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Dr. Laurent Bontoux earned a diploma of engineering in food technology from ENSIA, in Paris, a "Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies" (DEA) in enzymatic engineering from the Technological University of Compiègne (France) as well as a MS and PhD in environmental engineering from the University of California at Berkeley (USA). Before joining the European Commission, Laurent worked briefly as an engineer in product development at a small Californian high-tech company and then joined Procter & Gamble as an environmental safety scientist.

After joining the European Commission, he worked in technology foresight, assessment of environmental technologies as well as strategic planning at the Joint Research Centre. He was also Scientific Officer at the Directorate General for Research in the Environment & Health area under the EU 5th Framework Programme. He later managed the independent Scientific Committee for Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) at the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers of the European Commission (EC) where he was also dealing with nanotechnologies, antimicrobial resistance and electromagnetic fields at the science/policy interface.

Laurent now runs a foresight study on eco-industries at the JRC.