



# Agenda

**08h30 – 09h00:** Arrival and registration

**09h00 – 09h15:** Welcome & Opening Remarks

*TownHall Europe - Sq. de Meeûs 5 – 1000 Brussels*

## Uncertainty is the New Normal. Is Public Affairs Ready to Deliver?

- The growing expectations on public affairs teams amid global uncertainty
- Framing the key questions for the morning – what are the key challenges facing public affairs leaders and teams today?



**Speaker**

**Nneka Chiazor**  
President & CEO  
Public Affairs Council

**09h15 – 10h10:** Keynote Presentation & Discussion

## Reading the Map: Global Geopolitics and What It Means for Europe

- The global forces reshaping the political and economic landscape
- How geopolitical tensions are influencing EU priorities and policymaking
- What matters most for companies operating in and from Europe
- Distinguishing structural shifts from short-term volatility



**Speaker**

**Adam Ward**  
Managing Editor,  
Oxford Analytica from Dow Jones



**Moderator**

**João Sousa**  
Managing Director,  
International Practice  
Public Affairs Council

10h10 – 10h30: **Networking break**

10h30 – 11h25: **Executive Conversation**

**The C-Suite Perspective: What Business & Industry Expect from Public Affairs Today**

- How CEOs and senior executives perceive geopolitical risk and current global trends
- What they expect from public affairs in terms of insight, anticipation and guidance
- What makes public affairs credible and influential at the leadership level
- Common gaps between expectations and delivery
- How public affairs can better support strategic decision-making



**Moderator**

**Nneka Chiazor**  
President & CEO  
Public Affairs Council



**Speaker**

**Emily Rees**  
President & CEO  
CropLife International



**Speaker**

**Marcel Halma**  
SVP & Chief Public Affairs  
Officer  
Solvay



**Speaker**

**Marianne Barge**  
Co-Lead, Global Government  
Affairs Practice,  
Russell Reynolds Associates

11h25 – 11h40: **Networking break**

11h40 – 12h35:

## Panel Discussion

### From Geopolitical Risk to Public Affairs Impact: How Leading Teams Are Delivering In Uncertainty

- How teams are translating geopolitical and regulatory uncertainty into business relevant insights
- Ensuring message consistency across regions, markets and stakeholders in a fragmented environment
- Running effective, coordinated engagement strategies in the EU, and balancing central control with local flexibility
- Aligning public affairs with communications, legal, and business teams for better results
- Measuring and communicating value to C-Suite, boards, stakeholders and other departments



*Speaker*

**Amber Bechrouri**  
EU Consumer and  
Sustainability Policy  
Director  
Amazon Europe



*Speaker*

**Gavriilo Nikolic**  
Head of Public Affairs  
PHOENIX group



*Speaker*

**Laila Pinheiro**  
Public Affairs Head,  
Director for Europe  
Syngenta



*Speaker*

**Mayra Souza**  
Senior Director, Head of  
Global Trade  
IFF



*Moderator*

**João Sousa**  
Managing Director,  
International Practice  
Public Affairs Council

12h35:

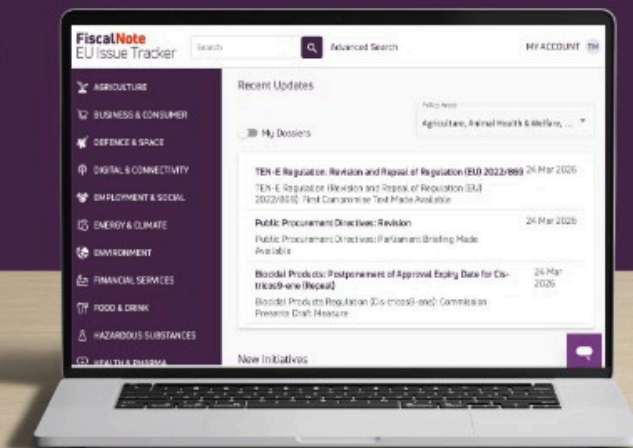
**Networking Lunch – Adjourn**

# Targeted Alerts and Forward-Looking Analysis from Experts in Brussels

EU Issue Tracker's team of Brussels-based policy analysts help you not only monitor, but act on changes in EU policy.

Acting as a force multiplier, EU Issue Tracker takes a systematic approach to policy intelligence and analysis. You control what is put in front of you by selecting specific dossiers of interest, and we'll send you timely alerts on procedural developments.

We capture the latest developments and timelines of all EU dossiers and monitor, catalogue, and assess their implications.



## What is it?

Our platform combines human intelligence and technology to help you identify risks and opportunities stemming from EU policy initiatives. Detailed timelines lay out each dossier's procedure step-by-step, with an additional layer of human analysis to help you make sense of it all.

## Why do you need it?

By removing the manual work typically involved in policy monitoring, EU Issue Tracker saves you time and puts the information that matters in front of you with a comprehensive solution. Keep your finger on the pulse with real-time, relevant updates on policy developments, timelines, and key stakeholders.

## What you get:

- ✓ Stakeholder information and AI transcripts of meetings with decision-makers
- ✓ Legislative and non-legislative files
- ✓ New developments coming out of the Commission, Council, Parliament, and other EU agencies
- ✓ Clear, concise updates sent to you directly, keeping you informed
- ✓ A dedicated policy team working with you to achieve your organizational goals

# FISCALNOTE

PolicyNote / CQ / Roll Call / VoterVoice

Fireside / FrontierView

FiscalNote combines the latest AI technology with decades of trusted expertise to simplify the way you track and shape policy. Through our flagship suite, PolicyNote, we deliver the most complete view of the policy landscape — from local to global — in platform and through API. By uniting the trusted reporting of CQ and Roll Call with the grassroots power of VoterVoice, we deliver end-to-end policy intelligence with unmatched clarity and speed. We zoom into the details so you can see the big picture, making sure you're not just in the loop, but in the lead.

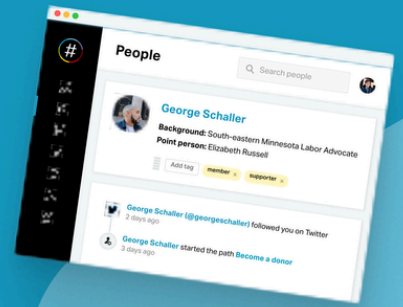
To learn more about FiscalNote and our suite of solutions, visit [FiscalNote.com](https://www.fiscalnote.com) or follow us across social media platforms @FiscalNote.



Public Affairs Council



NationBuilder



# One platform to power your advocacy

Modernising public affairs and community engagement  
for Europe's leading organisations

In an era of geopolitical volatility and fragmented political coalitions, public affairs teams need more than traditional stakeholder management. NationBuilder gives public affairs leaders the infrastructure to coordinate complex advocacy, demonstrate measurable impact, and respond at pace - without losing coherence across markets.

**Website builder** Create action-oriented pages that inspire supporters to sign petitions and amplify your position.

**People database** Track every supporter, partner, advocate interaction in one dynamic database. See engagement levels, issue priorities, and advocacy history.

**Communication tools** Send personalised, issue-specific emails based on supporter interests and past actions, ensuring the right narrative reaches the right audience at the right moment.

**Fundraising platform** Keep more of what you raise with industry-leading rates. Accept one-time and recurring donations directly on your site, all the while reducing operational friction for issue-based campaigns.

## With NationBuilder, public affairs teams can:

- Mobilise communities and build durable coalitions that amplify your influence with policymakers
- Equip advocates across member states to organise on your behalf - with consistent messaging and central control
- Convert rapid-response moments into sustained movements

Proud sponsor of the Brussels Public Affairs Forum 2026.

[nationbuilder.com](https://nationbuilder.com)



# Speakers

(In alphabetical order)



## ADAM WARD

MANAGING EDITOR,

**OXFORD  
ANALYTICA FROM  
DOW JONES**

Adam Ward became Managing Editor of Oxford Analytica in June 2025. Oxford Analytica, part of Dow Jones, serves a global client base of companies, investors and governments with analysis on geopolitical, political and economic analysis through its Daily Brief service.

Adam was previously the Deputy Director of the UK think tank Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs) as well as its Director of Research. Earlier, he held a succession of posts at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). He was for eight years Director of Studies, heading the Institute's global research and analysis in areas including geopolitics, conflict risk, defence and military trends, and arms control and non-proliferation policy. Prior to this, Adam developed the Washington DC office of the IISS as its Executive Director, building the institute's contacts across the US national security establishment, policy analysis sector and philanthropic community. His first assignment at the IISS was to be its Senior Fellow for East Asian Security and Editor of Strategic Comments, a series of briefings on global politico-military affairs.

Adam began his career at Oxford Analytica, where he spent four years as Asia Pacific Editor. He holds a BA in German and Politics and an MA in International Studies, both from the University of Warwick. He also studied at the University of Salzburg for one academic year.



## AMBER BECHROURI

DIRECTOR, EU PUBLIC  
POLICY

**AMAZON**

Amber Bechrouri is Director of EU Public Policy at Amazon, where she is responsible for the company's interactions with the European Union institutions across a wide range of issues, including on consumer and sustainability policy.

Amber has been in Brussels and active in policy and government affairs since 2001, initially in the paper industry, then at Nike. She was Head of EU and International Policy at UK consumer group Which?, before joining Amazon in 2017.

In addition, Amber is the sponsor of Women@AmazonBE. She is an advocate for inclusiveness and making time for personal development.

Amber lives with her husband and three children in Auderghem (Brussels) and enjoys swimming, walks in the forest and coffees with friends. She speaks English and French.



**EMILY REES**

PRESIDENTE &  
CEO

**CROPLIFE  
INTERNATIONAL**

Emily Rees is the President and CEO of CropLife International, a role she has held since March 2023.

As global advocate of the plant science industry, CropLife International champions innovative technologies that enable farmers to sustainably increase productivity while managing the critical challenges facing our climate and the environment. Spearheading the association's three pillars of ambition to bring workable solutions to increase food security, tackle climate change and protect biodiversity,

Emily leads the organization in its regulatory and policy-driven dialogues. Through advancing science-based approaches to regulation, and fair and equitable global trading rules, Emily helps bring together diverse partners with cutting-edge research and development to effect positive change. Emily joined CropLife International with an extensive pedigree in EU affairs and economic diplomacy.

Prior to joining CropLife International, she held posts as a Senior Fellow at the European Centre for International Political Economy, and Managing Director of Trade Strategies, a consultancy specialized in international trade policy. A specialist in EU-Latin American relations, she is fluent in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.



**GAVRILO  
NIKOLIC**

HEAD OF PUBLIC  
AFFAIRS

**PHOENIX GROUP**

Gavrilo Nikolic is Head of Public Affairs at PHOENIX group, a leading European integrated healthcare provider operating across 29 markets. In this role, he leads the company's EU public affairs strategy, overseeing a pan-European network of experts and driving engagement with key EU institutions and stakeholders on policies shaping the future of healthcare and pharmaceutical distribution.

He has been instrumental in establishing PHOENIX's public affairs function, developing board-level policy positions, and advancing the company's voice in major European initiatives, including the Critical Medicines Alliance. Known for combining strategic foresight with operational leadership, he specializes in identifying and mitigating policy risks while unlocking policy opportunities in complex regulatory environments at both EU and national level.

Prior to PHOENIX, Gavrilo held senior advisory roles at FGS Global and led public affairs initiatives at McKesson Europe.



## JOÃO SOUSA

MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
INTERNATIONAL  
PRACTICE

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
COUNCIL**

Joao Sousa, the Managing Director of the Public Affairs Council's International Practice, also spearheads the global public affairs practice and manages the International Network.

With over 15 years of experience, Joao is dedicated to guiding member organizations and global public affairs leaders, facilitating best practices, impactful strategy development, and peer collaboration. Based in Brussels, he has advised global companies, international organizations, and national authorities across various countries and sectors, focusing on strategic communication, public diplomacy, and reputation management.

Joao's extensive career includes eight years with the European Union, leading communication teams in the DR Congo and the Western Balkans, and providing consultancy for EU projects in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Holding a Master's in International Affairs, Joao is fluent in Portuguese, English, and French, with proficiency in Spanish, German, and Romanian.



## LAILA PINHEIRO

PUBLIC AFFAIRS HEAD,  
DIRECTOR FOR  
EUROPE

**SYNGENTA**

Laila Pinheiro is a public affairs and communications leader with more than 20 years of experience in multinational companies across Latin America and Europe. Based in Brussels, she serves as Director of Public Affairs for Europe at Syngenta, where she leads EU advocacy strategy and government engagement.

She previously led Syngenta's external affairs work for Latin America and Brazil, advising senior executives on public policy, reputation, sustainability and strategic advocacy.

Her earlier career includes senior roles at Dow and Ericsson, with expertise in policy campaigns, stakeholder engagement, regulatory strategy and communications in highly regulated sectors.

She holds a degree in Public Relations, an MBA from FGV, and advanced training in EU policy and diplomacy from the College of Europe and The Graduate Institute Geneva.

In 2024, Forbes named her among the "50 Women Who Take Agriculture from Brazil to the World."



## MAYRA SOUZA

SENIOR DIRECTOR, HEAD  
OF GLOBAL TRADE

**IFF**

Mayra Souza is Senior Director, Global Trade at IFF (International Flavors & Fragrances), based in Brussels.

She has spent more than 20 years in global trade and customs across the food, beverage, biosciences, chemical and automotive sectors, leading projects in over 25 countries and previously heading the global trade function at Solvay, where she steered the company's Brexit preparation. Her work brings trade compliance, public policy and sustainability into a single discipline, built on multi-stakeholder engagement with regulators, international organisations and industry.

She authored "The Bioeconomy Revolution: How Trade Fuels the Green Transition" in the Global Trade and Customs Journal and has contributed to WTO-supported discussions at COP29.

She serves on the board of the Brazilian Chamber of Commerce to Belgium and Luxembourg and advocates for women and youth in trade, recognised as a HEROes Women Executive Role Model and voted one of Belgium's top trade professionals. She holds a degree in International Relations and Trade and an MBA from the United Kingdom.



## MARIONNE BARGE

CO-LEAD, GLOBAL  
GOVERNMENT  
AFFAIRS PRACTICE

**RUSSELL  
REYNOLDS  
ASSOCIATES**

Marianne Barge co-leads Russell Reynolds Associates' Global Government Affairs Practice and European Legal, Regulatory & Compliance Practice. Based in Brussels, she advises leading international corporations, trade associations, NGOs and public affairs agencies on senior executive recruitment across government affairs, regulatory affairs, public policy, communications and compliance.

With more than 20 years of executive search experience, Marianne partners with clients to address strategic talent needs and build strong international leadership pipelines. Her work spans global, European and local mandates, with a particular interest in international and women executives.

Before joining Russell Reynolds Associates in 1999, Marianne held sales, market development and marketing roles at IBM. She holds an MA in Law from the University of Leiden and is fluent in Dutch and English, with working knowledge of French. She previously served on the Board of the European Policy Centre.



## MARCEL HALMA

SVP & CHIEF PUBLIC  
AFFAIRS OFFICER

**SOLVAY**

With over 25 years of experience in corporate affairs, Marcel Halma is currently Chief Public Affairs Officer at Solvay, a global leader in the chemical industry headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. In this role, he defines and drives the company's strategic public and government affairs agenda, as well as leading country management for the group. Before joining Solvay, he held similar roles in the chemicals and energy industry. Marcel started his career as a diplomat in the Foreign Service of the Netherlands, having worked in Brussels, Geneva and New York on EU and UN affairs. Marcel is Member of the Board of the Fonds Ernest Solvay, a global philanthropy fund in support of STEM education. He is also a Board Member and Member of the Executive Committee of the Public Affairs Council, the prime global association for public affairs professionals, based in Washington DC, and a Member of the Board of Advisors of FiscalNote - a U.S. based AI-driven enterprise SaaS technology company in GovTech that provides innovative solutions for managing public policy and corporate issues, where he advises the company's leadership on how to leverage technology and digital tools to meet the needs of clients and stakeholders. He is a regular speaker and lecturer on public affairs, lobbying, communications, EU-affairs and association management. Marcel graduated in Political Science and in American Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Marcel is passionate about creating positive impact through effective and integrated communications, stakeholder engagement, and corporate citizenship.



## NNEKA CHIAZOR

PRESIDENT & CEO

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
COUNCIL**

Nneka Chiazor is president of the Public Affairs Council, the leading international association for public affairs professionals. She has extensive corporate experience and a broad public affairs background with leadership experience to help demonstrate the value of public affairs to the business world.

Prior to joining the Council, Nneka was market vice president at Cox Communications where she led a multimillion-dollar operation with over 1,200 employees that included cross-functional teams from departments such as market expansion, field services, construction, finance, government and public affairs, marketing, and sales. Before that, she served as vice president of government and public affairs at Cox, providing executive leadership envisioning and securing funds for broadband initiatives and executing digital engagement strategies.

Prior to that, Nneka spent 14 years at Verizon. As vice president of policy & government relations, she provided thought leadership and oversight for Verizon's cross functional teams, focusing on public safety and cybersecurity.

Nneka's education background is focused on leadership, public affairs, business and technology. She received her Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Concordia University, a Master of Science in Telecommunications Management from the University of Maryland Global Campus, and she attended Harvard Business School for programs in Leadership Development and Cable Executive Management.



## Public Affairs Council

The Public Affairs Council is the leading international association for public affairs professionals. Both nonpartisan and nonpolitical, our mission is to advance the field of public affairs and to provide our members with the executive education and expertise they need to succeed while maintaining the highest ethical standards. We are headquartered in Washington, D.C., with offices in Europe. Our diverse membership, from Fortune 100 companies to nonprofits, includes more than 650 leading corporations, trade associations, nonprofits, consultancies and universities, representing nearly 14,000 individuals working in public affairs. We provide research, roundtables, training and other resources on public affairs, government affairs, stakeholder management, digital advocacy, issue management and related topics, based on an annual membership model.

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