



TARGET  
GENDER  
EQUALITY



## Target Gender Equality – When She Leads

"We all benefit from this as a society and as a company. We need leaders with a vision for change who are willing to promote women's leadership."



**Quick facts:** Marisol Amo – Europa Mundo Vacaciones – Spain

"Almost all companies start the same way: an idea, an aspiration, a dream to be fulfilled and the support of a leader and people who trust her."

In order to start getting to know this professional, we have to return to the past, to times when one was eager to take on the world, to historical moments such as the Transition, "la Movida madrileña", the arrival of freedom... those good old, beautiful, exciting and unique days. However, to better understand Marisol Amo's career, we have to go back to 1984, to those days in Mundo Joven. Marisol joined Viajes Universal in 1984, when she was 19 years old, a year before Luis García, our CEO, converted it into Mundo Joven. She debuted as a guide aboard a connecting bus route from Madrid to Nice and since then has grown to be one of the pillars of what is now Europamundo. Today she is the director of Europamundo's guides department, supervising more than 250 professionals belonging to 20 nationalities from five continents.

"We have to thank Marisol for her courage, her drive, her determination, her skills and her enthusiasm that has contributed to the creation of a company like the one we have today, of which we all feel so proud". Europamundo Team

### What have been your most outstanding achievements?

Joining the tourism sector was a challenge for me. My age was a barrier, to start with. I was very young... I was only 19 years old and secondly because of my lack of experience in the sector. In that situation, I met the director of a company that I still belong to, who trusted in me and gave me the possibility to fulfil my dream and vocation to be a tourist guide. The beginnings were not easy, especially as a woman travelling through unfamiliar lands; during the '80s, it was rare to see a woman working then. And in countries like Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, and Morocco, crossing borders with tourists was almost forbidden for women guides, where women were not expected to work. No, it was not easy, but my will and passion for this profession made me learn more and more every day, grow personally and professionally and acquire the confidence to function in these countries with such cultural differences.

I want to acknowledge and thank the trust that my company has in me. All this has made me grow and believe in my abilities. We can proudly say that at Europamundo, we are quite ahead in this issue and that equal opportunities exist, and I am genuinely an example of this.

From the point of view of a guides department director, who is in charge of some 300 personnel, I think my most outstanding professional achievement is that I have managed to build a multicultural and well-balanced team. We have people of all races and religions, and ages. The multiculturalism of my team is undoubtedly my greatest pride. That is our ESSENCE. The essence of our company and our CEO that I have been part of and would like to remain the same even after.

I consider a significant achievement the widespread recognition of my team of guides, ranked as one of the best in the sector and their loyalty to the company and me. THEIR COMMITMENT. In an industry where mobility is the most common thing, I believe that I have managed to gain the trust of many professionals. They repay me in the form of respect and affection, which is an outstanding achievement for me. I have received appreciation for my continuous

efforts towards training and my constant search for a work-life balance for the guides, which is no easy task in a profession as unique as this one.

Lastly, I would like to mention how we have tried to motivate and transmit confidence to the team and how well they have responded to the company in these unprecedentedly tough times as we are experiencing a business standstill. I hope our company will be an example for many.

### **What problems do you think we have to face in the coming years as women in the world of business?**

I believe that despite the significant progress that is being made, we still have substantial challenges ahead of us, such as work-life balance, equal opportunities, equal pay and access to managerial posts. Europamundo has always worked along these lines, and I believe that this is the path to the future.

The reasons are very diverse, although I would say that they stem mainly from education and awareness; with education and awareness, we can eliminate this type of behaviour that still exists. Another essential point, in my opinion, is the increase of public and private initiatives that promote and recognise diversity in companies, such as the need to have an equality plan in organisations.

It is clear that if we do not opt for diversity, we are losing a great opportunity and a lot of talent. It is more than proven that female talent contributes to the profitability of companies.

As a society and as a company, we all benefit. We need leaders with a vision to change who are willing to encourage the promotion of female leadership. For me, these are the keys to success, and at Europamundo, we are committed to this, and we are working on it.

### **What motivates you to keep fighting for the issues you care about?**

Giving voice to women motivates me, thus using my post and leadership to set an example. I am also excited about creating good plans to develop that involve fundamental analyses such as where we are, where we are heading, how we do it, and how we will measure it. I find the challenge of involving men in equality programmes exciting. To make men involved in equality programmes, make them allies, and convince them of the need for change.

Within Europamundo, we've set a great example with all the different programmes and the representation of women in the various positions and posts within the company.

It is essential to give women greater internal and external exposure by entrusting them with leading roles, just as it was in my case.

When you are enthusiastic about something, you transmit a passion that propels you into the future; you work hard and are committed because you believe passionately in what you do. Above all, it gives you absolute confidence and helps make you believe in your potential.

I have never felt constrained by the fact that I am a woman; I have always tried to understand and manage my responsibilities and obligations well; to be proactive and ambitious.

Emotional intelligence is key to being a leader, and a great manager must be a leader; natural empathy, motivation to overcome challenges.

### **What is the one piece of advice you would like to share with other women looking to break the glass ceiling in the business world?**

They must fight for their goals without limiting themselves; they should prepare themselves to the maximum; they must believe in themselves. As I mentioned earlier, please get to know the company they work for well, and use dialogue, hard work, passion and creativity to achieve their goals. Create and work with an egalitarian team with a strong focus on communication.

### **What advice would you like to offer to male business leaders?**

A more significant commitment to women's potential within their companies, giving them greater exposure and establishing processes that guarantee equal opportunities, working hand in hand and being partners are all key.