

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February, 2020, women from the civil society and the private sector gathered at a roundtable discussion about “Women in Sustainability”, hosted by Arabesque.



Arabesque is a sustainable finance firm that delivers asset management to clients by integrating quantitative investment strategies. Their top notch quantitative analysis is using high-end mathematical simulations and big data on environmental, social and governance financial market trends. The idea behind is to help companies that would like to consider the benefit of all the stakeholders involved in the production cycle. According to the principles of the firm profitability can have a complimentary relationship with responsibility. Clients of

Arabesque share the same principle and must have sincere willingness to transit towards decarbonization. Arabesque is an active member of the UN Global Compact, that is a group of companies accredited for the honest will and effort to commit to Corporate Social Responsibility. The Chairman is also one of the Founders of the UN Global Compact Institution.

During the talk, in a jolly atmosphere three prominent women who work in Sustainability shared stories, lessons and advices reflecting on their professional journey. Felicity Spors, introduced the audience to the Climate Science Sector, Liv Ehlerl to the big data Sector of Finance, and Britta von Campenhausen to the Sector of Arts as a mean to sensitize people.

The presentations by the speakers, were succeeded by group discussions over a “menu” of topics that were reflecting on how we, the all-female participants are experiencing our professional dynamics within the male-oriented sector of sustainability. Several important messages were delivered by all the groups. Among the most commonly vocalized was the fact that discrimination over women in a professional context, is a highly variable concept based on the geographical region or the working sector. For example, South and East Europe and the Global South overall and at the same time traditional Finance sectors, are more male-dominated than working in academia or the civil society or in the North European countries. However, in all localities and sectors there is still a lot of space for improvement when it comes to gender balance. In an overall context, women from the groups felt that they had to follow physical and behavioral strategies in order to have their voice be heard at work. Another note frequently reported was that typical male behavior, even among women are appreciated and applauded in the working context. But this statement could sound a bit patronizing for women on what is the



intrinsic nature of woman, which is another problem often encountered in a professional environment. All groups identified mentorship as the most significant solution for women to embrace their feminine professional behavior (whatever that may mean), operate in confidence and grow within work.

Particularly in the Sustainable Development, Environment, Climate and Humanitarian action, it is often noticed that women are dominating the volunteering movements. This is also profoundly observed in our Youth Climate Ambassadors Community. On the contrary, high end positions in the same sectors, like the Boards, Councils, CEO and Directing positions are almost monopolized by men. The involvement of Marjolein Snippe in the board of voting members of CUNCR, as well as the new election of our exceptional Youth Climate Ambassador, Joyce Najm, is a great starting point for our organization to change and break that ceiling starting from our organization, don't you think?