

INTERVIEW EUROPA NOVA



HILDE VAUTMANS

MEP

#ELLESFONTBOUGERLEUROPE

What has been your journey to reach the position you currently hold? And have you felt, during your career, that being a woman could be an obstacle, or at least have an influence on your career path? If so, how did you overcome it?

I have been politically active for a long time already and it won't come as a surprise to you that my gender has indeed played a role on several occasions. But being a woman has also brought some benefits to my career. When the law on gender equality had just been voted, I got the second and elective place on the list. On the other hand, I always followed defence and foreign affairs, which were topics that at that time were mainly followed by men. So I always had to make sure I knew my files twice as well, fortunately that wasn't a problem. (laughs)

What dimension do you think the European Union should explore in the future? What are the key values that you would like to see its representatives uphold?

Respect for other people is a value I hold very highly, and which drives my political vision and activities. I believe that a world in which everyone shows respect for the other, for their human dignity and for their choices, would be a much better world. Many of the problems we face today stem from the fact that some of us do not respect women or minorities as equally capable human beings. Therefore, I believe the EU should keep on promoting tolerance, understanding and a global commitment to human rights. These are values that I keep to in all my political and personal interactions, and that I also expect from people I interact with.

What advice would you give to a young woman who might be afraid to enter this sector?

Simple, they shouldn't be! I would tell every young woman not to let obstacles, fears and difficulties stop them. Some people might tell you that you are not good enough because you are a woman, but do not let that affect your ambition and your dedication: show them that you are good enough! We need more strong women who are passionate about politics and the European project. Do not be afraid to let your voice be heard, because there are so many people waiting to hear it, including me.