

NORTH  
**SEA**  
CONFERENCE

# Together for a **resilient future**

EVENT MODERATOR AND  
SPEAKER BIOS

**North Sea Conference**

Oldenburg, 24-26 June 2025



# Moderator BIO



**Dr. Ilke Borowski-Maaser**  
**Event Moderator**

For more than two decades, Dr. Ilke Borowski-Maaser has been facilitating collaboration for a sustainable society, often focusing on environmental issues such as water management. For her, facilitating means making collaboration easy, effective and sustainable for all stakeholders and the environment. Her training as a facilitator, mediator and change manager is complemented by her background as an environmental engineer. With her company INTERESSEN IM FLUSS, she has supported several projects funded by the North Sea Programme. She is currently project manager for Blue Transition on behalf of LIAG and is also supporting the 16 pilots in developing their strategies for resilient landscapes, i.e. balanced water and land use that minimises the impact of climate change on groundwater and soil.

# SPEAKER BIOS



**Councillor Elisabet Babic**  
**The North Sea Commission (NSC)**

Councillor Elisabet Babic, the President of the North Sea Commission, hails from the Swedish coastal region of Halland. With extensive experience at both the municipal and county council levels, Elisabet is dedicated to enhancing cross-border collaboration. Having initially been chair of the NSC Energy & Climate Change Working Group before becoming a part of the NSC Presidency, her leadership aims to strengthen the capabilities and voice of North Sea Regions through cooperative efforts on multiple levels.



**Christian Byrith**  
**Head of Secretariat, North Sea Programme**

Christian holds an MSc in Public Administration from the University of Roskilde in Denmark and an MBA from University of Durham. Christian has been Head of Secretariat of the Interreg North Sea Programme since 2007. He has a strong background in economics and has been working with project development and programme administration for more than 25 years.



**Camilla Evensson**  
**RISE Research Institutes of Sweden**

Camilla is a senior innovation project manager at RISE Research Institutes of Sweden and a driving force in the future of health and care. With a passionate commitment to changing how we view healthcare, technology and societal development, she leads several national and international projects.

In her work, Camilla mobilizes actors from across society to jointly meet some of the greatest societal challenges of our time, such as demographic shifts, the integration of innovative technologies and the need for sustainable healthcare structures. She has extensive experience in building and leading interdisciplinary collaborations across national borders and co-creating tech-driven solutions for tomorrow's health and care system, with the aim of creating long-term societal, organizational and individual resilience.

# SPEAKER BIOS



## **Antje Grotheer**

### **President of the Bremen State Parliament**

President of the Bremen State Parliament, of which she has been a member since 2011. A lawyer by profession, she has been active in several Committees among them the Committee for Federal, European, International Affairs and Development Cooperation.

Antje Grotheer has been a member of the European Committee of the Regions since 2020 and the Committee's Rapporteur on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, the Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027, on the Revised Schengen Agenda and on the Enlargement Package concerning Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. She is member and German representative of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the CPMR North Sea Commission.



## **Nikolaus Jansen**

### **State Representative and Head of Office for Regional Development Weser-Ems**

Nikolaus Jansen has been State Representative and Head of Office for Regional Development Weser-Ems in Oldenburg since May 2023. Holding a diploma in Public Management, he has been working for more than 40 years for public administration in Lower Saxony. His mission is to promote sustainable development, balance regional disparities and contribute to more resilient communities in the region of Weser-Ems. Among other activities, he is currently involved in strategic projects on energy transition, water management and nature protection.

Nikolaus Jansen looks back at many years of successful cross-border cooperation with the Netherlands. He chairs the Interreg A steering committee in the Ems-Dollart-Region, is member of the Interreg A monitoring committee and the steering committee of EUREGIO. In addition, he chairs the expert group of the Rijnland Institute and sits on the supervisory board of the GVZ Europark GmbH Coevorden-Emlichheim.

*Photo credits: Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Bundes- und Europaangelegenheiten und Regionale Entwicklung*



# SPEAKER BIOS



## **Jürgen Krogmann**

### **Mayor of the City of Oldenburg**

Jürgen Krogmann (born November 14, 1963) has been Mayor of the City of Oldenburg since 2014 and was re-elected for a second term in 2021. After studying history and German, he began his career as a reporter and presenter at Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR), later working as spokesperson and in the department for planning information and citizen participation within Oldenburg's city administration. He was subsequently elected to the Lower Saxony State Parliament and the Oldenburg City Council.

As mayor, Krogmann focuses on investments in education and schools, affordable housing, active economic development, digitalization, and climate protection. Under his leadership, numerous projects in schools, housing, and sustainable urban development have been realized. Since 2024, he has also served as President of the Association of Cities of Lower Saxony (NST) and sits on several supervisory boards, including EWE AG, GSG Oldenburg, and LzO.

*Photo credits: Assanimoghaddam/Mittwollen*



## **Dr Irene McMaster**

### **Principal Knowledge Exchange Fellow**

Dr Irene McMaster is a Principal Knowledge Exchange Fellow in the European Policies Research Centre (EPRC). Based at EPRC for 25 years, Irene has extensive experience of working on Cohesion policy planning, management, implementation and reform.

She specialises in cross-national research on INTERREG and transnational cooperation. She has just completed the preparation of an overview report on Interreg Consultations for the post 2027 period on behalf of the European Commission. Over successive programme periods, she has led evaluations of the North Sea, Northern Periphery and Arctic and Interact Programmes. She has worked numerous comparative research projects and provided expert advice on territorial cooperation across Europe, particularly in relation to cooperation in the high North, around the North Sea Region, and Irish Sea. She also works regularly on regional development policy in Norway and Ireland.

# SPEAKER BIOS



Johanna Nobel

**Oldenburger Energie cluster OLEC**

Johanna Nobel holds a Master's degree in sociology, history, and gender studies from the University of Oldenburg, where she studied from 2001 to 2008. She then gained practical experience in communications through a two-year internship at EWE AG and EWE NETZ GmbH. From 2010 to 2012, she worked in strategic management for youth welfare at AWO Weser-Ems. Since 2012, she has been responsible for communication and event management at OLEC e.V. Alongside her professional work, Johanna has been pursuing part-time studies in industrial engineering in Wilhelmshaven since 2017 and is expected to earn her Bachelor of Engineering degree.

*Photo credits: Johanna Nobel, OLEC e.V.*



**Filip Reinhag**

**President of the CPMR**

Filip Reinhag is the President of the CPMR. He has been a Regional Commissioner at Region Gotland since 2017 and the Chair of the Health Care Committee since 2022. He is a Swedish national, originally from the mainland, who has lived on Gotland since 2013. His political career includes serving as a Member of the Committee for the European Union at the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions since 2017 and as a Member of the Committee of the Regions since 2019.

Prior to his political career, he worked at the County Administrative Board on Gotland as a Special Advisor on gender, migration, and human rights, and at the International Centre for Local Democracy as a Case Manager.

# SPEAKER BIOS



**Susanne Kruse Sørensen**  
**Airport Director, Esbjerg Airport**

Susanne Kruse Sørensen is an experienced executive with a background in leadership and business development. Since 2020, she has served as Airport Director at Esbjerg Airport, where she is responsible for driving strategic development, attracting new flight routes, and strengthening the airport's organisational profile. Prior to this, she was CEO of Vordingborg Business A/S, a public-private development agency she helped establish.

Earlier in her career, Susanne held various leadership roles, including CEO and partner in a white goods company serving the Scandinavian market, and senior consultant and manager in Slagelse Municipality. Her international experience includes a position as Product Manager Europe at Whirlpool in Italy, and as Business Developer at Copenhagen Airports,. Her academic credentials include an MBA from SDA Bocconi in Milan, alongside a master's in economics and business administration from CBS. She is also active in multiple advisory boards and connected to several EU Interreg projects.



**Thijn de Voogd**  
**City of Arnhem, the Netherlands**

Thijn de Voogd is a policy advisor at the Department of Sustainability of the City of Arnhem in the Netherlands, working on the intersection of energy transition, sustainable urban development and social issues. He is the Lead Partner for the North Sea Region COOL CITIES project, in which 11 partners of 5 EU-member states focus on reducing outdoor heat stress in cities.

The project aims to set up a Roadmap to realise a Cool Network; a physical network of cool spots linked by cool shaded routes. He has also the lead in the North-Western Europe SCEPA project tackling energy poverty. With a background in communication and experience in supporting community-led sustainability efforts, Thijn is interested in how local governments can enable residents to contribute to the energy transition and climate adaptation. He works to connect policy with everyday practice, and values collaboration between cities, communities, and international partners to find workable and fair solutions for complex urban challenges.

# SPEAKER BIOS



## **Melanie Walter**

### **Minister for Europe and Regional Development at Lower Saxony State Chancellery**

Melanie Walter grew up in Reinstorf and completed her secondary education in Lüneburg in 1993. She then pursued studies in economics and political science for the teaching profession at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, graduating in 1998.

Following her studies, she completed a teaching traineeship at vocational schools in Hanover from 1998 to 2000. From 2001 to 2008, she worked as a consultant and project manager for the Hanover Chamber of Industry and Commerce. Between 2008 and 2013, she served as Head of Division for Policy Issues, Integration, International Affairs, Europe, and Science in the office of the then Lord Mayor of Hanover. She went on to become Head of Migration and Participation at the City of Hanover from 2013 to 2016, and then Head of the Office of the Minister President of Lower Saxony until 2018. From 2018 to 2025, she led the Vocational Education Department at the Lower Saxony Ministry of Culture.

Since May 20, 2025, Melanie Walter has held the position of Minister for Europe and Regional Development at the Lower Saxony State Chancellery.