

Traduzioni a cura di
Ilaria Da Col



Women and Institutions *Donne e Istituzioni*

Sara De Vido

Associate Professor of International Law and Rector's Delegate for the Days of Remembrance and Gender Equality, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

a conversation with **Luisella Pavan-Woolfe**

Associate of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-IRISS) and Board Member of Europa Nostra

A career in Europe and for Europe. Luisella Pavan-Woolfe, the director of the Council of Europe office in Venice, shares her international experience with Lei, as she has already partially done with Ca' Foscari students. Her career had two main leitmotifs: gender equality, from the very beginning and the protection of cultural heritage, in this new phase of her life.

When did you start getting interested in Europe?

I would say I always have been. Since I was a young student of Political Science at the University of Padua, where I encountered a professor who conveyed to me the love for what was then known as European Community law. To meet the right professor can truly change your life. That was still a relatively new subject, and not many universities included it in their curriculum. I had the opportunity to visit the European institutions in Brussels and Luxembourg. After the university, I became assistant in Anglo-American law, and later I passed an open competition

for the European Commission. I ranked among the top candidates in that competition.

Why didn't you choose a diplomatic career?

In the 1970s, a diplomatic career for a woman meant choosing between family and work. I wanted both. I chose a life that allowed me to know other cultures without moving every 3-4 years.

In which department did you start at the European Commission?

I began in the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, but I soon transitioned to the services for environmental protection, which were not even a Directorate-General at the time. Throughout my European career I always took on relatively new challenges. The early 1990s were difficult times for the Italy of Tangentopoli, and, back then, Jacques Delors' Cabinet asked me if I wanted to work on structural funds, in particular on the Social Fund. It consists of EU resources allocated to the Member States in order to support vocational training, employment policies and education. Italy was entrusted to me, and later I became responsible for half of the countries. I promoted gender policies through the Social Fund, negotiating with Member States and advocating for equality measures. Gender equality has always been a personal and professional interest of mine. I later became the Director for Equal Opportunities and dealt with legislation on gender equality. With the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, which came into force in 2009, the European Union established a diplomatic service. I was the first resident EU Ambassador to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. I represented the European Union during the negotiations for the Istanbul Convention and those for the accession of the European Union to the Convention on Human Rights. At the end of my career in EU institutions, the Council of Europe – which, as everyone knows, is an international

organization distinct from the EU – appointed me to represent the institution in Italy and I held this role for nine years, until mid-2023.

What was it like being a woman in institutions?

At the beginning there were few women in leadership roles. There were many assistants and secretaries but very few lawyers and economists, for instance. I was asked about the reasons for my choice to go abroad instead of taking care of my children. It was not easy to climb the career ladder, but it is true that the European Commission adopted an internal strategy very early on in order to monitor recruitment and ensure gender balance. Then, there were open competitions.

Were they discriminatory?

Let's say that men were clearly favoured by some general knowledge questions, such as which team had won the World Cup, being football a sport enjoyed mainly by men. Gradually, this kind of questions disappeared, and the number of women in the selection committees increased. Having female examiners was very important, especially in the oral exams.

What determined this drive towards gender equality in institutions?

The European Commission, the European Parliament and civil society have been active. Compared to the 1970s, when there were no female commissioners, now a real effort is made in order to achieve gender balance in the Commission. We must not forget that proposals for acts pass through the College of Commissioners, therefore gender balance is even more crucial. Then they reach the Council, where some governments are more supportive of promoting these issues than others.

Do you think language plays a role in achieving gender equality? I know that Italian women often do not want to be called *ambasciatrici*

(female ambassadors).

Language is very important. I now refer to myself as *ambasciatrice* (female ambassador), but it's true that up to a decade ago this term was used to refer to the wife of an ambassador.

Did your role as a female ambassador present any challenges for you?

Gender takes a back seat at certain levels. Being the first resident EU Ambassador to the Council of Europe, that was challenging. That involved coordinating the Member States in areas of competence of the European Union and clearly perceiving the resistances of some ambassadors to the EU's role. The ambassadors of the 28 Member States had been the voice of their country and suddenly they could not speak on certain EU-related matters anymore.

What are you working on now?

It's a new phase of my life, and right now I am focusing on the preservation of cultural heritage. I am lending my support and assistance to Europa Nostra, the most representative network in Europe for the advocacy of cultural heritage. I inherited my father's interest in architectural heritage. At the Council of Europe, I worked on Italy's ratification of the Faro Convention, a treaty that no longer asks what to preserve, but why we do it: for citizens and communities.

Do you have any advice for those female students who want to pursue a diplomatic career?

It's certainly worth trying both a career in European institutions and a diplomatic career. It's less challenging now than it was 40 years ago. I remind students that besides the EU there are many other organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the EU agencies, and the specialized UN agencies. I also recommend more specialized training, like the College of Europe. Of course, there is still much to be done in order to overcome the

stereotypes about women's role in society, although the situation has improved over the years. Women still have a lower employment rate, and a significant gender pay gap persists. We need a cultural shift. I am the mother of two sons, and I think that the new generations are more willing to share caregiving responsibilities in the family. However, stereotypes are there from a very young age. Gender-based violence against women is a form of discrimination and an example of how certain social structures of oppression are still active. When I worked on gender issues, there was only one female University Rector; this is what we call 'glass ceiling'. Nowadays, the numbers are different, but in Italy, the number of female Rectors is still very low. Ca' Foscari is a happy example of female representation at the top of the university.

Biography

Born in Trieste, Italy, Luisella Pavan-Woolfe studied in Venice, the U.S.A., Norway, Denmark and graduated in Political Science magna cum laude from the University of Padua. Here she subsequently became assistant professor of Anglo-American law. She then joined the European Commission where she developed policies and legislation in the areas of environment protection, equality between women and men and fight against all forms of discrimination. She was the first Director for Equal Opportunities to be nominated by the European executive body. As Social Fund Director she managed financial resources which support vocational training, employment and education in the member countries. In 2007 she entered the European Union diplomatic corps and opened the EU Delegation in Strasbourg. As the first EU Ambassador to the Council of Europe and head of delegation from 2010 to 2014, her mandate covered human rights and democratic governance in wider Europe. From 2015 to 2023, she was Head of the Council of Europe Representation in Italy. During her tenure she

focused on cultural rights as human rights and an essential component of democratic systems, cultural heritage as a source of identity and its role in conflict prevention and reconciliation.

She is an associate member of the Italian National Research Council (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, CNR-IRISS) and represents the European Institute for Roma Arts and Culture (ERIAC) in the Council of Europa Nostra, the pan-European federation for cultural heritage. She lectures at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and other Italian universities. She is author of numerous articles on European subjects and of books on social issues, employment policy in the EU and cultural heritage. In 1998 she was awarded the Special Prize of Marisa Bellisario Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs, international category.

My Skills *Capacità al centro*

by Giulia Milani

PhD Candidate at Venice School of Management and member of Ca' Foscari Competency Centre

Formulating your Personal Vision

«Where do you see yourself in 5 years?»

You may have feared this question during a job interview.

It is no coincidence that this Google query has over 80 million results: a series of articles and YouTube videos aimed at helping individuals find an effective answer. However, it is intriguing to find out what the hidden meaning of this question is. On the surface, it may seem straightforward: the interviewer is inquiring about your aspirations within a roughly five-year lifespan. Yet, this question often generates awkward silences. This is because defining who we wish to become in the future is not something that can be improvised. In order to start a reflection, it is essential to delve into it in detail.

In scientific literature, the ideal self is defined as the person we ardently *aspire* to become, distinct from the other *possible* versions of ourselves and those we *fear* becoming. This concept takes shape in one's personal vision, where the image of who we want to be in the future is expressed, along with what we hope to achieve in our personal and professional life within a specific timeframe. Studies also reveal that the ideal self serves as a motivational force capable of influencing an individual's present behaviour. When applied to a professional context, it can foster a proactive attitude with a view to career development.

As we elaborate further on the concept, we discover that the ideal self is primarily equal to the image of one's desired future, which, in turn, is built upon three elements: dreams, passions, and values. Dreams represent an emotional and mental state characterised by visual impressions and sensations, with the power to communicate our ambitions and fantasies. This state conveys optimism and motivation to individuals, which are necessary for implementing behaviours. Passions, on the other hand, are activities for which we feel a strong inclination, and their practice provides us with pleasure and joy. Consequently, passions infuse us with energy and a feeling of well-being. Personal values serve as ethical and moral guidelines, offering direction in our actions and directing our behaviour and decision choices. Overall, recognising these elements enables us to visualise what would be preferable for us. The typical reference time frame (usually up to 10 years) is not arbitrary: as a matter of fact, dreams and values naturally evolve during the main stages of life, as we keep on perceiving our vision as realistic and achievable.

From these key components the ideal self stands out, subsequently formalised in a personal vision, which articulates in words who we wish to become. An additional element that reinforces and refines one's vision is sharing their ideal

future with individuals they have trust-based relationships with. By giving voice to their project, the individual gains confidence and motivation while having the chance to understand whether alternative paths can lead to the same goal.

On the other hand, the development of the future self represents not only a prerequisite for improving our self-awareness, but also a *sine qua non* condition for development social and emotional competences. In the theoretical model of intentional change, which is used for the development of behavioural competences, the first of the five stages in the process is precisely the definition of one's ideal self, which serves as the starting point. Only by analysing the desired future can individuals deduce the necessary skills to achieve it, upon which the developmental process will be built. Furthermore, studies show that a clear definition of the desired future helps maintain high motivation, even in the face of obstacles and difficulties.

When individuals become aware of their ideal future, they are able to define the path that will connect their present to the desired future. In so doing, they can set clear goals that will be achieved during their learning journey.

During the training programs for competency development offered by the Ca' Foscari Competency Centre, students and professionals are guided to reflect on their future ideal self and formalise it in a detailed written personal vision. This effort is essential to significantly increase the chances of realising their desired future. Furthermore, being aware of these matters is essential for developing behavioural competences, which, in turn, help individuals become the person they aspire to be. Last but not least, they will finally be able to answer the recruiter's question without hesitation.



Wannabe Her
Da grande vorrei essere Lei

Ilaria Da Col
Graduate at Ca' Foscari University of Venice

a conversation with
Cristina Bottoni
Cybersecurity Specialist

Wannabe Her is a column dedicated to discovering and promoting innovative, 'out of the ordinary,' or hard-to-access professional roles in fields that may interest Ca' Foscari's students. In this issue, we delve into a field that is still relatively unknown in the Italian job market but is experiencing exponential growth in strategic importance: the cybersecurity sector, which encompasses various roles, including that of the Cybersecurity Specialist.

Introduction

The role of a Cybersecurity Specialist has existed since the early days of the internet and search engines. Discussions on cybersecurity and the need for professionals in this field have been ongoing. However, recent years have witnessed the rise of data to 'new black gold,' or rather new international intangible yet immensely valuable currency, along with the increasing complexity of computer programs and systems and the growing threats emerging from the digital realm. For these and other reasons, professions related to cybersecurity have gained significant strategic relevance, particularly in the national scenario, where they are still practised by a niche of individuals.

Let's delve into the bits and pieces of this profession and the pathways to embark on a career in cybersecurity from scratch with Cristina Bottoni, Cybersecurity Specialist at Darktrace.

Tasks of a Cybersecurity Specialist

As a dynamic profession involving a number of projects and tasks, no two days are the same for a Cybersecurity Specialist. In general, the primary duty of a Cybersecurity Specialist is to ensure that the different company

functions and assets are secured comprehensively. This entails a process that includes a gap analysis to reveal the most vulnerable areas and processes in order to identify the security needs of the company and the risks associated with potential attacks. The next steps include structuring and implementing corporate strategies or policies to address actual and potential critical issues, continuously monitoring processes, and taking actions to secure them while adhering to protocols and best practices.

A Cybersecurity Specialist may also deal with aspects related to cyber law and privacy, and activities such as raising awareness and staff training. Specific tasks vary depending on the chosen specialisation, which can encompass network security, device security, email security, business process security, risk management, threat prevention and response, and more. Additionally, they can differ based on the type of organisation one collaborates with, which could be a consultancy firm, a private company (ranging from multinational corporations to SMEs), or a cybersecurity product supplier.

Hard and Soft Skills

Given the diverse set of activities and tasks involved, it is clear that being a Cybersecurity Specialist requires a range of technical or hard skills. While the specific skills may vary depending on the chosen specialisation, fundamental skills include understanding infrastructure, networks, connections, internal cybersecurity processes, encryption protocols, cyberattacks and threats types, methods and targets. Additionally, a technological aptitude is necessary to evaluate computer products, determining their validity and utility for a specific organisation. Continuous training, both received and given, plays a pivotal role. Indeed, there is still a great deal of misinformation within companies when it comes to the IT field; therefore, it is essential to offer clarity without making any assumptions. Clarity is a crucial soft skill, alongside dynamism, lateral thinking, problem-solving ability, self-confidence in one's expertise, even when facing doubt during job interviews or client meetings.

Lastly, effective communication and empathetic dialogue with stakeholders involved in projects are important. Cybersecurity Specialists should be determined, open to constant self-improvement, willing to experiment and learn on the job.

Educational Background

What has been said so far may suggest that a solid background in computer science is strictly necessary in order to pursue a career as a Cybersecurity Specialist. This typically involves a BA degree in *Computer Science* or *Computer Engineering* followed by a MA or a PgD in *Cybersecurity*. No doubt this is the most traditional and certainly reasonable route to achieve the goal; nonetheless, it is likewise possible to reach it by passing through different avenues, all rooted in the economic and technological field – e.g., one could start with a BA in *Economics and Management* or in *Management Engineering*. Cristina's unconventional journey is somewhat of an exception which confirms the rule. Hailing from a classical high school background, she embarked on a very multidisciplinary BA in *Global Governance* at the University of Rome Tor Vergata. She started dealing with the field of information technology only in the final year of her undergraduate studies through majors in technology, statistics, and privacy. With considerable effort and supplementary exams, she admits, she secured a place in a *Cybersecurity* MA at La Sapienza University of Rome. Here, she further specialised in *GRC (Governance, Risk, and Compliance)* and successfully completed the course.

How did your educational background support your profession? What gaps did you have to fill?

I owe a lot to my unconventional educational journey. On one hand, the effort I put into keeping up during my master's program taught me to be diligent and persistent, even in the face of challenging situations, which is an attitude I now bring to my daily work challenges. On the other hand, my multidisciplinary undergraduate program, combined with my choice to step out of my comfort zone and pursue an unexpected educational direction (but one that was right for me, as it turned out), endowed me with the ability to 'think beyond' rigid and static structures. I use lateral thinking and employ my knowledge of law and economics to explore alternative solutions, which in many cases have made a difference. Lateral thinking is vital in today's context, where everything can change in the blink of an eye and the unexpected is ordinary, especially in the realm of information technology. I was pleasantly surprised to find that I can use it more easily and swiftly

than colleagues who followed a more linear IT education. As for gaps, they primarily relate to some technical knowledge and skills that I am gradually filling in, both independently and through the myriad of courses, YouTube videos, books, and e-learning platforms available. Continuous learning is essential. I also learn a lot every day through direct hands-on or learn-by-doing experience, and from more experienced colleagues.

You are the spokesperson for a minority within your field, i.e., the female component, which is notably underrepresented in your sector. In your opinion, how can a woman add value and make a difference in the field of cybersecurity? Do you believe there is a gender gap in your industry in terms of responsibilities, compensation, national and international recognition?

A girl who chooses to work in ICT should be prepared to work alongside men. To give you an idea, in my MA program women were 3-4 out of 70. This aspect wouldn't be an issue in itself, but men naturally tend to be more open with one another. In many Italian companies, there is a form of toxic camaraderie influenced by the patriarchal society in which we have all grown up, leading to subtle discrimination against women. This discrimination is often expressed implicitly, hidden within half-jokes, inappropriate questions, and half-finished sentences. These behaviours can sometimes even be disguised as acts of kindness and care for women when, in reality, they would prefer to be treated not as *women* but simply as *people*.

I want to clarify that, even though I am an advocate for gender equality, I do not consider myself an extreme feminist. I do not believe there is a significant gender pay gap in this sector, as there are increasing laws at both the Italian and European levels that enforce fair working conditions among employees. However, I have personally experienced differences in treatment during job interviews, my much longer apprenticeship compared to my male counterparts, and in my daily work when interacting with Italian clients. Working for a company with multiple international offices and participating in events has allowed me to notice that the IT sector in other European countries is much more gender-balanced, with more protections regarding maternity and paternity. While there is still much progress to be made in Italy, we have several positive examples to draw inspiration from.

I believe that women can bring a valuable perspective and contribute to the field of cybersecurity. Actually, I think that in the field of IT, as in any field, there is a need for more collaborative efforts: the synergy between men and women, each with their strengths and weaknesses, would benefit the entire industry and all its stakeholders.

Do you find that your role is highly demanded?

Let me share a brief anecdote to answer: exactly two months after enrolling in my MA in *Cybersecurity*, I began receiving inquiries from companies of various sizes. This continued throughout my studies, with daily reiterated job offers, and it still goes on. I believe this says a lot about the demand for professionals like me in Italy and the available career opportunities. [Note: According to estimates from the National Cybersecurity Agency, Italy needs 100,000 experts compared to the current 6,000; Italy is the third most targeted country for cyberattacks in Europe, and the role of Cybersecurity Specialist is listed among the top 10 future professions. Source: GQ, March 2022.] Some interesting aspects to note are that the nature of the work leads you to get involved in structured projects right from the beginning, even as a newcomer, thus allowing you to quickly gain expertise and, as a result, considerable seniority, even in terms of compensation. Moreover, the job can be largely remote, giving you the flexibility to work from anywhere, including abroad; last but not least, it is well-paid, even for entry-level positions with no prior work experience.

What advice would you give to a recent graduate or someone still in the early stages of their career, with the ambition to pursue a role like yours?

I would advise them to be determined but also a bit stubborn in pursuing their goals. Don't be afraid to embark on a path that is still relatively uncharted and male-dominated. Stay committed if you believe that this field is the right fit for you. Be proactive, flexible, open to change, and receptive to new opportunities. Stay informed about the companies you want to work for and their working conditions to avoid unpleasant situations. Get involved and absorb as much as possible from your work experiences, because they are the ones that will make you grow.

Innovative Business Tools *Strumenti innovativi per il mondo del lavoro*

by **Miriam Bertoli**

Digital & Content Marketing Strategist, Consultant & Trainer

Digital Networking: Tools and Good Practices for Building a Valuable Network of Contacts

Professional networking has become essential for a successful career. But why is it such a crucial element? First and foremost, networking not only allows you to gain knowledge and experience, but also opens the door to new opportunities.

Among its many benefits, networking facilitates access to job opportunities; in many cases, jobs are found through 'word of mouth'. A wide and strong networking enables you to discover job openings, projects or collaborations, often before they become public.

A network of relationships also provides continuous opportunities for mentorship, learning, and support.

Social media – and digital touchpoints in general – enables you to network and have a clear impact on how you can build and maintain your networks of relationships.

How can you start developing your digital networking? How can you stand out among thousands of people and millions of content? I like to use a metaphor; now imagine being in a crowded, bright, and vast hall where everyone is trying to connect with each other, get noticed and establish meaningful relationships. How can you stand out in this crowded hall and create valuable contacts? What should you focus on? Which social networks should you prefer?

Speaking of rooms and space, let's start with the virtual professional space par excellence: LinkedIn.

According to the above-mentioned metaphor, LinkedIn can be the area in the room where people with a common interest, i.e., their profession, gather. As I explained in the 9th issue of *Lei Magazine*, LinkedIn is not just where you post your CV, but it is primarily a space for building relationships. To make a good first impression, it's essential to have a comprehensive profile that genuinely reflects your skills, experiences and values. Relationships, just like at a party, are built by introducing yourself – by sending a connection

request – and interacting with classmates, colleagues, potential employers and industry leaders, always tactfully and pertinently.

If LinkedIn is an exclusive space for those who share an interest in the professional field, Facebook and Instagram are like city festivals. The atmosphere is more informal, but that doesn't mean they can't become occasions for professional networking, indeed. Following pages and profiles active in your field of interest, engaging with relevant content, and, most importantly, presenting yourself authentically, in a personal but always professional way – these are some good practices for setting up a productive networking.

Facebook and Instagram are the spaces where you should showcase your training experiences and your participation in industry events and conferences, share small and big professional achievements, and take a stand by commenting on industry news. Additionally, be open to requests for support from people in your network, and congratulate them on their achievements with a comment or show attention by sharing a request for support on your profile. Networks are built by weaving threads and connections, day by day.

There are moments when online networking is complemented by face-to-face interactions. Events, fairs and seminars are opportunities to take digital connections into the physical world, strengthen them and create new ones to be developed online. In these contexts, you should employ technological tools such as QR codes, thanks to which you can quickly share your LinkedIn profile, leveraging the networking features that are increasingly integrated into official event apps. Before an event, a good practice I always apply and recommend in my courses is to visit the profiles of the speakers and indicate that you will be at the event by sending a connection request, when it is relevant. This way, it will be much easier to interact during the in-person meeting.

As in any social context, there are some unwritten rules to follow in digital networking. First and foremost, respecting privacy and others' spaces is essential. Don't be intrusive or too pushy, and, above all, ensure that you provide value in social interactions. In other words, 'bring something to the party' before seeking attention.

One of the golden rules of networking is always to start with how you can be helpful to others before thinking about what you can ask from them. When you receive help or advice, always show gratitude with a thank-you message or a comment. Networking, both online and offline, requires commitment, consistency, authenticity and a genuine willingness to connect with others. As we close the door to this grand hall, make sure to leave a window open for new opportunities, new meetings and new professional adventures. The digital world has made networking more accessible than ever, and it's up to each of us to use it respectfully, constructively and authentically.