

INTERVIEW EUROPA NOVA



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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?

Before joining the European Parliament, I have worked for the Dutch national police on issues related to inclusion. Experiences with discrimination and sexism have largely shaped my motivation to get involved in politics. I felt a very personal mission to combat social and economic inequalities. Entering the European Parliament as a woman of colour comes with certain challenges, like underestimation and prejudices. At a certain point, you have to stop listening to it and focus on your own mission.

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?

The key values I wish to uphold are values of diversity and inclusion. I think the EU should consider these values as a priority moving forward. They are also closely related to my work as FEMM Coordinator for Renew Europe. I believe the right to equal representation is the key to an inclusive EU. Women and people of colour remain under-represented in in all domains of decision-making at the highest level. A lack of diversity really is a missed opportunity to shape diverse and inclusive policy in the EU.

In the Parliament, I aim to unblock the Women on Boards Directive and promote the role of women in company boards. I am also glad to see that the European Commission wishes to uphold the same values and aims to improve the diversity of its own institutions.

Secondly, I am committed to combatting violence against women. Especially in times of crises, such as the pandemic, we see that women suffer from a rising numbers of domestic violence. We need to implement necessary protocols on violence against women in order to improve the fundamental values of human rights and dignity in the EU.

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

Be open and speak out on your ambitions and the goals you want to achieve and ask yourself questions on the things that give you energy and you wish to change. Build a supporting network around you that support you in your mission and that provide you with constructive feedback.

As long as you are intrinsically motivated to make a meaningful change, there is nothing that can hold you back. As a woman, this might mean you have to fight and challenge the existing gender norms, but it's all worth it.