

## Roundtable Participants: Biographical Notes

### OPENING REMARKS



**Michael Curtis**  
Deputy Ambassador  
Delegation of the European Union to the United States  
Washington D.C.

Michael Curtis has been the EU Deputy Ambassador to the US since September 1<sup>st</sup> 2019. Immediately before joining the Delegation, he served in the team of the EU's Foreign Policy Chief, Federica Mogherini, advising her on a number of important foreign policy issues for five years, including on transatlantic relations.

He has had a long career in the European Union institutions working mainly on foreign policy and external relations, trade, development and humanitarian issues. From 2004-2008, he worked as the EU Humanitarian Affairs Counsellor to the United Nations in New York. From 2000-2004, he worked on the team of the EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Poul Nielson, first as Press Spokesperson then as a member of his Staff.

Mr. Curtis has also had two stints working for the European Commission's Secretariat General focusing on relations with the EU Member States in the area of foreign policy and trade, then relations with the European External Action Service where he was closely involved with its setting up in 2010.

Mr. Curtis has a Bachelor's degree in French and Politics from Leicester University in the U.K and a post-graduate Master's degree in European Politics from the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium. He is a dual Italian/British national.

## PANELISTS



**Eva Alvino**  
**Deputy Consul General of Italy**  
**Consulate General of Italy in Miami**

After graduating from the University of Padua where she studied International Relations, Eva Alvino joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in 2016. She was assigned to the Directorate General for Human Resources serving as a Deputy Head Office for Recruitment and Hiring. She supervised and successfully concluded several recruitment selections for young diplomats as well as for administrative and technical staff. She was then appointed Deputy Chief of Staff to the Director General for Human Resources where she supported both Rome-based offices and the diplomatic missions abroad with people management. Eva Alvino started her role as Deputy Consul General in Miami in March 2020. Before becoming a diplomat, Eva Alvino worked as a retail manager for Apple Inc. in various locations in Italy. As a Deputy Consul General, Eva Alvino supervises all the activities of the Consulate General of Italy, from assisting Italian nationals with consular services to promoting Italy through cultural initiatives. Eva Alvino is fluent in English, German, French and has a good knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese. She is passionate about Asia, where she has extensively travelled, thus she has some knowledge of Hindi and Chinese



**Lisa Arias Rodriguez**  
**Education Advisor**  
**of the Embassy of Spain**  
**Consulate General of Spain in Miami**

Lisa Arias is an Education Advisor of the Embassy of Spain stationed at the Consulate General of Spain in Miami since 2019. She graduated cum laude from Middlebury College with a joint major in Spanish and French and holds two master's degrees from the Universities of Santiago de Compostela and Vigo in Spain in Philology and Advanced Studies in English.

After a lifelong career in teaching at all levels, as well as being a professional development specialist, Lisa has recently taken a new direction in her career, yet always connected to the field of education. In September 2017, Lisa became an Education Advisor for the New York office of the Embassy of Spain. At the Embassy, she promotes diverse educational outreach programs in the United States and Canada with the goal of fostering collaborative educational programs between these countries and Spain, building long lasting ties among their citizens.

Always in the hope of inspiring and empowering individuals to become global citizens through the passionate process of language learning, she is currently the national coordinator of the NALCAP Spain Program.



**Hanni Geist**  
**Senior Manager, University Relations**  
**Head of Information Point San Francisco**  
**German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)**

Hanni Geist is a professional in higher education, fostering exchange between the US and Germany. Originally from Berlin, Hanni now lives in the San Francisco Bay Area and represents the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in the San Francisco office. Since 2013, Hanni supports students and researchers to study, intern, and research in Germany. Hanni is responsible for all activities in the Western region of the US. To increase Germany alumni engagement, Hanni created the podcast Coffee Connections to highlight the diverse experiences in and with Germany. Hanni has presented at NAFSA, the Forum on Education, and Diversity Abroad conference on study, intern, and research opportunities in Germany under the lens of DEI. As a professional in the field of International Education, Hanni focuses on topics related to mental health.



**Caroline Lowe**  
**Higher Education Officer**  
**Advisor and Partner Relations**  
**Campus France USA**  
**Embassy of France in the United States**

Caroline Lowe joined Campus France USA as a Higher Education Officer in 2015, assuming a role in providing orientation, advising, and assistance to American students interested in pursuing higher education in France. Within her responsibilities, she serves as the primary point of contact for study-abroad advisors, university partners, and is one of the main contacts for visa-related inquiries at the French consulate, focusing on student visas. Caroline takes great pride in her work with students, promoting France as an ideal destination for higher education, and facilitating students' mobility to France.

Before her assignment in Washington, D.C., Caroline served as a corporate lawyer at a prominent French insurance company. Her educational background includes a master's degree in criminal law from the University of Paris II and a specialized Master's in International Business Law and Management from ESCP Business School.

## MODERATOR



### **Markus Thiel, Ph.D.**

Director, Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence  
Professor, Politics & International Relations  
Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs  
Florida International University

Markus Thiel is a professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Florida International University, Miami and director of FIU's Jean Monnet Center of Excellence. Dr. Thiel's research interests are the political sociology of the EU and European (Union) Politics more generally, as well as Human Rights and Identity Politics. He graduated with a Ph.D. from the University of Miami in 2005 and has published several EU-related articles and book chapters in peer-reviewed journals including the Journal of European Integration, the Journal of Common Market Studies and others. In addition, his research on the political sociology of the EU produced the monographs 'The Limits of Transnationalism' (Palgrave, 2011) and 'EU Civil Society and Human Rights Advocacy' (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), as well as 5 co-edited volumes on: 'Diversity and the European Union' (with Lisa Pruegl, Palgrave, 2009), 'Identity Politics in the Age of Globalization' (with Roger Coate, Lynne Rienner/First Forum Press, 2010), 'European Identity & Culture: Narratives of Transnational Belonging' (with Rebecca Friedman, Ashgate, 2012), 'Sexualities in World Politics: How LGBTQ Claims Shape International Relations' (with Manuela Picq, Routledge, 2015) and 'EU Development Policies between Norms and Geopolitics' (with Sarah Beringer & Sylvia Maier, Palgrave, 2019). Most recently, he published 'The EU's international LGBTI rights promotion: promises & pitfalls' (Routledge, 2021), and co-authored 'The Politics of Social In/Exclusion in Europe' (Palgrave/Springer, 2023, with Ernesto Fiocchetto & Jeffrey Maslanik).

He teaches CPO 3103 Comparative (Western) European Politics, CPO 3104 EU Politics, INR 3214 International Relations of Europe, INR 3502 International Organizations, as well as graduate courses on European/EU Politics, International Organization and Research Design in IR.

He supervises doctoral students in the areas of EU Politics, International Organizations and Political Sociology.



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