

Sustainable Innovation 2021

Accelerating Sustainability in Fashion, Clothing, Sportswear & Accessories

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University for the Creative Arts

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I embody the triple helix since my work and passions have given me experience in academia, business and politics. I am especially committed to promote innovation processes and competitiveness in Europe, especially in technical textiles and fashion, with a track record of over 25 years working with European Funding Programs such as Interreg and Horizon2020. I am born in a textile family; my father was a textile chemist with ICI, my mother a textile designer in the Lancashire textile industry. I studied economic geography in Utrecht and at LSE. I wrote a PhD thesis on globalisation of the fashion industry. From 1991 till 2000 I worked i.a. as Director for Economic Affairs at the Dutch Fashion Industry Association Modint. I held several professorships in fashion and in international economics in Paris (IFM), Amsterdam (AMFI), Enschede, Kleve and Wuhan.

Over the last years I have shifted my attention to public policy and policy making in innovation for municipalities, regions and in international cooperation. From 2015 till 2019 I was regional minister (Gedeputeerde) in the Province of Gelderland for Economy, Education and Europe. Having won the elections twice (2011 and 2015), I finally lost my last elections and decided to devote my last working decade to sustainability in textiles. I am honoured to be able to do that at the best University in agriculture in the world: Wageningen University and Research. Besides that engagement I am Chairman of the Dutch Investment deal in Professional Education and Chairman of the Cultural heritage and Climate Change Fund, on behalf of the Dutch Minister for Education, Culture and Science.

I am truly a European citizen, born in the UK, raised in Belgium and educated in the Netherlands and working across borders. Opera inspires him to see the dramatic dimension of daily life. Skiing with wife and daughters is my favorite method of relaxation in winter, cycling with friends in the spring, summer and fall.