

Dear Ladies and gentleman,

Today and tomorrow we will talk about economy, energy, migrations and a little bit about the role of women in our society and their role in politics and the business life.

I can say, that politics and business are still man's world. Also in Europe not only in less developed part of world.

Each of us, who are here today, can tell our own story, why we have decided to enter this man world. What convinced us? What motivates us?

I can of course tell my story and I will, but first, I will tell you some statistics for my country.

If I start with politic - Our Parliament has 90 members. In the final composition of Parliament today, 32 of those are women, which is more than 1/3 or 36%. In comparison to other countries, I can say, that we are successful. Of course it was not always so.

In 2008 we only had 12 women in parliament, a very small 13,3%. Of course, the change did not happen by itself. We have changed the law and now we have a very precise rule: »On any list of candidates sexes may be represented by less than 35 % of the total actual number of candidates on the candidate list.»

With this change the structure of Parliament repaired, in favor of women, of course.

In the business sector however, we currently don't have the legal quota for company management and for members of supervisory boards. Therefore the situation is significantly worse. According to a survey carried out in 2014, Slovenia had only 5% of companies run by women.

Many of the world's research indicates that companies leading by women are more successful than companies lead by men.

So why do we still live in the last millennium, when the world really is divided among male and female? How much can we blame ourselves for this and by what extent is it the fault of the system?

I will of course focus on politics, and my active role in the last couple of years.

I will talk about my experience and discuss the real issues women face in politics, especially those in leading roles/positions.

In March 2013 I became the first female Prime Minister of Slovenia and the first woman in one of the most important political positions in our country. Until then, it was reserved for men only.

We could expect that things are much better in the European Union. But when I attended the meetings of the European council, where the heads of

governments sit, there were only 4 women and 24 men, which is staggering 3.7% !!!

Why is this world still reserved for men?

1. Maybe it's because women themselves do not dare to step forward?

As the Prime Minister, I was quite unhappy because I did not succeed in including more female ministers in my government. I can tell you that I have made great efforts. But at the end when it was necessary to make a decision and step forward, the female candidates said no. Why?

2. Maybe it's because people and media are more critical to us than to our male colleagues?

From my own experience, I can tell you, that the media was never concerned with the appearance of my predecessors. But from the very moment I took office, there was constant backlash of my clothing, questions were raised about the length of my skirt, people were guessing whether my shoes were suitable and there was an uproar if I dared to wear the same outfit twice. I was constantly asking whether I was a mannequin or the Prime minister frantically trying to save our country from bankruptcy.

Why these are only issues for women?

Evidently, women are under more public scrutiny compared to our male colleagues, which I believe, is one of the reasons less women undergo a career in politics.

We can ask - WHY WOMEN ARE REQUIRED IN POLICY?

However, I think that women can bring a new light to a situation, and offer an alternative solutions to a problem.

Our ability to compromise, and not give up, even in the most difficult situations, is a vital quality to possess.

We can provide a different perspective, a female perspective to the world. That is a fact, and our grandest attribute. **In Slovenia, we have a saying that a woman bears three corners of a house– and this is certainly true.**

Not long ago women fought for our right to vote, women fought for our right to wear trousers and I am certain that in the near future, women in leadership roles will be a normal occurrence.

Allow me to conclude with the visionary words of a man – Jean Monnet: “When we decided upon the goal that we want to reach, we must act without making assumptions about the risks of not achieving it. As long as you did not try it, you cannot say that nothing is impossible.”

Nothing happens by itself, women are the ones who have the power to change these things, **only we can do it.**

In Slovenia we say – When men cannot solve problems, it's time for a women to take the lead.

And, ladies and gentleman, I'm sure that the future is definitely female.