

Dear Soroptimist friends,

we cordially invite you to join us in celebrating the *Charter Ceremony of the Foundation of the First Soroptimist International Club* in Armenia, which will take place on Saturday, May 29th 2010, in Yerevan, the capital of the Republic of Armenia.

An attractive and exciting tour of Yerevan and Armenia will be offered on this occasion.

We are looking forward to spending this admirable DAY with you, dear Friends, with the President and the members of the Board of SI/E, with our godmother Club Genova Due Italy), with our godmother Elena, and we will try to make it an unforgettable event for all of us!

Yours sincerely,

Tamara with all the future Soroptimist of Yerevan.

A letter from Genova, Italy

Dear friends and European Soroptimists,

I strongly encourage you to attend the Charter Ceremony of the foundation of the first Soroptimist Club in Armenia, Saturday 29th May. If there is a great turn out of people from several European Countries, we could certainly reach an excellent goal of the Soroptimist Link, i.e., many women together allied for the peaceful union of our Countries.

In 2004, my sister Elena (now the godmother of the new Club) and myself visited Yerevan and Armenia attending a NATO-OTAN Mission. Tamara Sarkissian was the local NATO Chairman: now she is ready to be the President of the new Club Yerevan. She is a Professor of Genetics at the University.

On that occasion she organized an interesting three day visit of Yerevan and Armenia, including the navigation on lake Sevan, which is among beautiful mountains and nice views. She is now carrying out a similar local organization with her tourist Agent. You may contact her by e-mail: <tamsar @ sci.am> and her collaborator Meri Ghevondyan <meriagro @ gmail.com>.

Armenia is the smallest Caucasian country. On the south side it is possible to admire the Ararat (5165 m) and the small Ararat (3925 m). On the other sides there are mostly hills and mountains, several small towns, many villages, and monasteries and churches, mostly of the medieval period, can be seen everywhere, but there are also Roman and other ancient ruins.

As you probably know, Armenia was the first country to be completely Christian since 301 A.D. At the beginning, King Tiridates III the Great (250-330) was allied with the Roman Emperor Diocletian, but then he became very ill and was cured by a miracle by Saint Gregory the Illuminator. The King was converted and ordered that all Armenians receive, at once, Christian Baptism with him and his family. The history of Saint Gregory the Illuminator is probably partly imaginary, he was the son of Prince Anac, the killer of King Cosroe, father of Tiridates. Brought up as a Christian in Cappadocia, as an adult he went back to his country. Someone recognized him and he was put in a deep well, near Khor Virap, in front of Ararat and left there for 13 years. After the conversion of the King he was Patriarch of Armenia for 20 years, till his death. The Armenian Christian Church worships Tiridates III the Great as a Saint.

Another thing worth remembering is the great Armenian culture, the love for their origins, religion and country. The Patriarch, known as Catholikos, lives in Echmiadzin, in the surroundings of Yerevan. All Armenians, even those of the Diaspora, mostly living in the USA and in many European Countries, follow him and the rules of their religion.

Tamara and her collaborators have arranged a simple tour similar to the one that was organized for us in 2004. I recommend visiting the Yerevan upland and town and enjoying the extraordinary view on the Ararat, Lake Sevan at 1900 meters, one of the highest large lakes in the world, and the surroundings with many medieval churches and monasteries. The old routes of the Silk Road were along the edges of this lake. Garni and Geghard, once Greek, and then Roman cultural centers, are different and very interesting, too. I hope that many of you will join us in visiting Armenia and its Capital Yerevan, and will find new friends in the very special group of these new Soroptimist members.

Thanks very much indeed!

Yours sincerely,

Luisa Massimo (Soroptimist of Club Genova)