

Meet the panelists

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Jesús Casado Navarro-Rubio is the **Secretary-General of European Family Businesses (EFB)**. Based in Brussels, EFB represents all National European Family Businesses associations and aims to promote policies conducive to long-term entrepreneurship in Europe. EFB's members – over 10 000 family business owners – making up more than 10% of the European GDP. He started his career as a lawyer before joining the Spanish Family Business Association (IEF). In parallel, Jesús was a Board member of the Family Firm Institute (FFI) and of the Executive Committee of Family Business Network (FBN-I). He possesses a degree in Law & Economics from Universidad Pontificia Comillas (Madrid), a post-graduate degree from Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen (Germany), the Spanish Diplomatic School (Madrid) and the Institut de Sciences Politiques (Paris). He also earned an MBA from ESADE Business School.



Jordi Sebastià is the **Head of External Relations of IVACE, the Regional Development Agency of the Valencian Region**. As mayor of his hometown Burjassot (38 500 inhabitants), he developed several plans to support local businesses. From 2014 to 2016 he was a Member of the European Parliament and worked in the Agriculture and the Women's rights committees, focusing on the impact of trade agreements on European SMEs. He possesses a Bachelor's in Spanish Philology (Universitat de València - Spain), Portuguese Studies (Universidade Aberta de Portugal-Portugal), Philosophy (UNED -Spain), and a Master's in Study of Religions and Secular Thought (Université Libre de Bruxelles -Belgium). He is also a writer and journalist.



Rodi Kratsa was elected **Governor of the Ionian Islands Region in Greece** in 2019. She was previously a member of the European Parliament, elected in 1999, 2004, and 2009 and was elected 1st Vice-President of the EP in 2007 and 2009. Among others, she took part in the committees on Economic and Monetary Affairs, Regional development, and Women's Rights and Gender Equality. She also worked in the fields of social economy, sustainable development, cultural diversity, tourism, and youth by creating intergroups in the EP. She is very active in the peace process between Arabs and Israel and the promotion of cooperation between the GCC and the EU for security and development in the Mediterranean. Rodi Kratsa also takes part in civil society initiatives at international and regional levels, such as meetings of the IMF, the World Bank, and UNESCO. She studied Political Sociology at the University of Geneva and continued her postgraduate studies at the Institute of European Studies of the same university.



Themis Eftychidou is the **Secretary-General for Industry at the Ministry of Development & Investments of the Hellenic Republic**.

She has served as an Advisor to the Ministry of Development (2011-2012 and 2014) and was responsible for reforms in competition, market legislation, and improving the business environment. From 2015 to 2019, she worked for the World Bank to simplify licensing and reform inspection systems for businesses. In 2019, she became Advisor to the Deputy-Minister where she coordinated a Greek inter-ministerial project to improve the Business Environment and Greece's ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business index. She was also an expert for the OECD and studied the removal of barriers to competition in Greece and internationally, supporting the Global Forum on Competition (OECD, Paris). She holds a degree in Law and a Master's in Commercial Competition Law from the Democritus University of Thrace and possesses an MBA.



Birute Miskiniene, Ph.D. heads the **Vilnius University Business School** and teaches a module focused on Family Business. She is also Vice-president of the Vilnius Chamber of Commerce and sits on the board of MITA, the Lithuanian government's Agency for Science, Innovation, and Technology. University and Business Collaboration are her primary areas of interest and were even the topics of her Ph.D. She led several projects and events dealing with Women entrepreneurship and Family businesses, one of those being the highly successful annual "Entrepreneurial Family/Versli Šeima" event that draws attention to successful family businesses. She was previously the Managing Director of ISM Executive School before joining the Vilnius University Business School in 2016.



Carmen Arias is the **Secretary-General of the European Footwear Confederation (CEC)**. The CEC brings together major European national footwear and leather goods associations, making up more than 80% of the total EU footwear production. It promotes the sectors' interests and participates in several initiatives with footwear stakeholders and public authorities dealing with trade, social affairs, education & skills, and sustainability. Carmen started her career as a legal and tax advisor at Ernst & Young and Deloitte. She then worked at the European Commission for nine years, where she developed and implemented technical assistance programmes for the Western Balkans. In 2005, and for 7 years, she joined the Valencian Regional Government Office in Brussels and coordinated several projects supporting the competitiveness of SMEs. She holds a Law Degree from the University of Valencia and a Master's in Company Tax Law from the IE Business School in Madrid.



Michalis Tzortzis is the **Head of the Special Service for the Management and Implementation of Industry, Commerce, and Consumer Protection (EYDE - VEK)** in the **Ministry of Development and Investments of the Hellenic Republic** and is the contact person for the Interreg Success Road project.

In the 1990s, he worked in the consulting sector and later in the Management Organisation Unit of Development Programmes S.A. He has then served as Head of the Managing Authority of the Regional Operational Programme of Western Greece, and Head of the coordination Unit for Regional Operational Programmes in the Ministry of Development and Investments. After years in Regional Policy, he moved to the General Secretariat for Industry in 2016 and has been holding his current position since 2020. Michalis is an economist by training.