Tania Delabarde also teaches forensic anthropology at Université Paris Cité.

### **Panagiotis Maniatis, Public Prosecutor at the First Instance Court of Athens**

Panagiotis Maniatis is Public Prosecutor currently serving in PPO at the Court of First Instance of Athens. He has a 20-year practical experience in the prosecution service, having been deployed in different posts and assigned in multiple tasks. He has been the Deputy National Member for Greece at Eurojust (2017-2022), national member in numerous European Union, Council of Europe and United Nations-led committees of experts on different topics and has been appointed focal point in networks related to international judicial cooperation in criminal matters. He has dealt with smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings cases, at national and international level, for the last 10 years. Here, Mr Maniatis oversaw national investigations and coordinated national authorities with regard to parallel ongoing investigations in jurisdictions abroad.



## Round Table 2: Engaging families throughout the process (paragraphs 6, 12, 25.2, 25.5 and 25.7 of RES 2569 (2024))

### **Sarah Klingeberg, Regional Internal Displacement and Migration Adviser for Europe and Central Asia, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**

Sarah Klingeberg works in Brussels as the Regional Adviser on Internal Displacement and Migration for Europe and Central Asia at the ICRC. Prior to joining the ICRC, she spent seven years with the Belgian Red Cross – French Community – as Migration Adviser. Over the past twenty years, she worked as migration expert in Europe and Africa to support the operational response to migrants' needs, the elaboration and implementation of advocacy strategies for the respect of migrants' rights as well as the promotion of migrants' empowerment.

### **Batoul Karbijha, Co-founder, Association of Families of Missing Asylum Seekers**

Batoul Karbijha is the co-founder of the Families of Missing Asylum Seekers association and a human rights activist. Since 2014, she has been actively engaged in migration issues, advocating for the rights of missing migrants and their families. The association serves as a platform for families to seek answers about their missing loved ones, participate in search efforts, uncover the fate of the missing, and access legal and psychological support. Originally from Syria and now based in the Netherlands, Ms Karbijha has firsthand experience with the tragedy of missing migrants, as her own sister, Maysoon, went missing. She has spoken at numerous United Nations conventions, collaborated with national and international NGOs, and actively campaigned for the right of families to be involved in search and justice processes. Beyond her human rights advocacy, she is also a documentary filmmaker, producing films that highlight migration and human rights issues. Through both activism and filmmaking, she has amplified the voices of migrants and their families, shedding light on their struggles, advocating for their rights, and working to uncover the fate of those who have disappeared.

### **Syd Bolton, The Last Rights Project**

Syd Bolton is one of the co-founders of the UK charity Methoria and its First Rights/Last Rights projects, working to promote and protect the rights and interests of migrant children and for bereaved families of those who have lost their lives as a consequence of migration journeys. Mr Bolton qualified in the UK as a lawyer in 2000. He is now resident in France and not in UK practice. He specialises in advocacy for children's rights and the rights of people on the move, globally. He has worked as a lawyer for abused children, forced child conscripts, victims of trafficking, survivors of torture and families of missing and deceased migrants. Mr Bolton has written and published many journal articles and contributed to legal practice and academic texts and the training of other lawyers and has spoken regularly at UN, international NGO, European and national events. In 2024, he gave evidence to the PACE Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, leading to its report on the need to clarify the fate of missing migrants.



### Round Table 3: What databases? Addressing the challenges and needs in the migration context (paragraphs 13, 14, 18-23, 25.3 of RES 2569 (2024))

#### **Lieutenant Pantelis Themelis, Hellenic Police - Joint Coordination Centre for Cooperation and Crisis Management, Commander of the Greek DVI Team**

Police Lieutenant Colonel Pantelis Themelis, graduated in 2001 from national police academy with the rank of Police Lieutenant. He has served in various agencies including the Attica Police Directorate, Anti-Terrorism Division, Olympic Games Security Directorate and Crisis Management Directorate. He is currently positioned in the Joint Operations & Crisis Management Cooperation Center of the Police Headquarters. He is specialised in the fields of crisis management, exercise planning, threat and risk assessment, vulnerability assessment, and critical infrastructure protection. He has also followed special training in dealing *C.B.R.N.E. Threats*. Lieutenant Themelis holds a master's degree in the field of Crisis & Critical Incident Management from the National University of Athens. Since 2011, he has been a Research Associate at the Center for Security Studies of the Hellenic Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection. He has also been a Lecturer at the National Police Academy and Military Academy and other institutions. Since 2021, he has been the Commander of Hellenic Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) team and has successfully dealt with various disasters.

#### **Dr Susan Hitchin, Coordinator of DNA Unit, INTERPOL**

##### **Patricia Bárcena García, Second Deputy Spanish Ombudsperson, Defensor del Pueblo**

Patricia Bárcena García currently serves as the second deputy to the Spanish Ombudsman. She oversees matters related to economy, environment, migration, and equal treatment. Ms Bárcena García is a human rights lawyer specialised in immigration law and international protection. She has participated in various human rights observations missions in Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia. Before joining the Ombudsman's office, she held leadership positions in the civil society organisations *CEAR-Euskadi* and the Bar Association of Bizkaia in Spain.

##### **José L. Prieto (MD, DDS, PhD), Head of the Forensic Pathology Department, Institute of Forensic Medicine and Forensic Sciences, Madrid**

José L. Prieto is currently the Head of the Forensic Pathology Service of the Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences of Madrid. He is a Doctor of Medicine, specialised in legal and forensic medicine, and odontology. Dr Prieto has been a member of the National Body of Forensic Doctors of Spain since 1988, as well as of the Forensic Advisory Board. He has also been a consultant for the International Committee of the Red Cross, the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary killings, and the International Criminal Court. Since 1997, he has also been an Associate Professor at the Department of Legal Medicine, Psychiatry and Pathology of the School of Medicine of the Complutense University of Madrid.



## Round Table 4 – Cross-border co-operation on missing migrants: good practices (paragraphs 13, 25.4 and 25.5 of RES 2569 (2024))

### **Claudia Guarneri, Acting Focal Point for Missing Migrants and Desk Officer, European Migration Policy Task Force at the German Federal Foreign Office**

Claudia Guarneri is the German Focal Point for Missing Migrants. She is a Desk Officer in the European Migration Policy Task Force of the German Federal Foreign Office. In her previous post, she was Deputy Director of the German Information Centre at the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. Claudia Guarneri holds a B.A. and M.A. in Political Science from the University of Heidelberg.

### **Mercedes Salado Puerto (PhD), Director for Eurasia and Middle East, Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF)**

Mercedes Salado Puerto, PhD is a member of the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) and its current director for Eurasia and the Middle East. She is specialised in forensic investigations and search and identification of missing persons in different contexts. Since 1998, she has served as an expert witness in numerous forensic investigations and has participated in training and advisory missions in multiple countries worldwide. She is a member of the ICRC's Forensic Advisory Group, the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions' Forensic Advisory Group and the Latin American Association of Forensic Anthropology (ALAF).

### **Pape Lamine Diop, Technical Advisor, to the Secretary of State for Senegalese abroad, Ministry of African Integration and of Foreign Affairs**