



INFORMAL MEETING OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR RESEARCH

3 FEBRUARY 2021

Belem Cultural Centre - CCB, LISBON

(online event)

INFORMAL MEETING OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR RESEARCH

Speakers Bios

Manuel Heitor, Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education Portugal

Manuel Heitor is Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education in the Portuguese Government since November 2015. From March 2005 to June 2011 he served as Secretary of State for Science, Technology and Higher Education.



He is a Full Professor at the Instituto Superior Técnico, Lisbon, having a PhD from the Imperial College of London in Mechanical Engineering (Experimental Combustion, 1985). He did a post-doctorate at the University of California at San Diego, 1986, having subsequently pursued an academic career at the Instituto Superior Técnico in Lisbon, where he started to develop his research activity in the area of energy and environment, with an emphasis on Fluid Mechanics and Experimental Combustion.

He served as Deputy President of the Instituto Superior Técnico between 1993 and 1998, and since early 1990s has been committing to the study of science, technology and innovation policies, including higher education policies and management. In 1998 he founded the Centre for Studies in Innovation, Technology and Development Policies, IN +, from IST, which was named in 2005 as one of the Top 50 global centres of research on Management of Technology, by the International Association for the Management of Technology, IAMOT. He coordinated, among others, the IST PhD programs in Engineering and Public Policies and in Design Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing Systems.

He was a Research Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin, at the IC2 Institute, Innovation, Creativity and Capital, and during the 2011/12 academic year he was a Visiting Professor at Harvard University.

Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

Mariya Gabriel is the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education, Youth and Sport. Under her leadership, the new Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, and the cultural strand of Creative Europe programmes (2021-2027) will be defined and implemented.



Her main priorities are excellence in research, innovation and education (ERA, EEA, EIA); tackling the R&I divide in Europe; Europe as a leader in strategic innovation areas through the digital and green transition, with a particular attention for young people and regions. "No one left behind" and "Think out of the box" are her mottos.

Between 2017 and 2019, Mariya Gabriel was European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society. She proposed the new Digital Europe programme, worked on EU Strategy on AI, disinformation online, cybersecurity and launched the EuroHPC strategy. She has extensively engaged with external EU partners to enhance digital cooperation, in particular with the Western Balkans and Africa.

She was elected as Member of the European Parliament (MEP) in 2009, 2014 and 2019. Mariya Gabriel is First Vice-President of the European People's Party (EPP), and, since 2012, Vice-President of EPP Women.

Commissioner Gabriel is a board member of the United Nations youth programme Generation Unlimited (GenU). She has been ranked among the 50 most influential women in Europe in the field of cybersecurity by the leading European cybersecurity magazine SC Media UK (2019).

Mariya Gabriel is also known for her involvement in the fight for gender equality. Among others, she received the prestigious Italian prize "Golden Apple" for highest achievements for women. At the European Parliament, she was awarded twice "MEP of the year" - in 2016 for the Development category, and in 2013 for the Gender Equality category.

In November 2020, Commissioner Gabriel received the Annual Award of the Vienna Economic Forum "Partner of the Year 2020" for contribution to the economic development, rewarding Ms Gabriel's vision of a European knowledge strategy comprising the European Education Area, the European Research Area and the new Digital Education Action Plan.

She holds a Master's degree in political sciences and international relations from the Institute of Political Studies (Bordeaux, FR) and a Bachelor's degree in Bulgarian and French Languages from "Paisii Hilendarski" University (Plovdiv, BG). She also graduated from "Dr. Petar Beron" Language High School (Kyustendil, BG).

Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, President ad interim European Research Council

Jean-Pierre Bourguignon was President of the European Research Council between 2014 and 2019 and remains as President ad interim since July 2020.

He has a PhD in Mathematical Sciences (Global Differential Geometry) by the Université Paris VII (1974).

He was the Director of the Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques (IHÉS) from 1994 till 2013, where is now Honorary Professor. He was also the first ERC Panel Chair in Mathematics, for Starting Grants.

For 44 years he was Research Fellow of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), where now remains as Directeur de recherche emeritus.

He held a Professor position at École polytechnique from 1986 to 2012.

From 1990 to 1991, he was President of the Société Mathématique de France and President of the European Mathematical Society from 1995 to 1998. He is a former member of the Board of the EuroScience organisation (2002-2006) and served on EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) committees since 2004.

Jean-Pierre Bourguignon received the Prix Paul Langevin in 1987 and the Prix du Rayonnement Français in Mathematical Sciences and Physics from the Académie des Sciences de Paris in 1997. He is a foreign member of the Royal Spanish Academy of Sciences. In 2005, he was elected honorary member of the London Mathematical Society and has been the secretary of the mathematics section of the Academia Europaea. In 2008, he was made Doctor Honoris Causa of Keio University, Japan, and, in 2011, Doctor Honoris Causa of Nankai University, China. In 2017, he was elected honorary member of the German Association of Mathematicians (DMV) and foreign member of the Portuguese Academy of Sciences. In 2019, he was made honorary member of the Polish Mathematical Society.



Elvira Fortunato, European Research Council Grantee, NOVA University Lisbon, Former Chief Scientific Advisor of the European Commission

Elvira Fortunato is Vice-Rector at NOVA and Director of the Materials Research Center (CENIMAT) of the Associated Laboratory i3N, the Institute of Nanostructures, Nanomodeling and Nanofabrication.



Elvira Fortunato pioneered European research on transparent electronics, namely thin-film transistors based on oxide semiconductors, demonstrating that oxide materials may be used as true semiconductors. She is co-inventor of the paper electronics concept worldwide: Paper-e[®]. In 2008 she wins an Advanced Grant from the European Research Council (ERC) for the project "Invisible" and in 2018 she received the second one ERC, with the amount of € 3.5 million. The project is entitled "Multifunctional Digital Materials Platform for Smart Integrated Applications | DIGISMART".

Her research team is exploring novel active properties in advanced and sustainable multifunctional materials, including oxides as well as novel electronic-active materials including alternative deposition methods, with the main objective of developing eco-friendly technologies and devices to be used and exploited in electronic circuits made of stable amorphous semiconductors able to serve large area smart flexible and conformable surface electronics.

She is an elected member of: Academy of Engineering (2008); European Academy of Sciences (2016); Lisbon Academy of Sciences (2017) and Academia Europaea (2019). She belongs to the Board of Trustees of the Luso-American Development Foundation (2014).

Former Chief Scientific Advisor of the European Commission, between 2016 and 2020.

She is coordinating since 2019 at NOVA University the SPEAR project, an European platform for supporting and implementing plans for gender equality in academia and research.

**Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills,
OECD, Paris**

Andreas Schleicher is Director for Education and Skills at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). He initiated and oversees the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and other international instruments that have created a global platform for policy-makers, researchers and educators across nations and cultures to innovate and transform educational policies and practices.



He has worked for over 20 years with ministers and education leaders around the world to improve quality and equity in education. Former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said that Schleicher “understands the global issues and challenges as well as or better than anyone I’ve met, and he tells me the truth” (*The Atlantic*, July 11). Former UK Secretary of State Michael Gove called Schleicher “the most important man in English education” – even though he is German and lives in France.

Before joining the OECD, he was Director for Analysis at the International Association for Educational Achievement (IEA). He studied Physics in Germany and received a degree in Mathematics and Statistics in Australia. He is the recipient of numerous honours and awards, including the “Theodor Heuss” prize, awarded in the name of the first president of the Federal Republic of Germany for “exemplary democratic engagement”. He holds an honorary Professorship at the University of Heidelberg.

Andrew Wyckoff, Director for Science, Technology and Innovation, OCDE, Paris

Andrew W. Wyckoff is the Director of the OECD's Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) where he oversees OECD's work on innovation, business dynamics, science and technology, information and communication technology policy as well as the statistical work associated with each of these areas.

His experience prior to the OECD includes being a program manager of the Information, Telecommunications and Commerce program of the US Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), an economist at the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and a programmer at The Brookings Institution.



He has served as an expert on various advisory groups and panels which include joining the Global Board of Trustees of Digital Future Society (DFS), being a Commissioner on the Lancet/FT Governing Health Futures 2030 Commission, the International Advisory Board of the Research Council of Norway and Head of OECD's Delegation at the G20 and G7 meetings on ICT and Digital Economy.

Mr. Wyckoff is a citizen of the United States, holds a BA in Economics from the University of Vermont, and a Master of Public Policy from the JFK School of Government, Harvard University.

Joost Korte, Director-General, Director-General in DG EMPL, European Commission

Joost Korte was appointed Director General on the 16 March 2018.

Joost Korte was Deputy Director-General of the European Commission's Trade Department on January 1, 2017. Previously, the Dutch national served as Deputy Director-General in the Agriculture and Rural Development Department as well as in the Enlargement Department. Furthermore, Mr. Korte spent several years in the Commission's Secretariat General as Director responsible for the relations with the Council of Ministers and gained extensive experience in the Private offices of Sir Leon Brittan, Chris Patten and Danuta Hübner. These professional experiences within the European institutions allowed him to develop a profound understanding of EU decision-making.

A lawyer by training, Joost Korte joined the Commission in 1991, following eight years of academic work on European law at the Universities of Utrecht and Edinburgh.



Jean-Eric Paquet, Director General of DG Research and Innovation of the European Commission

Jean-Eric Paquet became Director-General of DG Research and Innovation on 1st April 2018; however, his involvement in EU research policy dates back from 2002, as Deputy Head of Cabinet of Philippe Busquin, then Commissioner in charge of Research and Development.

Jean-Eric's career at the European Commission started in 1993. Since then he contributed in shaping EU policy in various fields and achieved major breakthroughs, notably in DG Transport, where he led the development of the Trans-European Transport Network Policy and was responsible for Europe's transport infrastructure policy and investment strategies, the single European rail area, inland waterways and port policy.

He also gained considerable experience at international level: in DG Enlargement, his portfolio covered Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and FYROM. He was also EU Ambassador in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania from 2004 to 2007.

In 2015, he was appointed Deputy Secretary-General of the European Commission, in charge of Better Regulation and Policy Coordination.

In all his endeavours, he puts co-creation and systemic change at the heart of the decision-making process, and strongly believes that citizens should be more involved in shaping public policy agendas.



Guy Villax, CEO, Hovione, Portugal and Ireland

Guy Villax has been Hovione's Chief Executive Officer since 1997, having previously worked at Price Waterhouse in London and Hovione in Asia.

Hovione is a pharmaceutical manufacturer. It is the country's most prolific patent applicant and the employer of the largest number of PhDs in any company of the private sector. Hovione played a key role in the process development and manufacturing of most of the Hepatitis C cures, and of one of the SARS-Cov-2 therapies.



Guy has been an active actor in the pharma chemistry industry for almost 40 years, this results in a wealth of understanding and perspectives on the subject matter and on the impact of globalization on this industry.

Guy Villax was on the EFCG's Board (European Fine Chemicals group, a CEFIC committee in Brussels) from 2004 to 2016. Over this period Guy was involved in many EFCG advocacy activities to express the voice of the API industry in a wide range of legislative matters.

Guy Villax was a board member of Rx-360 from 2010 to 2017, having been Chair in 2016/17. This consortium brings together companies in the pharmaceutical value chain with an aggregate sales volume of >\$500bn, whose mission is to fight counterfeit medicines. He was elected to the board again as from 2020.

He testified in 2007 before a US Congress sub-committee on the risks of globalization of the pharma supply chain, the risk of falsified medicines and the weak oversight of regulators over API producers located abroad – this took place 2 months before the counterfeit Heparin tragedy that killed over one hundred patients. Guy was part of the EFCG Team that represented the API industry's views during the legislative process that led to the European Parliament voting the Directive on Falsified Medicines. He also represented the EU API industry in the negotiations with the US FDA during 2011 that resulted in the Generic Drugs User Fee Act (GDUFA). This legislation caused a faster approval of ANDAs (market authorizations for the US generics market) and a sharp increase in FDA inspections in India and China and the creation of FDA offices in these countries.

Guy was a member of the Board of Trustees of Universidade Nova de Lisboa from 2017 to 2020.

Guy Villax has a degree in Management from Buckingham University, he is fluent in English, French, Portuguese, Italian and Spanish.

Patrick Prendergast, President & Provost Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin

Patrick Prendergast was elected by academic staff and student representatives as the 44th Provost of Trinity College Dublin, coming into office on August 1st, 2011. The Provost is the Chief Officer of the university responsible to the Board and ultimately to the State for the performance of the university. A change to the Statutes in 2012 confirmed the title of the office as "President & Provost" in matters of external affairs. Previous leadership roles were as Vice-Provost /Chief Academic Officer (2008-2011) and Dean of Graduate Studies (2004-2007). He served on the board of several companies, and on the board of Tallaght Hospital, a large academic hospital in Dublin. He was appointed by the European Commission to the Governing Board of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) in 2012. He participated in the [Glion Colloquium](#), an independent think tank committed to the future of research universities at which he spoke on [Global Research Questions and Institutional Research Strategies](#) in 2015, and on [The Public-to-Private Shift in Universities: Consequences for Leadership](#) in 2017.



Since coming into office as Provost, Dr Prendergast has strengthened Trinity's reputation as a university of global consequence, known for realizing student potential and for research and scholarship that benefits Ireland and the world. Under his Provostship so far, Trinity has developed a [Global Relations Strategy](#) which has doubled international student enrolments and student mobility, has engaged with industry through a new Innovation & Entrepreneurship Strategy, and has restructured the university's administration into three divisions, including a significant focus on commercial revenue generation through the Commercial Revenue Unit (CRU). Projects under development include the new Trinity School of Business co-located with an Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub, as well as the development of E3: the Engineering, Energy, and the Environment Institute. These developments culminated in the launch of a new [Strategic Plan](#) for Trinity in November 2014, and were reviewed in Dr Prendergast's Mid-Term address to Students and Faculty in October 2016. In September 2016 a "Provost's Council" was created. Consisting of alumni and benefactors of the university, it advises the Provost on how to advance Trinity's position in the world by financing new projects and initiatives.

Dr Prendergast came to Trinity as an undergraduate in 1983, where he also completed a PhD. After post-doctoral positions in Bologna, Italy and Nijmegen, The Netherlands, he was appointed to the engineering faculty in Trinity College Dublin in 1995. He has held Visiting Professorships at the Institute of Fundamental Technological Research, Poland; Erasmus University Rotterdam; The Technical University of Delft; and, in 2008, at University Polytechnic of Catalonia (UPC), Barcelona. Prior to his appointment as Provost, he was Professor of Bioengineering where he introduced the teaching of biomechanics into the engineering curriculum, founded the [Masters Programme in Bioengineering](#), and published several hundred articles related to implant design and tissue mechanobiology. During this period he was a Science Foundation Ireland Principal Investigator and held many industry-funded and EU-funded research grants.

Dr Prendergast holds a BA, BAI, PhD, and ScD degrees, all from Trinity College Dublin. He is a Member of the Royal Irish Academy (MRIA), a Fellow of the Irish Academy of Engineering (FIAE) and in 2013 was elected an International Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering (FREng) in the UK. In 2016 he was awarded honorary Fellowship of the Anatomical Society (HonFAS) in recognition of his contributions to bioengineering and anatomy, and in 2018 was made an Honorary Member of the European Society of Biomechanics.

Lidia Borrell-Damián, Secretary-General, Science Europe, Brussels

Lidia Borrell-Damián is the Secretary General of Science Europe, the association representing major public organisations that fund or perform excellent, ground-breaking research in Europe. She holds overall responsibility for the strategy and functioning of the organisation. Prior to this she worked for the European University Association (EUA) between 2006 and 2014. During the last five years in EUA she served as its Director for Research and Innovation (R&I), holding responsible for the overall strategy and activities of EUA in the area, working with EUA individual universities as well as the National Rectors' Conferences.



Her areas of experience cover a wide range of EU R&I priorities, including the EU Framework Programme; European Research Area; research infrastructures; research ethics and integrity; research assessment processes; university-business cooperation; regional innovation; gender issues in research; Digital Agenda and Open Science. She also worked on doctoral education through the EUA-Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE) and coordinated scientific policy input to the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan) through the European Platform of Universities in Energy (EUA-EPUE).

Lidia Borrell-Damian holds a Doctorate in Chemistry (Chemical Engineering Specialty; Solar Energy) from the University of Barcelona. Prior to joining EUA, she was Director of Research at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona from 2003-2005. Before then she was Visiting Scholar at the University of Western Ontario (1999-2001) and at the North Carolina State University (1997-1998).

Àngel Font, Corporate Director of Research and Health, “la Caixa” Foundation, Spain and Chair of the European Foundation Centre

Àngel Font i Vidal holds a PhD in Economics (Barcelona Ramon Llull University) and a Degree in Chemistry (Barcelona University). He also has a diploma in Business Management from EADA.

He began his career as environmental engineer, and subsequently joined Intermón Oxfam where he held different management positions, first in programs serving as Latin America Desk Officer and after as a Deputy Director, where he was liaison officer with Oxfam, and strategic planning manager.

He funded the Un Sol Món (One World) Foundation financed by Caixa Catalunya, where he runs job placement, social entrepreneurship, and social housing and microfinance projects. In 2010 he joined the “la Caixa” Foundation, as coordinator of strategic development, position that combined with the Human Resources Management of the Foundation. In 2014 he joined the Management Executive Committee of the Foundation. Currently is the Corporate Director of Scientific Research. In May 2020 he assumed the Presidency of the European Foundation Center on behalf of the “la Caixa” Foundation.



Carlos Moedas, Member of the Board, Gulbenkian Foundation, Portugal

Carlos Moedas was born in 1970 in Beja, Portugal, and graduated as a civil engineer from *Instituto Superior Técnico* (Lisbon) in 1993. He was one of the first Erasmus Students in Portugal and attended the *École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées* in Paris (1993).

In 1998 he graduated with a Master in Business Administration from the Harvard Business School, USA (1998/2000).

He started his career as a civil engineer working for the French conglomerate *Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux* in France, where he lived for 5 years. After his graduation from Harvard he worked for Goldman Sachs in their Investment Banking division in London.

In 2004 he returned to Portugal and became head of *Aguirre Newman*, where he was also a member of the executive board in Spain. In 2008 he went on to create his own investment management company.

In 2011 he headed the Social Democrat Party's (PSD) economic team and participated on the negotiations for Portugal's 2011 Public Budget.

That same year he was elected a Member of Parliament by the Beja constituency and appointed under-Secretary of State to the Prime Minister of the XIX Constitutional Government of Portugal where he was tasked with coordination of monitoring the adjustment programme structural reforms.

In 2014 he was nominated by the Portuguese Prime-Minister to be the the European Commissioner. He was the Commissioner responsible for Research, Science and Innovation, one of the largest science and innovation projects on the planet worth 77 billion euros. He designed the proposal for the future Horizon Europe programme worth 100 billion euros, set to be launched in 2021. He was the 5th Portuguese national to hold this position since Portugal became a EU Member State in 1986.

Commissioner Moedas co-authored a series of publications in the field of science and innovation. Among these articles, one stands out: 'Open Innovation: Research, Practices and Policies' published in the *California Management Review*, co-signed by Henry Chesbrough who is known for coining the term 'Open Innovation'.

In 2014, the Commissioner became the youngest member to be elected to the Portuguese Academy of Engineering. He is an honorary fellow from the African Academy of Sciences. In 2016 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Laws by the University of Cork in Ireland and in 2018 an Honorary Doctorate in Management from the ESCP Europe (École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris). In 2019 received the Gold Medal of the Portuguese Order of Engineering.



Georg Schütte, Secretary General, Volkswagen Foundation, Germany

As of 1 January 2020, Dr. Georg Schütte is the new Secretary General of the Volkswagen Foundation. The private foundation, based in Hanover, is dedicated to the support of the humanities and social sciences as well as science and technology in research and higher education and is one of the largest foundations in Europe. On 28 June 2019 the Board of Trustees of the Volkswagen Foundation had elected Dr. Georg Schütte to succeed Dr. Wilhelm Krull as Secretary General.



Prior to his engagement with the Volkswagen Foundation, Georg Schütte served as State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry of Research and Education a position to which he was appointed in December 2009 by the then Minister of Education Annette Schavan. In this function, Schütte was particularly involved in the areas of research funding, European research policy, and international scientific cooperation. From 2018 to 2019, he was in charge of negotiations at State Secretary level between the Federal Government and the Länder on the future financing of the German science system and was responsible for the ministry's budget.

Before this, in 2004, Schütte was appointed to the post of Secretary General of the Humboldt Foundation in Bonn – his third term of employment at this foundation. From 2001 to 2003, Schütte was Director of the German-American Fulbright Commission in Berlin. He switched to Berlin following his second appointment at the Humboldt Foundation, where he had headed its policy department from 1998 to 2001. Before this career step, he had worked as a research assistant at the University of Siegen, held teaching positions at various universities, and occupied a position as program manager at the Humboldt Foundation from 1993 to 1998.

In the frame of his doctorate, the media and communication scholar conducted research at the DFG Collaborative Research Center "Screen Media" at the University of Siegen (1989-1994) and as a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University (1992). He studied journalism at the TU Dortmund and television and radio at the City University of New York from 1984 and completed his studies in 1989 with a Master of Arts degree. Dr. Schütte was born in Rheine, Germany, in 1962.

The way to the Volkswagen Foundation

Dr. Schütte is closely familiar with the work and organization of the Volkswagen Foundation from his time as a member of the Board of Trustees (2013-2018). The Foundation's highest decision-making body consists of 14 personalities, half of whom are appointed by the German government and half by the state government of Lower Saxony. Dr. Schütte held the office of Deputy Chairperson.

Over the years, Dr. Schütte has held supervisory board positions in various scientific organizations. He was a member of the university councils of the Universities of Bonn and Siegen, the founding supervisory board of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and the Berlin Institute for Health

Research (BIG), the supervisory board of the Society for Heavy Ion Research (GSI), the International Council of the Facility for Antiproton and Ion Research (FAIR), the supervisory board of the Futurium Berlin, the board of trustees of the Max Planck Institute for Art History - Bibliotheca Hertziana in Rome, and the senates of the Helmholtz and Leibniz Associations. He is also a member of the advisory board of the Fulbright Alumni e. V..

Dr. Schütte is married and has two adult children. He finds balance and new ideas not least in jogging and long walks. He finds reading not a burden, but always a joy.

Thomas Rachel, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister of Education and Research, Germany

Thomas Rachel has been a Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister of Education and Research since November 2005. In this function, he supports the Minister in fulfilling her governmental duties, in particular in the parliamentary sphere. His priority topics at the Federal Ministry are the science system, higher education institutions and research organizations, key technologies and innovation strategies, bioethics and bioeconomy as well as energy and climate research. He is a member of the Senate of the Fraunhofer Society (FhG) and a member of the Board of Governors of the German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development (GIF).



Thomas Rachel has been a Member of the German Bundestag since 1994. He was spokesman on education and research policy of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group there from 1998 to 2005. As a directly elected Member of the German Bundestag, Thomas Rachel represents the constituency of Düren. He was vice-chairman of the commission of inquiry on Globalization of the World Economy, later also spokesman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the commission of inquiry on Ethics and Law in Modern Medicine. For many years, he was vice-chairman of the German-Greek Parliamentary Friendship Group.

Thomas Rachel has been Chairman of the CDU Aachen district association since 2011. He has been Chairman of the CDU Düren-Jülich county association since 2012. Mr. Rachel has been involved in voluntary work from a young age, initially in youth work, later in local politics and the protestant church. Since 2000, Thomas Rachel has been a member of the Land Synod of the Protestant Church of the Rhineland, since 2003 a deputy member of the Synod of the Protestant Church of Germany. He has been Federal Chairman of the CDU/CSU Protestant Working Group (EAK) and as such a member of the CDU Federal Executive since 2003.

From 1986 to 1987, Mr. Rachel worked as an assistant for Matthias Wissmann, a Member of the German Bundestag. From 1992 to 2004, Thomas Rachel worked for the Steel Trade Association Düsseldorf.

Thomas Rachel graduated in 1992 with an M.A. in Political Science, History and Public Law at the University of Bonn with a fellowship from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. He obtained his Abitur at the Städtisches Gymnasium am Wirteltor in Düren.