On the 26th of October, WIL Europe organised an **Online Debate on the EU Green Deal in the face of COVID-19, sponsored by Kering.** The event, which was moderated by Thaima, WIL’s President, featured a high-level panel of speakers, including Didier Reynders, European Commissioner for Justice; Heidi Hautala MEP; Antoine Colombani, Member of Cabinet of Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice President for the European Green Deal; and WIL member Marie-Claire Daveu, Chief Sustainability Officer and Head of International Institutional Affairs at Kering.

This conference provided an opportunity for sustainability experts from different sectors to come together to share their perspective on the future prospects for a Deal which has been at the heart of the EU Commission’s agenda since 2019, given the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. During the debate, the high-level speakers debated both opportunities and challenges in generating engagement for the EU Green Deal during COVID-19. Among the issues debated were the critical role of consumers and producers for achieving the SDGs, and the importance of collective buy-in and action to make the Deal a reality.
**OUR ONLINE DEBATE AT A GLANCE**

**WIL ONLINE CONFERENCE**

**EU GREEN DEAL & COVID-19**

How to keep the environmental momentum going

26 October 2020  
2:30 – 4:00 p.m. CEST

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**ONLINE DEBATE**

**2 PANEL DEBATES**

**4 HIGH LEVEL SPEAKERS**

**65+ PARTICIPANTS**

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**EVENT SPONSOR**

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**HIGH LEVEL SPEAKERS**

- Didier Reynders  
  EU Commissioner for justice

- Heidi Hautala  
  Member of European Parliament

- Antoine Colombani  
  Member of cabinet, EU Commissioner Frans Timmermans

- Marie-Claire Daveu  
  Chief Sustainability Officer, Kering  
  WIL Member

- Moderated by Thalma Samman  
  Partner of SAMMAN Law & Corporate Affairs and WIL President
How to engage all stakeholders to make the Green New Deal a reality post-pandemic

Antoine Colombani, Member of Cabinet of Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice President for the European Green Deal

“We need action from everybody in society, including businesses and governments”.

“We need to raise the motivation and enthusiasm for sustainability”.

During this first panel debate, Antoine Colombani – Member of Cabinet of Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice President for the European Green Deal – recalled the important role of the Green Deal in the context of the crisis and economic recovery. He underlined what businesses can expect from the EU Green Deal, and what the EU Commission is, in return, expecting from businesses and civil society. Mr Colombani highlighted the importance of making the right investments, especially in the areas where there is a synergy between environmental protection and economic growth. Furthermore, he stressed that both Member States and enterprises have an integral role to play in guaranteeing the success of the EU Green Deal and must step up efforts to ensure that it becomes a reality.

Marie-Claire Daveu, Chief Sustainability Officer and Head of International Institutional Affairs at Kering – WIL Member

“We are in a framework which is changing very quickly, thus we need to move faster”.

“At Kering we believe that if we want to change the paradigm we have to count on collective action”.

Marie-Claire Daveu provided the industry perspective during this first discussion, explaining how the fashion industry can contribute to achieving Europe’s sustainability goals following COVID-19. Ms Daveu shared the work of The Fashion Pact as a recent example of a collaborative approach to promoting sustainability in the fashion sector. Furthermore, she provided details on Kering’s efforts to reduce their environmental impact, thus highlighting their role as a leading example in the industry.
Thaima Samman, a Partner of SAMMAN Law & Corporate Affairs and WIL President

“It is very important that, during COVID-19, we can still come together to discuss core issues like sustainability as a network.”
Sustainable Development Goals, and Corporate Social Responsibility

Didier Reynders, European Commissioner for Justice

“We urgently need to change the way we produce and consume”.

“We need to ensure the importance of social fairness when transitioning to sustainability”.

In this second panel discussion, Didier Reynders – European Commissioner for Justice – shared the Commission’s views on Sustainable Corporate Governance (SCG). Commissioner Reynders discussed the new two-pilar initiative on SCG, which is due to be launched in 2021, and which will follow publication of the Commission’s study on due diligence requirements throughout the supply chain and directors’ duties.

Commissioner Reynders underscored the important role of directors in achieving sustainability, calling on them to embed sustainability goals within their strategies. He highlighted that one of the key issues for the Commission is ensuring that the new Directive is proportionate.
Heidi Hautala, Member of European Parliament

‘We have entered a new paradigm, where sustainability and responsible business conduct are integral to the Green Deal’.

‘A lot of consumers are not confident that they are getting full transparency’.

Member of European Parliament, Heidi Hautala, focused her intervention on the role of civil society and the future of EU democratic support in the context of the Covid-19 crisis. Ms Hautala stressed the importance of deploying a multi-faceted approach to fair and sustainable supply chains in the production of substances such as cocoa and coffee. This approach would unite an ambitious and integrated EU Sustainability strategy with the need for Mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence legislation. Heidi Hautala also highlighted the importance of different actors in society in working towards EU Sustainability Goals, noting that the unity of individuals is integral to pushing for greater respect of human rights and protection of the environment in supply chains.

Marie-Claire Daveu, Chief Sustainability Officer and Head of International Institutional Affairs at Kering – WIL Member

“If you look at and monitor what is happening inside your own “frontiers” only, as a company you are not doing your job for the planet and for the people”.

“The new generation of clients and employees are paying close attention to the origins and supply chains of their clothes”.

Marie-Claire Daveu drew upon Kering’s historic and long-term commitment to sustainability when discussing SGDs and CSR. She shared examples of Kering’s best practices to reduce their environmental impact, including their 2025 Roadmap which operates around three pillars: care for the environment, social collaboration, and creating sustainable innovation. Kering’s tangible environmental targets as part of this roadmap will be a 40% reduction in their environmental profit and a 50% reduction of their carbon emissions. However, the CSO and Head of International Institutional Affairs for Kering also highlighted that these changes required a shift in mentality. For retailers to reduce their environmental impact, they must adopt a mindset of open sourcing, transparency, and humility. Finally, Ms Daveu focused on the importance of innovation and education in reaching targets and creating long-term awareness and partnerships.
CLOSING REMARKS

Wrap up: Women’s Talent Pool Programme 5th Edition Participant
Natalia Melniciuc – WTP 5th Edition Participant and IT Mediation Manager in International Operations, Orange Moldova

“Sustainable development is one of the fundamental objectives of the European Union”.

“Now, more than ever, we really need to enlarge the vision of stakeholders”.

Participant in the Women’s Talent Pool Programme 5th Edition, Natalia Melniciuc, eloquently summarised both discussions and brought our attention back to the role of the European Union (EU) as an institution founded on collaboration. She highlighted that, whilst sustainability is becoming a priority for enterprises in order to engage future generations of consumers and employees, it is also a priority for the EU, since it is based upon the core value of collaborative action. She ended by reminding the audience that sustainability is a pressing reality that we all need to try and address.