

Iskra Dochovska

Attending the European Women in Tech Conference and visiting the Netherlands

Dear UACS Staff and Committee,

Allow me to begin by saying that I was incredibly grateful for the opportunity you had given me to attend an inspiring event and visit a country renowned for its beauty and rich cultural heritage. The Netherlands had always fascinated me with its picturesque landscapes, iconic windmills, and charming canals that seemed straight out of a fairytale. I was thrilled to be able to immerse myself in the vibrant atmosphere of the conference, where I engaged with like-minded individuals, exchanged ideas, and gained valuable insights into the latest advancements in my field. Additionally, the chance to explore the Dutch traditions, taste their delectable cuisine, and discover the historical treasures of cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam filled me with excitement. I was truly looking forward to this unforgettable experience and I'm pleased to say that it exceeded my expectations.

I'm pleased to present a report on the European Women in Tech Conference that I attended during my visit to the Netherlands. The conference was a remarkable gathering of professionals and experts in the field, covering a wide range of topics related to technology and artificial intelligence. I had the opportunity to attend several talks and engage in enlightening discussions, which left a profound impact on my understanding of the industry. One of the notable talks I attended was on Generative AI, which explored the potential of AI systems to generate new and creative content. The speaker highlighted the advancements in this field and discussed the implications for various industries, including art, entertainment, and marketing. It was fascinating to see how AI can contribute to innovation and push the boundaries of human creativity.

Another thought-provoking session focused on the rise of AI and its impact on society. The speaker discussed the benefits and challenges associated with the widespread adoption of AI technology. We explored ethical considerations, privacy concerns, and the importance of ensuring responsible AI development and deployment. The talk emphasized the need for a balanced approach that prioritizes human values and societal well-being. The topic of responsible AI was a common thread throughout many talks at the conference. The speakers emphasized the ethical considerations and the importance of building AI systems that are transparent, fair, and accountable. They discussed the potential risks of AI bias and the need for diversity and inclusivity in AI development to avoid perpetuating social inequalities. Building AI responsibly is not only crucial for maintaining public trust but also for ensuring the long-term success and positive impact of AI technologies.

One particularly intriguing talk delved into the challenges faced by AI models and why many of them fail. The speaker highlighted common pitfalls, such as inadequate data, biased training sets, and overfitting. It was a valuable reminder that developing robust and reliable AI models requires careful attention to these factors and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

The conference also touched upon the role of AI in space exploration, showcasing the exciting advancements in this area. The talk highlighted how AI can enhance our understanding of the universe, assist in analyzing vast amounts of astronomical data, and support space missions. It was inspiring to see the intersection of AI and space exploration, opening up new possibilities for scientific discovery.

In addition to the technical talks, the conference also emphasized the importance of gender equity in technology. A session explored how fostering gender diversity and inclusivity can drive growth in the tech industry. The speakers discussed initiatives and strategies to address the gender gap, promote equal opportunities, and empower women in the field. It was a reminder of the significance of creating an inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives and experiences.

Alongside the diverse range of topics discussed at the European Women in Tech Conference, one of the most inspiring aspects was the diverse group of women in attendance. Women from various backgrounds and experiences gathered together, each with their own unique journey in the tech world. It was truly remarkable to witness the camaraderie and willingness among these women to share their stories of overcoming challenges and excelling in their respective fields. The conference provided a platform for them to exchange valuable insights, strategies, and advice, creating a supportive network that celebrated the achievements of women in technology. Hearing these empowering stories reinforced the importance of fostering a culture of inclusion and mentorship, where women can thrive and make significant contributions in the tech industry.

Overall, the European Women in Tech Conference provided a platform for learning, networking, and inspiration. It highlighted the rapid advancements in technology and AI while emphasizing the need for responsible development and ethical considerations. Attending this conference has broadened my horizons, deepened my knowledge, and motivated me to contribute positively to the ever-evolving world of technology.

During my visit to the Netherlands, I had the amazing opportunity to explore Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Amsterdam's canals and neighborhoods were absolutely charming. The traditional houses with their unique gabled roofs added a touch of magic to the city. I was thrilled to visit the famous Rijksmuseum, where I saw incredible works by artists like Rembrandt and Vermeer. Another fun museum I visited was the KattenKabinet, which had a collection of art with a cat theme. It was quirky and made me smile. In Rotterdam, the modern and lively atmosphere caught my attention. The skyline was filled with impressive architecture, including the Erasmus Bridge and the Cube Houses. The Cube Houses were especially fascinating with their tilted design.

Both cities had diverse culinary scenes. In Rotterdam, I tried flavorful Surinamese roti, which was filled with aromatic curries and tasty meats. I couldn't resist indulging in the Netherlands' famous cheeses. Amsterdam and Rotterdam both offered a plethora of cheese shops where I had the chance to sample an array of flavors and varieties. From creamy Gouda

to tangy Edam, each bite was a true delight for my taste buds. Pairing the cheeses with a fresh, warm stroopwafel, a sweet syrup-filled waffle, was the perfect combination of sweet and savory. No visit to the Netherlands would be complete without experiencing some traditional Dutch treats. I bravely tried haring, a raw herring fish served with onions and pickles. Although it may seem unusual to some, I found the herring surprisingly delicious and enjoyed the unique combination of flavors. It was a true local experience. Additionally, I couldn't resist indulging in some of the famous Dutch beers. From crisp pilsners to flavorful craft brews, I had the opportunity to sample different styles and appreciate the rich brewing traditions of the country.

I also had the chance to explore the countryside. The Kinderdijk, with its windmills and beautiful canals, was a postcard-perfect scene. It was interesting to learn about the country's agricultural history and see these iconic symbols up close. The peacefulness of Het Park in Rotterdam and the serene Kralingse Bos Park allowed me to enjoy nature's tranquility.

One thing I loved about the Netherlands was the cycling culture. Riding a bike through the cities, along the canals, and in the parks was an incredible experience. The country's infrastructure for cycling is impressive, with dedicated paths and a real integration of bicycles into daily life.

Overall, my visit to the Netherlands, coupled with the European Women in Tech Conference, has been an unforgettable journey of discovery and personal growth. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity and the support provided by UACS and the Milovanovic family. This experience has broadened my horizons, deepened my knowledge, and inspired me to contribute positively to the ever-evolving world of technology.

Thank you once again for this incredible opportunity.

Sincerely,
Iskra Dochovska