ZNEXT

WOMEN IN TECH

A NIGHT ROOTED IN INNOVATION

Wednesday 28/10/2026

Universityhall Leuven

Colourful chic

OUR SPONSORS

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Meet NEXT

Inspiring the NEXT generation of tech entrepreneurs.
NEXT Leuven is a student organisation that connects ambitious students with the world of technology, startups and entrepreneurship.

Through inspiring events, hands-on workshops and startup experiences, we help students discover new opportunities, meet industry professionals and turn ideas into action.

Our mission?

Our mission is built around four pillars: Inform, Inspire, Engage and Launch. We believe that great ideas can come from any background, and that the next generation of innovators starts with curiosity and ambition.

What's NEXT?

- 4-6 November 2026: Belgium Startup Trip
- 25 November 2026: MedTech
- 25 February 2027: Startup Jobfair
- 10 March 2027: Next Level Challenge
- 24 March 2027: Startups in AI



WOMEN IN TECH

What is Women in Tech?

A night rooted in innovation

Our speakers come from diverse backgrounds, studies and career paths. Whether you study engineering, marketing, biology, economics or something completely different, technology touches every field, and there is a place for you within it.

Each speaker shares the story behind her career: the choices she made, the barriers she ran into and what she wishes she had known when starting out.

Afterwards, meet the speakers at a networking reception with cocktails and desserts.
Because the future doesn't follow one path: it grows through teamwork, diversity and the courage to find your own way.

The minds behind Women in Tech 2026



THE PROGRAMME

An evening of inspiration, connection & innovation

- 19:00 Doors open
- 19:30 Start
- 19:30 Welcome by NEXT
- Introduction by McKinsey & Company
- First speaker: Christina Hadinoto
- Second speaker: Sophie Roelants
- Third speaker: Anita Van Looveren
- Fourth speaker: Li Yu
- Fifth speaker: Manon Vandebergh
- 21:00 Reception
- 23:00 The end







SPEAKERS

Christina Hadinoto

What did you study?
Law & Communication sciences.

What are you currently working on?
Contour Lab, my fashion tech company, teaching Fashion Entrepreneurship at Thomas More & other ways to inspire female (aspiring) entrepreneurs.

What are you most proud of?
My family.

What does success mean to you?
Personal growth.

Why do you enjoy making time for an event like Women in Tech?
To motivate & inspire other women in tech, show them what's possible and to believe in yourself.

What advice would you like to share with the next generation?

When in doubt, do it anyway. You can't be what you can't see so dare to step up and never under-estimate what positive impact you can create for yourself and others.



SPEAKERS

Sophie Roelants

What did you study?

I studied Bioscience Engineering, specialising in Cell and Gene Biotechnology, and did a PhD on Microbial Biosurfactants in Ghent.

What are you currently working on?

I am currently working on the commercialisation of microbial biosurfactants as sustainable and safe surfactant alternatives. We developed a platform using microbes and waste- and side streams. Our first products are now available on the market.

What does success mean to you?

Success means having a positive impact on the world, the economy and its people by contributing to the solutions of tomorrow. It also means building a sustainable business where employees enjoy coming to work.

Why do you enjoy making time for an event like Women in Tech?

As a speaker, I want to share my experience and inspire and guide others. I also hope to learn from others, recognise common challenges and learn from their failures and successes.

What advice would you like to share with the next generation?

Follow your passion and choose a direction that genuinely interests you. Do not ignore who you are or what you enjoy, because that is unlikely to make you happy in the long term.



SPEAKERS

Anita Van Looveren

What did you study?
Applied Economics at the University of Antwerp, specializing in econometrics, and an MBA at KU Leuven.
What I enjoyed most was putting that theory to work on real problems.

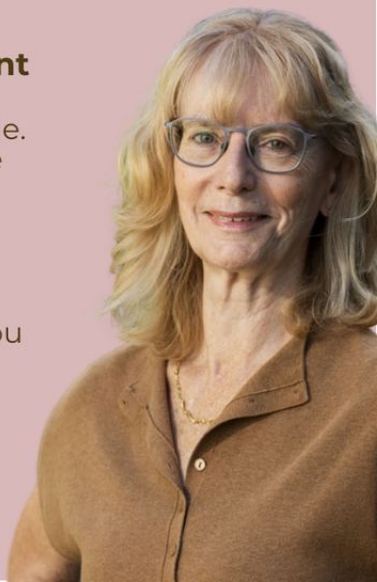
What are you currently working on?
I joined OMP in 1985 as its first consultant, became CEO, and since 2024 I am executive chairwoman of this Antwerp-based supply chain planning company.

What are you most proud of?
That a handful of people in a villa in Brasschaat in 1985 grew into nearly 1,500 colleagues of more than 60 nationalities, with our values like people, passion, and promise still intact.

What does success mean to you?
Happy customers and happy people. Value our customers can rely on, and a place where colleagues keep learning and growing. One does not last long without the other.

Why do you enjoy making time for an event like Women in Tech?
To share my experience and inspire young people. When I started out, a few real stories would have meant a lot to me.

What advice would you like to share with the next generation?
Go for your passion. Measure yourself by what you learn and how you grow rather than by titles or salary.



SPEAKERS

Li Yu

What did you study?

I studied Applied Economics (TEW) at Ghent University. I enjoyed programming and logical thinking, which led me to a consulting firm in 1998 and started my career in technology.

What are you currently working on?

I am a Senior Director at Deloitte and lead solution architect in SAP Global Trade Services. I help international companies navigate trade regulations and explore how AI can transform technology projects.

What are you most proud of?

I am most proud of the people I have helped to grow through learning programs and mentoring. Seeing people become independent is more rewarding than any individual achievement.

What does success mean to you?

Success means seeing my colleagues become independent and create their own career paths. Today, I ask myself: “Who is growing because I was here?”

Why do you enjoy making time for an event like Women in Tech?

I know what it feels like to question whether you belong. I moved from China to Belgium at 11, barely understanding Dutch, and entered technology without a computer science degree. If my story helps one young woman believe she belongs in tech, this time is well spent.



What advice would you like to share with the next generation?

Don’t wait until you feel completely ready. Stay curious, trust your ability to learn and use your voice. You don’t need to follow someone else’s path. And as you grow, help someone else grow too.

SPEAKERS

Manon Vandebergh

What did you study?

Law studies, then a Master's in International Management at Vlerick Business School.

What are you currently working on?

“I’m COO of Phished. We protect companies and their employees against phishing through a digital learning platform and a Phished Assistant that helps keep their IT infrastructure safe.”

What are you most proud of?

Achieving a top position in a tech company as a woman, before I turned 30.

Why do you enjoy making time for an event like Women in Tech?

Diversity, in every form, builds better products, better strategic decisions, and sustainable company growth. Unfortunately, women are still underrepresented in the rooms where major technology decisions are made.

What advice would you like to share with the next generation?

Don’t focus on the amount of money they offer you in the first five years. Choose the company or person where you can learn the most. Do something you love and are genuinely better at than most people.



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About McKinsey & Company

About McKinsey & Company
McKinsey & Company is a global management consulting firm. The company partners with leading businesses, governments, and non-profit organizations to help them solve their most complex strategic, operational, and technological challenges. From accelerating digital and AI transformations to mapping out net-zero pathways, McKinsey helps organizations turn ambitious goals into reality.

Why does McKinsey enjoy making time for events like Women in Tech?

Technology is a primary driver of global growth, yet women remain significantly underrepresented in tech roles and leadership. By actively supporting events like Women in Tech, we aim to build strong networks, highlight role models, and help create diverse, inclusive pathways for the female leaders of tomorrow.

What does the company do to help make the world a better place?

We are deeply committed to helping build a sustainable and inclusive future. Beyond our day-to-day consulting, we dedicate time to pro bono projects, invest heavily in climate research, and help communities tackle the green energy transition. We also believe that making the world a better place starts at home. That's why we place a huge focus on workplace well-being, knowing that supportive, positive relationships at work are key to a happier, healthier life.

What advice would you like to share with the next generation?

Never stop exploring. Use your university years to gather as many different experiences as possible, inside and outside the classroom. The future isn't just about what you know technically; it's about how you think, adapt, and work with people. Embrace your curiosity, learn from different fields, and trust that a diverse background is actually your greatest superpower.

Our sponsor:



Air Liquide

About Air Liquide

Air Liquide is a world leader in gases, technologies and services for Industry and Health. The company helps address global challenges such as the energy transition, healthcare and digital transformation, creating value for customers, patients and society.
Present in 60 countries with approximately 66,300 employees, Air Liquide serves over 3.8 million customers and patients. With inventiveness at its heart, the company offers international learning and development opportunities while remaining committed to sustainability and climate action.

Why do you participate in Women in Tech?

At Air Liquide, we believe the future of technology thrives on diversity, fresh perspectives and inclusive innovation. Women in Tech allows us to empower the next generation of talent and reinforce our commitment to a diverse and dynamic workforce.

What are you currently working on?

Driving the energy transition and decarbonising heavy industry are at the core of what we do. By scaling up low-carbon hydrogen solutions and delivering vital medical gases worldwide, we use innovation to build a sustainable future for society and the planet.

What advice would you like to share with the next generation?

Don't feel pressured to have your entire career mapped out from day one. Your professional journey is an exploration. Take the time to discover different disciplines, learn across business units and continuously evolve. An open-minded approach can take your career further than you ever imagined.

Our sponsor:



About Elia

Elia is the Belgian transmission system operator, ensuring a reliable and sustainable electricity supply. The company is building the future of Belgium's electricity grid and helping make the energy transition possible by supporting renewable energy.
At Elia, you can make an impact in a varied and innovative working environment, with a focus on personal growth and well-being. You'll join a diverse team of passionate colleagues and help shape the future of energy.

Why does Elia enjoy making time for an event like Women in Tech?

The future of energy is also a future of technology and innovation. At Elia, we want everyone to see that they can help shape that future. Women in Tech allows us to connect, inspire and encourage more women to explore careers in STEM.

What does Elia do to help make the world a better place?

We are building the infrastructure that makes the energy transition possible. By strengthening the electricity grid and supporting renewable energy, our work contributes to a more sustainable energy future.

What advice would Elia like to share with the next generation?

Be curious, be bold and don't be afraid to take your place. The challenges ahead need different perspectives, fresh ideas and people who dare to make a difference.

Our sponsor:

OMP.

About OMP

OMP is a leading game changer in supply chain planning solutions. The world's largest companies, including Johnson & Johnson, Procter & Gamble and Nestlé, rely on its smart software and services to optimise their supply chains.
With over 1,500 passionate colleagues from more than 67 nationalities, OMP brings together people from different backgrounds and areas of expertise. Through continuous investment in talent and innovation, its teams work together from Belgium and offices around the world.

Why does OMP enjoy making time for an event like Women in Tech?

Great technology needs different perspectives. Events like Women in Tech help women in tech connect, exchange experiences, inspire each other and meet the people behind OMP.

What does OMP do to help make the world a better place?

We help companies make smarter supply chain decisions, use resources more efficiently, reduce waste and build resilient supply chains. Through our ESG programme, we also support social and environmental projects that create a positive impact.

What advice would OMP like to share with the next generation?

Stay curious, keep learning and don't feel you need to have everything figured out from the start. Most importantly, bring your own perspective.

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Our sponsor:



Deloitte.

About Deloitte

Deloitte provides audit and assurance, consulting, tax and related services, but we're more than our offerings. We exist to make an impact that matters.

By focusing on equality, serving the public interest and leading digital transformation, Deloitte helps clients realise their ambitions and creates opportunities for people and societies around the world. Together, we work to build a better future.

Why does Deloitte enjoy making time for an event like Women in Tech?

Technology is shaping the future of every industry, but that future needs different perspectives. Women in Tech allows us to connect with people who are excited about technology and its possibilities. At Deloitte, we believe the strongest ideas emerge when technology, business expertise and diverse perspectives come together.

What does Deloitte do to help make the world a better place?

We turn complex challenges into meaningful progress by combining different expertise with technology and AI. We help organisations navigate change and build lasting solutions. Just as importantly, we invest in people, giving them opportunities to learn, grow and make a difference.

What advice would Deloitte like to share with the next generation?

Approach AI with curiosity, not fear. Learn to understand it, embrace it and use it with purpose. Let AI amplify your capabilities, while keeping human curiosity, creativity and judgement at the heart of what you do. Be human-led and AI-enabled.

THANK YOU

Thank you for being part of this evening.

At Women in Tech, we believe that bringing people together, sharing knowledge and exchanging perspectives are essential to shaping the future of technology. We hope this evening has inspired you with new ideas, meaningful conversations and fresh perspectives on the opportunities within the tech industry.

A special thank you to our speakers for sharing their knowledge and experiences, to our partners for their support, and to everyone who helped make this event possible.

Most importantly, thank you to everyone who joined us tonight. Together, we can create a community where talent, ambition and diverse perspectives thrive.

We hope you leave feeling inspired to explore new opportunities and contribute to the future of technology.

The future of tech is shaped by the people who dare to be part of it.

The NEXT Leuven Team

THANK YOU

We hope you got inspired tonight