



UNITEE

New European Business Confederation

ENTREPRENEURIAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEW CHALLENGES FOR EUROPEAN WOMEN

**ADDRESS BY ADEM KUMCU
PRESIDENT OF UNITEE**

16 MAY 2013

Conference held at the European Parliament

Madam Deputy Minister, Members of the **European Parliament, Honoured Guests and Friends**. Welcome to the conference “**Entrepreneurial and Professional challenges of New European Women.**”

It fills me with great pride and pleasure to see so many of you here today and I am **looking forward** to hearing from the **impressive panel** of experts we have assembled from the worlds of **business, politics and academia**.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank **tMs Emine Bozkurt**, the host of today's event, who was **such a great help** with the organization of this conference. I am also particularly happy to welcome **Dr. Askin Asan, the Turkish Deputy Minister of Family and Social Policies**, who is going to be our **key note speaker**. Many thanks also to our other panelists for agreeing to attend this conference and to give us the pleasure to hear their interesting interventions about this important issue:

- **Dr Caroline Essers**, will present the scientific research approach to the issues connected to New European female entrepreneurship.
- **Ms Agnes Hubert**, from the Bureau of European Policy Advisers, will present the framework within which EU policies support women entrepreneurs.

- And at the end of the conference you will be given the chance to converse directly with **professionals Ms Tanya Mann Rennick and Ms Suzan Kizilaslan.**

Today's event follows in the steps of last year's grant success "**Strengthening Women's Business Leadership in the EU: A focus on Women from a Migrant Background**". The conference was attended by over **280 established and aspiring women entrepreneurs** from all over Europe. We had the great privilege to play host to an impressive panel of speakers including **Vice President of the European Parliament Ms Isabelle Durant**, and **Mr Ali Babacan**, the **Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey.**

I am addressing you today as a man, and it matters because I do believe that **the battle for women's integration does not have to be fought only by women.** It is a shared interest that **ALL stakeholders** need to set as their **common GOAL.**

Women are **not only half of the world's population;** there are half of what constitutes our civilizations, our history and cultures, but also our economies and our sustainable future.

We all use the phrase "the gaps between men and women", as I am doing today in front of you, and although it is true, it creates a biased idea that there is a gender fight. **We at UNITEE refuse to envisage a gender fight,** and see instead a common opportunity, a **gender alliance.**

The European-Turkish Business Confederation was established 2 years ago to represent European-Turkish **businessmen and women** around Europe. We organise conferences and activities to **stimulate** cross-border trade between our **member entrepreneurs** and those in different countries around Europe.

However, I **regret to say,** that the vast majority of the entrepreneurs who have attended our events in the past are **predominately men.** This situation needs to change. Through our Women conference series we are taking **concrete steps** in order to change this situation.

With today's conference, we are essentially giving the **floor to you**, our women members, to share your **experiences**, express your **opinions** and **propose ideas** to the following central question: how we can strengthen women entrepreneurship and by extension, the European economy?

As a business confederation UNITEE has a **distinct interest** in strengthening the European economy. We therefore actively supports the empowerment of women in the business world, through a **variety of activities** ranging from workshops to trade missions. It includes the organization of conferences like this one, where we **inform** our members on European policies and **lend support** on the way to entrepreneurship. We also **defend and promotes our members interest at the EU level**, e.g. through initiating roundtables where interested business professionals can meet and talk directly to important politicians and EU stakeholders.

Hand in hand with our national federations we **form a strong and influential Europe wide network** that provides you with services and support covering all aspect of entrepreneurship. Together, we are working **to fight gender stereotypes and negative cultural habits**.

I would now like to leave the floor to the Deputy Minister but before, let me share the words of former president of the United Nations **Kofi Annan** with you who said ***“Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.”***

A better economic reality, a sustainable development and good stable governance that are the objectives of the European Union, we are all fighting for.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to thank you once more for your attention and for your involvement in what I hope, will be a turning point in the promotion of women in decision making positions.

Thank you!

