

## Inspiring 50 in The Hague with Queen Máxima of The Netherlands and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte

The narrow representation of women in the technologic field, as highlighted by the [European Commission's "She Figures"](#), is a sharp reminder of how slow gender equality progresses in male dominated fields, no matter how well tracked and documented it is.

On the 25 May 2016, leading women in the European tech scene met at the Maurishuis Museum for a day of discussion on diversity in the tech industry. The Maurishuis Museum is renown over the world for hosting paintings from the Dutch Golden age, including the famous "Pearl Earring" by 17th- century Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer. One of the many inspiring women in the Maurishuis Museum on that day.



*Inspiring Perspectives: Lady Geek CEO Belinda Parmar talked about the worrying figures of female employees in the tech sector in 2015, and how we can campaign to inspire young girls to consider a career in the tech industry.*

Netherlands Special Envoy for startups and Former European Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes introduced the event and the special guests for the day: Queen Máxima of The Netherlands, and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte.



*Inspiring 50 co-founder Janneke Niessen (left), Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, and Netherlands Special Envoy for startups Neelie Kroes (right).*

background and unusual career path. Born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago by her single mother of three children, she eventually attended Yale, studied law at Oxford University and became an attorney at law, as well as an on-air journalist, host and Presenter in the US and Trinidad.

Over the past few years, the Dutch government has work intensely to support the growth of tech start-ups in the Netherlands.

Kroes, who has been a long-time advocate for technology and start-ups, announced: "All companies of the future will be tech companies, and it is vital that we work together now to encourage more girls and women to take an interest in technology or quite simply they will be left behind."

A career in tech is rewarding and fun and urgent attention is needed to address the diversity in the sector to bring positive change for a future generation. We hope through this event we can come up with new ideas that can make a difference."

One of the attendees, Facebook global director of diversity Maxine Williams talked about her

In a few years the country has grown as one of the Europe's biggest start-up hubs. Investment and the number of start-ups continue to increase every year. The Next Web is now an established and world-renowned tech conference held in Amsterdam each year.

As of January 2016, The Netherlands is ranked 4th place in the EU and 19th globally in the Global Startup Ecosystem Ranking.

Much like the rest of the European startup scene, Dutch startups are yet to improve the overall gender imbalance in the tech industry. In 2015, 13% of founders were female, while the European average is at 17% and in Silicon Valley, 24%.



*Mark Rutte, Dutch Prime Minister, interviewed by Dutch hockey champion and Olympic gold medalist Kim Lammers, chairwoman of the event.*



*Clemence Tanzi, qLegal Coordinator, and Veronic Sijstermans, University of Amsterdam Clinic's Manager.*

Initiatives to tackle the tech gender issue have spread in many European countries. The aim of Inspiring Fifty is to inspire women to pursue a career in tech by showcasing successful role models. One of the organisation's motto is: 'If she can see it, she can be it.' Founders Janneke Niessen and Joelle Frijters explained that the "goal of the event is to bring together these brilliant women to discuss just how we can work both individually and collectively to address the diversity issue. We are delighted to have the support of Queen Máxima and Prime Minister Mark Rutte. It demonstrates what an important topic diversity is and we hope to keep it top of the agenda until it hopefully is no longer necessary."



*Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, and the Inspiring 50 attendees.*