

SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES



Borhene Chakroun (Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO Education Sector)

Borhene Chakroun is an engineer and has a PhD in Education Sciences from Bourgogne University in France. Borhene worked, during the 1990s, as trainer, chief trainer, project manager. He has also worked as short-term consultant for the EU, World Bank and other international organisations before coming to the European Training Foundation (ETF) in 2001. At the ETF, Borhene worked as Senior Human Capital Development specialist. He is now Director of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems Division at UNESCO-HQ. Borhene conducted a range of policy reviews and skills systems diagnosis in different contexts. He has authored and co-authored various articles and books in the field of skills development and lifelong learning. Much of his most recent work focuses on global trends in reforming education and training systems and global agenda for skills development in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.



Thérèse Zhang (Deputy Director for Higher Education Policy, EUA)

Thérèse Zhang is the Deputy Director for Higher Education Policy at the European University Association (EUA). She works on topics related to learning and teaching, European policy developments in higher education, and global relations with other regions of the world. She has been active in higher education policy/management and, more generally, project management in education and culture, for over fifteen years. When Ms Zhang first joined EUA in 2008, she focused on quality management and institutional development, with responsibilities in various projects and in EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme. As a Project Manager at the Belgian French-speaking quality assurance agency, she also coordinated evaluations and contributed to developing evaluation methodologies. Her earlier experience includes serving as a French teacher for several years. Ms Zhang is a graduate in Romance Philology and in European Studies, and was trained in Belgium, Italy, and the United States.



Darren McDermott (Team Leader Designate EU-SHARE)

From Dublin, Ireland, Darren has lived and worked in Asia for over 15 years, predominantly within the higher education and international development sectors. Following education roles in Japan and Ireland and an MSc in Education & Training Management, Darren joined the School of Education Studies at Dublin City University as a lecturer and researcher on international education programmes. He subsequently conducted research on the internationalisation of education on a Japanese Government research scholarship at Waseda University, Tokyo. Darren has worked on numerous EU Commission and British Council funded education development and capacity building programmes with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States' ministries of education and their higher education institutions. He has recently been invited to join the Asia-Europe Foundation's (ASEF) ARC8 Expert Group on Inclusive Mobility of People and Knowledge to prepare the Outlook Report 2030: Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe. Darren is currently Team Leader Designate of the European Union's Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) Programme. SHARE is a large-scale, ASEAN-wide higher education programme to strengthen regional cooperation, enhance quality, regional competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education, contributing to the development of an ASEAN Higher Education Area.



Herman de Leeuw (Member ASEM Expert Group Digitalisation, Groningen Declaration Network)

Herman de Leeuw is Initiator and Executive Director of the Groningen Declaration Network, an international public benefit foundation registered with the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce. He is passionate about putting citizens in control over their own data sets, that is, about bringing together a person's formal, non-formal and informal education attainments and professional experience in a person's "Digital Learner Currency" which that person may access and choose to share with whomever, wherever at any time. Herman brings that vision into practice by bringing relevant stakeholders around the globe together at the annual meeting of the Groningen Declaration Network. Volunteerism and international cooperation lie at the heart of his professional life, which began as a regular presenter at conferences such as AACRAO, EAIE, EUNIS, NAFSA and so forth. From 2006 till 2014, Herman served in elected positions within EAIE, the European Association for International Education, from 2006-2008 as member of its Expert Community for Admissions Officers and Credential Evaluators (ACE), and from 2008-2012 as ACE chair. In 2010, he co-established, together with Simone Ravaioli, EAIE's Task Force DSDP (Digital Student Data Portability). In 2012, Herman initiated the Groningen Declaration Network which he has been driving and supporting from the start as its Executive Secretary, from December 2016 onwards as its Executive Director. In September 2015, Herman received EAIE's President's Award for outstanding service. In September 2018, Herman was selected as one of three nominees for the PIONEER Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Industry. In 1988, Herman graduated with an MA (honors) from Leiden University, The Netherlands, in Arabic Language and Literature. In 2005, Herman was trained as a forensic document researcher at the Netherlands National Police Academy.



Cloud Bai-Yun (ASEM Working Group on the Bridging Declaration, UK Naric)

Dr Cloud Bai-Yun is our Chief Executive. Dr Bai-Yun joined UK NARIC in 1997 to effect the initial Ministerial brief to create and implement the UK NARIC services on behalf of the UK's Government. Under Dr Bai-Yun's dynamic and pioneering leadership, UK NARIC has been transformed from a low profile, loss-making operation to an internationally recognised and respected leading public service provider. Her career history also included designing and developing the National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications (NRP) since its inception in 2001; the National Europass Centre (UK NEC) since 2005; the National Contact Point on Professional Qualifications (UK NCP) from 2008, and the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) Centre for England in more recent years. Dr Bai-Yun was the driving force and creator of the first ever comprehensive database of its kind, the UK's Crown copyright databank, International Comparisons. She was also the designer of the UK NARIC Band Framework, a prized intellectual property of the Crown. The unique International Qualifications Converter for the US and the invaluable Bridge for the Oil and Gas Industry were the brainchild of Dr Bai-Yun. Over the past few years, Dr Bai-Yun has developed and pursued professional interests in the global market for education, skills and international mobility, having served as an elected Board member of the EU NARIC network and wider international community. Internationally, she has been a key mover in taking forward major initiatives in international qualification and standards in key regions worldwide. Dr Bai-Yun has played an active role in the ASEM Education Process, a major contribution to enhancing cross-regional cooperation. She is also the elected Vice President for Standards of TAICEP, the Association of International Credential Evaluation Professionals; the Honorary President of the Sino-Britain Skills Cooperation Development Alliance. At the personal level, Dr Bai-Yun has a high level of proficiency in a number of languages. Her original research was in Slavonic Studies and Linguistics, having gained a doctorate in 1997 at the University of Leeds. She also holds professional qualifications in IT, Computing and Business Management.



Magalie Soenen (Chair ASEM Expert Group on Interregional Credit Transfer Mechanisms and Learning Outcomes Systems)

Magalie Soenen has 20 years' experience in internationalisation in higher education, on institutional level (Ghent University), Erasmus+ national agency level (EPOS vzw) and national policy level (Ministry of Education and Training of Belgium/Flemish Community). Magalie Soenen has developed the mobility policy for higher education in Flanders "Brains on the Move". Magalie Soenen represents Belgium/Flemish Community in the Bologna Process and the ASEM process. She was co-chair of the Bologna Peer Support Group on Quality Assurance and co-chair of the Bologna Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue during the last working period. She is also chair of the ASEM Expert Group on Interregional Credit Transfer Mechanisms and Learning Outcome Systems and co-chair of the ASEM Work Placement Programme. She is coordinator of 7 European Erasmus+ projects, dealing with diverse topics such as quality assurance, inclusive mobility, micro-credentials and digitalisation.