



European R&I for Enhanced Competitiveness

YES WE CAN!

A Research & Innovation Union Fit for Fight



EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

24th September 2025

Residence Palace, Brussels



AGENDA

NTNU European Conference 2025



08:30

Registration - *The Patio*

09:00

Opening Session - *The Polak Room*
Welcoming Address & Keynotes

09:25

OPENING PLENARY - *The Polak Room*

10:30

Coffee Break - *The Patio*

10:50

PARALLEL SESSIONS

Session 1: Oceans, coast and civil security - *The Maelbeek Room*

Session 2: Community - *The Polak Room*

12:20

Networking Lunch - *The Patio*

13:30

AFTERNOON SESSION - *The Polak Room*
Summary of Parallel Session Highlights
Setting the Scene

13:55

CLOSING PLENARY - *The Polak Room*

14:40

Closing Address & Closing Remarks - *The Polak Room*

Programme

NTNU European Conference 2025

08:30	Registration desk opens <i>Welcoming coffee and pastries</i>
09:00	Welcome and introductory remarks <i>by Massimo Busuoli, Director, NTNU Brussels Office</i>
09:05	Keynote Address <i>by Tor Grande, Rector, NTNU</i>
09:15	Keynote Address <i>by Antonella Sberna, Vice-President, European Parliament</i>
09:25	OPENING PLENARY <i>The blossoming European Political and Strategic Landscape: challenges, complementarities and the role of R&I in a reinforced Approach to Competitiveness</i> Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alexandr Hobza, <i>Cabinet Expert, Cabinet of Executive Vice-President Séjourné, European Commission</i>• Lucilla Sioli, <i>Director of the Artificial Intelligence Office DG CNECT, European Commission</i> Followed by a panel debate featuring <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tor Grande, <i>Rector, NTNU</i>• Alexandr Hobza, <i>Cabinet Expert, Cabinet of Executive Vice-President Séjourné, European Commission</i>• Daniel Wennick, <i>Policy Director, Orgalim</i>• Lucilla Sioli, <i>Director of the Artificial Intelligence Office DG CNECT, European Commission</i> Moderated by Simon Pickard, Network Director, Science I Business
10:30	Coffee Break

Programme

NTNU European Conference 2025

10:50

Parallel Sessions - **SESSION 1**

OCEANS, COAST AND CIVIL SECURITY

Securing Europe's blue future: Leveraging data for a secure and resilient Blue Europe

Welcoming remarks

- **Bjørn Egil Asbjørnslett**, *Director Ocean & Coast*, NTNU
- **Nils Kalstad**, *Director Civil Security*, NTNU

Keynotes

- **Zoi Konstantinou**, *Policy Officer*, DG MARE, European Commission
- **Bertrand Vallet**, *Policy Officer*, DG RTD, European Commission
- **Renauld Hock**, *Team Leader*, DG DEFIS, European Commission

Examples of current approaches:

Digital leadership with data

- **Preeti Pillai**, *Portfolio Manager*, Alfa Laval

The Observational Pyramid

- **Bjørn Egil Asbjørnslett**, *Director Ocean & Coast*, NTNU
- **Nils Kalstad**, *Director Civil Security*, NTNU

Panel debate with the above speakers, followed by an audience Q&A

Moderated by Eirik S. Sivertsen, *Project Manager* Department of Marine Technology, NTNU.

Programme

NTNU European Conference 2025

10:50

Parallel Sessions - **SESSION 2**

COMMUNITY

*Beyond Democratic Resilience in a Digital Society:
Challenges and Opportunities*

Welcoming remarks

- **Karoline Daugstad**, *Director Community*, NTNU

Presentations by the research community

- **Andreas Goldberg**, *Associate Professor*, NTNU
- **Kristine Ask**, *Associate Professor*, NTNU
- **Anne Nielsen**, *Policy Advisor*, ERC, European Commission

Keynotes

- **Simone Rosini**, *Team Leader*, DG EMPL, European Commission
- **Mario Scharfbillig**, *Science Policy*, JRC, European Commission
- **Sanna Sjöblom**, *EU Policy Advisor*, University Alliance Stockholm Trio

Panel debate with the above speakers, followed by an audience Q&A

Moderated by Gabi Lombardo, *Director*, EASSH.

Programme

NTNU European Conference 2025

12:20 **Networking Lunch**

AFTERNOON SESSION

13:30 **Summary of Parallel Session highlights**

- **Karoline Daugstad**, *Director Community*, NTNU
- **Bjørn Egil Asbjørnslett**, *Director Ocean & Coast*, NTNU
- **Nils Kalstad**, *Director Civil Security*, NTNU

13:45 **Setting the Scene - The proposal for a New Horizon Europe**

- **Francisco de la Torre Francia**, *Deputy Head of Unit DG RTD*, European Commission

Moderated by Simon Pickard, *Network Director*, Science I Business

13:55 **CLOSING PLENARY**

The new R&I funding framework: *An appropriate tool for approaching EU future challenges?*

Panel featuring

- **Eszter Lakos**, *Member*, European Parliament
- **Toril A. Nagelhus Hernes**, *Pro-Rector for Innovation*, NTNU
- **Renzo Tomellini**, *Director*, Leonardo Brussels Office
- **Francisco de la Torre Francia**, *Deputy Head of Unit DG RTD*, European Commission

Moderated by Simon Pickard, *Network Director*, Science I Business

14:40 **Closing Address**

by **Manuel Aleixo**, *Cabinet Expert*, Cabinet of Commissioner Ekaterina Zaharieva, European Commission

14:55 **Closing Remarks**

by **Massimo Busuoli**, *Director*, NTNU Brussels Office

LIST OF SPEAKERS

In order of appearance



Massimo Busuoli

Director, NTNU Brussels
Office

Massimo Busuoli has been Head of the NTNU Brussels Office since January 2016. He holds a degree in Physics from the University of Bologna.

He is currently chair of UniLion and chair of EOREA Secretariat. Previously, he was **Head of the EU and International Bodies Unit at ENEA and Director of its Brussels Liaison Office.** He was part of the **Secretariat of the European Energy Research Alliance** (2008–2015), which he coordinated from 2013, and a member of IGLO (2006–2015), chairing it in 2013–2014. He also founded and chaired the **GIURI network of Italian liaison offices in Brussels.**

Expert evaluator for the Commission since FP5, he has served on the Board of Directors of CUP2000, and coordinated the organisational secretariat of the 2014 SET Plan Conference during the Italian EU Presidency.



Tor Grande

Rector, NTNU

Tor Grande is Rector at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

He was **Pro-Rector for Research and Dissemination in 2021 – 2023** and has previously been **Vice-Dean for Research at the Faculty of Natural Sciences** and **Head of the Department of Materials Science and Engineering.**

Grande is **professor in chemistry and materials science** and has broad experience with teaching, research, innovation, and collaboration with industry. He has been visiting researcher at NIRIM, Japan and University of Rennes, France. He has been on sabbatical leave at the EPFL in Switzerland and the Northwestern University in the USA.

Grande has extensive experience in research evaluation including ERC evaluation panels.

In 2009, he received the Gender Equality Award at NTNU.



Antonella Sberna

Vice-President,
European Parliament

Antonella Sberna is Member of and Vice-President of the European Parliament.

She has been a **Member of the European Parliament** since 2024, she is a member of the **European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) political group.** Since July 16, 2024, she has been the **Vice-President of the European Parliament.** She is a member of the legislative committees on cohesion policy, the housing crisis, and food security and the environment.



Alexandr Hobza

Cabinet Expert, Cabinet of
Executive Vice-President
Stéphane Séjourné,
European Commission

Alexandr Hobza is the expert in the Cabinet of Stéphane Séjourné, the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission.

Previously, he was **Chief Economist at DG Research & Innovation** and part of Mario Draghi's team preparing the report on Europe's competitiveness. He also served as Vice-Chair of the **OECD Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy**, led teams on structural reform assessments, and advised the Director-General of DG ECFIN. Before joining the Commission, he was a Research Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels.

He holds a **Ph.D. from the University of Economics in Prague**, a D.E.A. in Quantitative Economics from Université Libre de Bruxelles, and an M.A. in Economics of European Integration from a joint program of the University of Antwerp, Staffordshire University, and the University of Economics in Prague.



Lucilla Sioli

Director of the Artificial
Intelligence Office DG CNECT,
European Commission

Dr Lucilla Sioli is the Director of the "EU AI Office" within Directorate-General CONNECT at the European Commission.

She is responsible for the coordination of the **European AI strategy** and its governance, including the **AI Continent Action Plan**, the **Apply AI strategy**, the implementation of the AI Act and international collaboration in AI and AI for good. She is also responsible for the coordination of the R&D&I activities in the field of AI and for the implementation of innovation activities in key strategic sectors such as healthcare, robotics and advanced manufacturing.

Lucilla holds a **PhD in economics from the University of Southampton (UK)** and one from the **Catholic University of Milan (Italy)** and has been a **civil servant with the European Commission since 1997**.



Daniel Wennick

Policy Director, Orgalim

Daniel Wennick is the Policy Director of Orgalim, Europe's Technology Industries.

Appointed Policy Director in March 2023, Daniel oversees **Orgalim's policy and advocacy** across the Policy Committee, Working Groups, Task Forces, and the Executive Forum for Advanced Manufacturing, working closely with the leadership team.

Before joining Orgalim, he held roles including **Director of EU Affairs** and Head of the Brussels Office at Teknikföretagen, Director of International Affairs at Swedenergy, and Deputy Director at the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise in Brussels. He is currently completing an **Executive PhD in Political Science on EU affairs at Maastricht University**.



Simon Picard

Network Director,
Science | Business

Simon Pickard leads on network engagement and development for **Science | Business** in line with the company's growth strategy. He previously held directorial positions with **The Academy of Business in Society (ABIS) network and IDAS Global**, a technology solutions provider to the global cash industry. Within these roles, he designed and coordinated a wide range of international projects focused on sustainability-driven **innovation**, both in research and education.

Simon holds master's degrees in modern languages from the University of Oxford and in business administration from HEC Paris School of Management.



Bjørn Egil Asbjørnslett

Director, NTNU Ocean &
Coast

Bjørn Egil Asbjørnslett is Director of strategic area Ocean and Coast at NTNU, and Professor in Marine System Design at Department of Marine Technology, NTNU.

He has broad research, supervision and teaching experience related to maritime and marine activities. Has established and lead two interdisciplinary study programs within aquaculture, as well as **participated in several centers for research-driven innovation in the maritime and marine sectors.**



Nils Kalstad

Director, NTNU Civil Security

Associate professor Nils Kalstad (1978) is the director of NTNU Civil Security.

Kalstad holds an M.Sc. in Industrial Mathematics from the Department of Mathematical Sciences (NTNU), and a Ph.D. in Information Security from the Department of Computer Science at the University of Oslo.

He has previously lead **NTNU Department of Information Security and Communiation Technology (2017-2023)** and been **the director of NTNU Center for Cyber and Information Security (NTNU CCIS, 2017-2023).**



Zoi Konstantinou

Policy Officer, DG Mare,
European Commission

Zoi Konstantinou is a Marine Scientist MSc-PhD, with expertise on Integrated Coastal Management and on Science-Policy-Society interface.

Before joining the European Commission, she worked in research, in science-policy interface and in higher education. As an EC Policy Officer, she is working on the **European Marine Observation and Data network (EMODnet)**, the **EU Digital Twin of the Ocean (EU DTO)** and on the coordination of **Ocean Observation**.



Bertrand Vallet

Policy Officer, DG RTD,
European Commission

Bertrand Vallet works as a policy officer at the European Commission's Directorate General for Research and Innovation in the Oceans, Seas, and Waters Unit.

With engineering credentials in water treatment, he also holds a **master's and PhD in wastewater treatment and modelling**. Bringing over 20 years of sectoral experience, he focuses on **sustainable water services, the circular economy, ecosystem protection, and disseminating innovative solutions to facilitate a sustainable green transition**.



Renauld Hock

Team Leader, DG DEFIS,
European Commission

Renauld Hock worked for 20 years as Engineer officer for the Belgian Defence.

He managed national and multinational projects, participated in three operational missions on board of an operational frigate and then specialized in **Cyber & Intelligence Operations**.

Before joining the European Commission, he led the binational (BEL-NLD) rMCM programme for tree year. Today, as Team Leader within DG DEFIS, he contributes to the strengthening of the **European Defence Technological and Industrial Base**.



Preeti Pillai

Portfolio Manager and
Product Owner, Alfa Laval

Preeti Pillai is the Portfolio Manager for Automation & IoT at Alfa Laval Decanters.

She leads the transformation of industrial separation equipment into intelligent, autonomous systems to drive technology leadership. With a background in digital and data product management and innovation, she is now focusing on accelerating customer and business value through Industry 4.0 technologies – leveraging data and machine learning to drive efficiency and sustainability in particularly the food and water industries.



Eirik Selnæs Sivertsen

Project Manager,
Department of Marine
Technology, NTNU

Eirik Sivertsen is project manager for small satellites at NTNU in Trondheim.

He is currently also working with the observation pyramid, NTNU Ocean and Coast and «Mission Mjøsa». The observation pyramid includes groups at AUR-lab, shore control lab, autonomous robots lab, UAV-lab og smallsat-lab.

He came from the position as a member of parliament in Norway (2009-2021). There he served among other things at the standing committee of Transportation and Communications, the standing committee of Foreign Affairs and Defence and the standing committee of Local Government and Public Administration.

He also has been the chair of the Storting's delegation for Arctic Cooperation and chairman of the international Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region.



Karoline Daugstad

Director, NTNU Community

Karoline Daugstad is Director of NTNU Strategic Research Area Community.

She is professor in human geography and **her research focus on agriculture and climate change, landscape policies, mountain farming, and cultural heritage**. She has been project leader for a number of projects with national and international funding.

Daugstad has experience as **department head and vice-dean for research at NTNU**, she has been involved in evaluation of research at national as well as European level.



Andreas Goldberg

Associate Professor,
Department of Sociology
and Political Science, NTNU

Andreas Goldberg is an Associate Professor in Political Science (quantitative methods) at the Department of Sociology and Political Science at NTNU.

Before joining NTNU, he held positions as lecturer and postdoctoral researcher (EUROPINIONS project) at the Amsterdam School of Communication Research (ASCoR) at the University of Amsterdam (2016-2021), as postdoctoral researcher and PhD student at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Geneva (2011-2016) and as project collaborator in the Swiss Electoral Studies Project (SELECTS) at FORS Lausanne (2011-2015).



Kristine Ask

Associate Professor,
Department of
Interdisciplinary Studies of
Culture, NTNU

Kristine Ask is an Associate Professor at Department of Interdisciplinary Studies of Culture at NTNU where she research the relationship between technology and society.

She is interested in how digital technologies are made part of our everyday life, and how appropriation can lead to new and unexpected meanings and practices. In addition she is concerned with how technology can be used to include and exclude vulnerable groups of users.

In both research and teaching she combine internet- and game studies with perspectives from Science and Technology Studies (STS). She use using qualitative methods like interviews and ethnography in combination with theoretical approaches such as actor-network-theory, script and domestication, to focus on my analysis on the heterogenous, complex, changeable and relational.



Anne Nielsen

Policy Adviser, European
Research Council

Anne Nielsen is a policy adviser in the sector of Scientific Impact and Feedback to Policy at the European Research Council Executive Agency (ERCEA).

She joined ERCEA in 2017, initially working in the Social Sciences and Humanities unit before transitioning to the feedback to policy sector. Prior to joining ERCEA, Anne worked in **DG Research and Innovation** within the unit overseeing the H2020 Societal Challenge 6 work programme: "Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative, and reflective societies."

With a background in sociology and cultural studies, she holds a **PhD from the European University Institute in Florence**. Preceding her work in the European Commission, she spent two years as a postdoctoral fellow at Yale University and has worked in think tanks and international NGOs, concentrating on migration, women's rights, and child protection.



Simone Rosini

Project Officer, DG EMPL,
European Commission

Simone Rosini is a Socio Economic analyst and work as Project leader for the European Commission – DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Brussels (Belgium).

DG Employment monitor and analyse latest developments in European social equity and inclusion, labour market policies, free trade agreements (focus on TTIP and FTA with Asian countries), innovation policy and on digital single market strategy



Mario Scharfbillig

Science for Policy, JRC,
European Commission

Mario Scharfbillig works on behavioural research and implementation in the area of evidence-informed policymaking at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission since 2019.

He is currently leading the work on values and identities in the political process as part of the Enlightenment 2.0 research programme. Since 2022, he is **associate editor of the JRC Editorial Review Board**.

He received his **PhD in economics from the University of Mainz**, where he specialized in research on behavioural economics, public policy and corporate governance. During his PhD, he also managed the **Interdisciplinary Public Policy (IPP) research group at the University of Mainz**.



Sanna Sjöblom

EU Policy Officer, University
Alliance Stockholm Trio

Sanna Sjöblom is a Human Rights expert and EU Policy Officer for the University Alliance Stockholm Trio.

Stockholm Trio works proactively to shape the EU's upcoming framework programme for research and innovation, **FP10**, set to run from 2028 to 2034.

The Brussel representations efforts include **drafting joint position papers, providing input through consultations**, and utilizing their Brussels presence to **host seminars and create opportunities** for the three universities to participate in panels, expert groups, and networks.



Gabi Lombardo

Director, EASSH

Gabi Lombardo (PhD LSE), is Director of the European Alliance for SSH.

SSH is one of the largest advocacy and science policy organizations in Europe. EASSH advocates for an evidence-based approach to policy-making, and researchers' inclusion in funding design and NTNU is a member of the Alliance. High-level experience in strategic and 'foresight' planning working in international organisations like London School of Economics, European Research Council and Science Europe. She's an **evaluator for the EU, World Bank, and COST**.

Gabi received the Young Academy of Europe Prize in 2018.



**Francisco de la Torre
Francia**

Deputy Head, DG RTD,
European Commission

Francia de la Torre is currently Deputy Head of the Common Strategic Planning & Programming Service Unit at the Directorate-General Research and Innovation.

De la Torre joined the **European Commission** in 2007 after having lectured at **the University of Barcelona and the Ramon Llull University**. He has worked on legal and financial management of EU-funded research projects, on horizontal aspects of the implementation of the framework programmes (simplification, business processes, the Funding and Tenders Portal), and on the programming of research on social sciences and humanities.



Eszter Lakos

Member of the
European Parliament

Eszter Lakos (EPP, Hungary) was elected to the European Parliament in 2024 as a member of the TISZA Party.

In the Parliament, MEP Lakos serves as a member of the Committee on Industry, Research, and Energy (ITRE), Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), Committee on Security and Defence (SEDE) and special committee on the European Democracy Shield (EUDS). She is member of **STOA**, the Parliament's Science and Technology Options Assessment Panel.

Before assuming her mandate, she worked at the European Institute of Technology & Innovation (EIT) in Budapest and as a research attaché at the Permanent Representation of Hungary to the EU, representing Hungary in Horizon Europe negotiations. She holds a PhD in International Law & Economics from Bocconi University in Milan.



**Toril A. Nagelhus
Hernes**

Vice-Rector, Research &
Innovation, NTNU

Toril A. Nagelhus Hernes is Vice President for research and innovation at Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU, and a professor in medical technology (PhD from 1997).

She is **responsible for university collaboration** with industry, public sector and society (external relations) as well as the **knowledge transfer, commercialization of research, facilitating spin off companies from students and scientific employees.**

Hernes is also in several national and regional innovation ecosystem clusters, boards and bodies. Hernes is engaged in political discussions regarding university's role in innovation ecosystems.



Renzo Tomellini

General Manager,
Leonardo Brussels Office

Renzo Tomellini is General Manager of the Leonardo Brussels Office and collaborates with the Defense Information Studies Research Institute (ISTRID).

A **chemist by training**, with additional studies in business management, administration, and EU law, he began his career as a researcher at the **Italian Industrial Research Center for New Materials** and later managed the Brussels office of the **Italian National Center for Reference Materials**. He joined the European Commission in 1991, where **he led units on Nanosciences, Nanotechnologies, and Materials**, contributed to framework programmes such as **Horizon Europe**, and served as Acting Director in DG Research and Innovation.

From 2021 to 2022, he headed the **technical secretariat of the Ministers of Ecological Transition and of Environment and Energy Security**, and was President of the National Council for Territorial and Environmental Information. He has published extensively, is author of several patents, and has lectured on EU business management at the **University of Bergamo**.



Manuel Aleixo

Cabinet Expert, Cabinet of
Commissioner Ekaterina

Zaharieva, European Commission

Manuel Aleixo is a cabinet expert in the cabinet of Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation, Ekaterina Zaharieva.

Formerly, he was a Head of the Unit at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation responsible for the ERA, Spreading Excellence, and Research Careers. Manuel has also worked in the European Parliament and as a diplomat in Portugal's Foreign Ministry.

Transport information

Address of the conference: Rue de la Loi 55, 1040 Bruxelles

Nearest Metro Stop:

Schuman

Nearest Bus Stop:

Maelbeek

Nearest Train Station:

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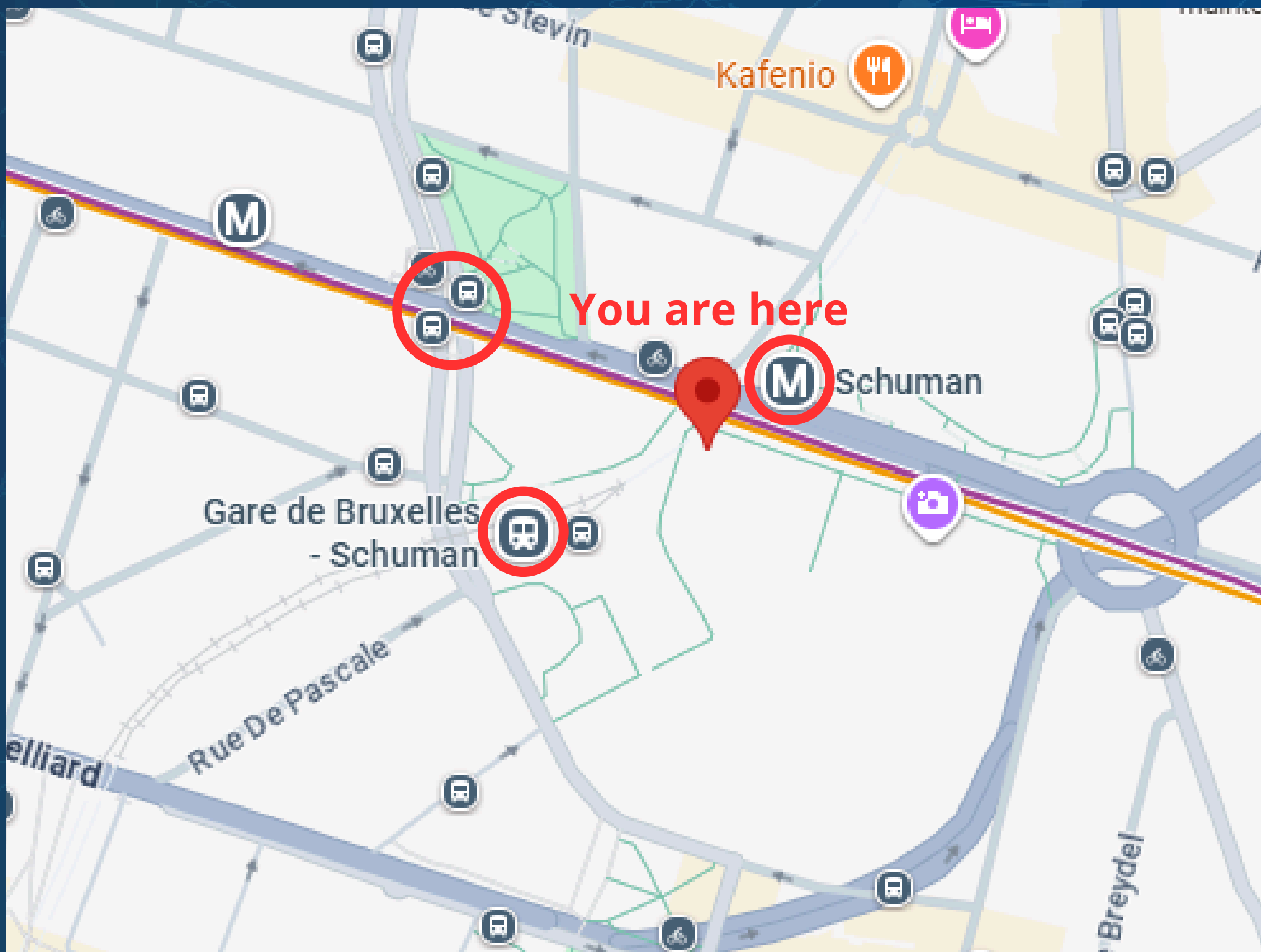
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Uber



Thank you for attending the 9th NTNU European Conference

We hope to see you next year!



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