

INTERVIEW EUROPA NOVA



# MARTINA DLABAJOVA 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 must say that my professional journey has been quite long but straightforward. I feel that all the obstacles and life struggle I experienced during my studies and professional career helped me to take me where I am now. After high school, I moved to Italy, where I studied political science at the University of Padua. However, already during this period, I started my first company that aimed at helping to connect Italian businesses and local authorities with various EU opportunities.

The company later on successfully expanded to other regions in Europe, starting from Czech Republic, and Slovakia to eventually other European countries. However, while 20 years in business have been fulfilling, I decided to come back to my roots and to something that has been dear to my heart already during my studies in Italy - the European integration.

To answer your question whether being a woman has been an obstacle in my success, I must say that I have never perceived it this way. It is true that being an eastern European girl that moved to Western Europe in a very young age, shaped me to a great extent. It helped me to learn how to “fight” my way through and how to face difficulties that I experienced during my business years. An interesting fact I learnt during these years in business is that it is quite unusual to be a woman in this sector. Many times, during negotiations, I was the only woman at a negotiating table, surrounded by men. However, this does not happen only in the business sector, but it is equally omnipresent in politics, despite the steady progress in recent years.

**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?**

My goal has always been to make the EU more accessible, pragmatic and bring it closer to the citizens. Even if we can see some progress happening, there is still room for improvement, and we need to continue to work on it. Many times, words are not enough, and the EU representatives have to do more than that. However, thinking about the impact of their steps and decisions should be in their mind for the whole time.

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

Don't be afraid at all 😊 and follow your dreams. Do not take bad advice personally and learn something new every day. Don't give up and work on yourself all the time. And finally, know when it is the right time to move on.