



11/2014



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PROGRAMME TEAM!

As we approach November 25th, we once again focus our attention on the issue of violence against women and girls — a human rights violation that is receiving increased international attention but that, nonetheless, shows no signs of abating. We applaud all of you for the phenomenal work you continue to do in your communities to fight violence against women, and we urge you not to tire in your efforts to raise awareness of this important issue. Moreover, we invite you to join forces with each other in doing so—on this issue and on others. What better place to start exchanging experiences and ideas than the 20th Soroptimist International Convention taking place in Istanbul next July? We hope to see many of you there!

Maria-Elisabetta de Franciscis – President Elect and head 'Programme & Advocacy'
Christine Peer – Programme Director
Emine Erdem – Assistant Programme Director

This month: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the start of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. The 16 Days of Activism end on December 10th, International Human Rights Day.

What is the 16 Days Campaign?

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign originating in 1991 from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute and coordinated by the Centre for Women's Global Leadership. Since then, **over 5,100 groups in 187 countries have taken part in the campaign!** Their activities take the form of art competitions, exhibitions, memorials, film screenings, postcard and poster campaigns, information stands, and media campaigns.

The 16 Days Campaign provides us all with the **opportunity to break the silence around domestic violence.** By organising events in our local communities that highlight the issue



of domestic violence, we make the issue visible, we give hope to women who are suffering, and we hold perpetrators of abuse to account.

Why those dates?

Taking place between the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Human Rights Day, the campaign highlights **the link between violence against women and human rights.** Today, women and girls are subjected to many forms of human rights violations solely on the basis of their gender.

What are the aims of the Campaign?

The 16 Days Campaign is an **opportunity for individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women by:**

- ◇ Increasing women's safety
- ◇ Highlighting the nature and prevalence of violence against women
- ◇ Raising awareness of violence against women as a human rights issue
- ◇ Establishing a clear link between local and international work to end violence against women
- ◇ Showing solidarity among women around the world
- ◇ Promoting women's leadership
- ◇ Lobbying governments
- ◇ Strengthening local work to tackle violence against women

Soroptimists across our Federation are engaged in the fight against gender-based violence. The 16 Days of Activism are an ideal opportunity to raise awareness in our Clubs, communities and countries. **So, what will you do to get involved in the 16 Days of Activism?**

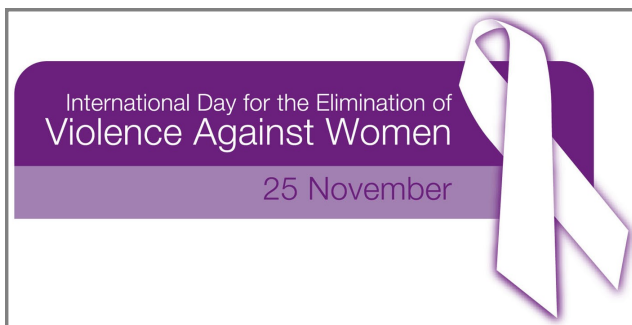
Renate Smith-Kubat, SIE Rep to the EWL



11/2014

35,000 SOROPTIMISTS STAND UNITED AGAINST VIOLENCE!

On the occasion of November 25th, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, we wish to share with you a statement prepared on behalf of Soroptimist International of Europe's 35,000 members to mark this important day. Please feel free to translate this statement into your own language and to distribute it widely!



On the occasion of November 25th, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the 35,000 professional women members of Soroptimist International of Europe say a resounding No! to violence against women.

As an organisation of women who have for almost a century now been working on the elimination of violence against women, we are profoundly disappointed with the consistent failure of the prevention strategies and programmes. Rates of violence against women across our societies remain astoundingly high: in Europe alone, estimated prevalence rates average 24% over the course of a woman's lifetime. In some countries around the world rates can be as high as 70%.

It is through conducting hundreds of projects each year aimed at alleviating violence against women – by building shelters and protected courtrooms, by funding and providing counselling services, by running anti-trafficking initiatives, and by conducting awareness raising initiatives – that we have understood just how ineffective 'official' strategies for the elimination of violence against women can be. We have also seen, with our own eyes, how high the price of such violence is. It is a price borne by individuals, by families, by communities, by entire societies.

This must change. It must change because, whether it is physical, psychological or economic, and whether it happens in the home, at work, in public places, in times of peace or in times of conflict, violence is a violation of women's human rights. It deprives millions of women of health, of happiness, of productivity, of dignity. It is the single greatest impediment to the achievement of gender equality in our societies.

As Soroptimists, we will continue our dedicated battle against violence against women. We invite all other relevant parties – individuals, organisations, institutions, governments – to take a firm stand on this issue and to go one step further in defeating this scourge of our time.



PROGRAMME NEWS

11/2014

THE *DEFEATING VIOLENCE* *AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS* PROJECT

By now you have probably all heard of SIE's *Defeating Violence Against Women and Girls* project.

As Soroptimists, we know very well that violence against women remains globally pervasive. Through the *Defeating Violence* project, we wish to reverse this trend and to make a concrete contribution to the elimination of violence against women and girls across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. We wish to bring about a deeper, more nuanced understanding of violence against women, and thus to contribute directly to the creation of more effective prevention strategies and programmes.

Many Soroptimists from across our Federation have already expressed their interest in making an active contribution to this project, and we must say a big thank you now already for your interest and support of this very ambitious initiative!

The project leaders are currently in the fundraising phase, which is of essence for getting the project off the ground. More detailed information about how your Club or Union can contribute to this project – financially or through donating your time, your expertise or your contacts – will be shared as soon as this phase is complete.

We thank you for your interest and your patience and hope to bring you good news soon!





11/2014

35,000 SOROPTIMISTS UNITED IN ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS!

Some highlights of recent projects conducted by Soroptimists across Europe and Africa!

Understanding domestic violence

To raise awareness about the nature of violence against women, **Soroptimists from Hyères in France** organised a conference for the public. The event consisted in part in role-play exercises which sought to demonstrate the process of domination – by having one spouse pretend to exert control over the other. This was an effective way to better understand the issue of violence, to start to combat it, and to learn about relevant laws. The conference was given by a legal professional who specialises in violence against women.



Club Soroptimist International d'Hyères
Soirée-conférence 23 novembre 2012
animée par F. GALLOU sur le thème
des violences conjugales.



Supporting women in danger

Soroptimists from the Club of Skive in Denmark wanted to help battered women in their country. They realised that women who have spent time in shelters have a hard time reintegrating into society. To assist victims of violence through the complex reintegration process, they contacted a local shelter which helped them identify women who needed assistance. Soroptimists from Skive then provided financial and social assistance to a young foreign woman with no social network, who was moving into her own flat after having spent some time in the shelter.

Children say no to violence

Soroptimists from Targoviste in Romania see family violence as a serious problem in their town. They note especially the effect that it has on children. Soroptimists thus joined



forces with the local Children's Palace and an art teacher to offer children and teenagers art lessons. An awareness raising art exhibition was subsequently organised. Entitled "Stop family violence!", the event saw the participation of many children and their parents who all presented their paintings or drawings on the theme of violence. Some of them even performed a small show. The main goal of this project was to allow children to express themselves through art and drama and to enable their parents to better understand their needs and anxieties.

Life without violence

As a Club with members of different nationalities, **SI Costa del Sol in Spain** decided to inform foreign women about the services that exist for women who have experienced gender violence. They decided to do so because they realised that existing information which is available in several languages isn't reaching its target groups. Their goal was also to raise awareness and to help local projects dedicated to defeating violence against women. The project received good press coverage and positive feedback from the community. The Club is now planning a new campaign related to violence together with the Malaga Women's Institute.

Defeating violence through education

Migrant women, especially those who have fled their home countries to escape physical and psychological violence, need to be supported in the country in which they seek asylum and to learn the language of the new country. **Soroptimists from Cologne, Germany**, are thus supporting migrant women, and particularly those who escaped violence, by financing German language lessons for them.

PROGRAMME NEWS

11/2014

COUNTRY FOCUS: MOLDOVA!

There are 5 SI clubs in **Moldova**: **Chisinau (2000), Edinet (2007), Causeni (2008), Cahul (2011), Nisporeni (2013)** as well as a Club in formation, **Stefan-Voda (submitted in October 2014)**.
There are **90 Soroptimists in Moldova**.

“Soroptimists in Moldova, with the support of Soroptimists from Norway, will tackle violence against women and girls as a public issue – and not as a private one. We will do so by providing information, education and communication to girls and boys, women and men. Women’s empowerment relates to both women and men.”
This statement represents one of the main conclusions reached during the Soroptimist International Conference held in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, on October 4, 2014. The event brought together Soroptimists from Moldova and Norway to discuss the issue of violence against women and identify concrete steps Soroptimists can take to raise awareness on this issue.



The heart-breaking reality is that, in Moldova, 60% of women have experienced one of the following forms of violence at least once in their lifetime: economic, psychological, physical or sexual. Six out of 10 women in rural areas and 7 out of 10 women in urban areas have been victims of domestic violence¹. An NGO hotline for victims of violence finds that 91% of all calls are from women who accuse men as being the main perpetrators – only 9% of calls are from men. Women are mostly victims of multiple violence, mainly physical-psychological (83%)². In Moldova, as in many other places, violence against women is fuelled by economic, social and educational factors: poverty, lack of financial independence among women, alcohol abuse, lack of access to education, traditional gender role distribution, social stigmatisation, and the “disciplinary” role held by men.

Moldova has a legislative framework in place to combat violence against women, namely the *Law on Prevention and Combatting of Domestic Violence* (2007), a series of by-laws such as protection orders for victims, regulations on the establishment of multidisciplinary teams comprised of police officers, doctors and social workers. Our country is a member of various international treaties such as CEDAW and is currently in the process of signing and ratifying the *Istanbul Convention*, following considerable civil society pressure.

However, the enforcement of the legislative framework still needs more effort. Civil society organisations, including Soroptimist, are taking the lead in this regard by implementing various targeted activities to reach ordinary people. With the support of Norwegian Soroptimists, Soroptimists in Moldova have recently implemented three projects on violence against women:

- ◇ *“Hopes and Dreams for Everyone”*, targeting 120 vulnerable girls and boys from rural boarding schools, teaching them life skills, including prevention of domestic violence, gender equality, and the benefits of a life free of violence (SI Chisinau with SI Norway, the IOM, the Centre for Children’s Rights),
- ◇ *“Professional skills”*, focusing on teaching life and professional skills to a group of 60 children and their parents from three Moldovan villages (SI Chisinau with SI Hamar),
- ◇ *“Prevention of Violence against Women”* targeting 20 women victims of domestic violence from vulnerable rural families (SI Edinet with SI Steirisches Ennstal-Grobming, Austria, and SI Sandefjord, Norway).

Moldovan Soroptimists will continue raising awareness about violence against women, especially during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence which starts on November 25th, 2014, and is marked in Moldova with a series of awareness raising activities implemented jointly by our Government, civil society organisations, and a community of donors.

*Violeta Bunescu, SI Chisinau
Valentina Bujulea, SI Chisinau
Liliana Rusu, SI Edinet*

1. Violence against Women, http://www.statistica.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Violenta/Raport_violenta_fam.pdf
2. NGO LaStrada website http://arhiva.lastrada.md/actiuni_curente



11/2014

GENERAL PROGRAMME NEWS

THE 20th SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION PROGRAMME IS OUT!



The 20th Soroptimist International Convention, taking place in Istanbul in July 2015, will be a unique opportunity to reflect on our organisation's past successes, to celebrate the present, and to imagine our future. We will come together to share and develop *fresh ideas for empowering women!*

Let's Celebrate!

Join sessions and listen to distinguished speakers to learn what our organisation and others are doing to educate and empower women and girls, fight violence against women, and much else. **Visit the Soroptimist Projects Fair** and "travel" to all corners of the world through inspiring projects developed by your fellow Soroptimists. **Celebrate Best Practices:** each Federation will present its 'Best Practice' – a uniquely impactful project that has helped improve the lives of women and girls on a large and lasting scale!

Let's Learn and Contribute!

We will debate with and learn from distinguished and renowned speakers who have expertise in the area of women's issues. We will challenge ourselves to reflect on our own role as a women's organisation in influencing and shaping the global women's agenda. **Participate in Sessions and workshops:** we will address gender equality needs in the areas of education, economic empowerment, health, the elimination of violence against women, and sustainable

environment. Workshops will provide you with the opportunity to further develop your skills!

Let's Be Creative!

For decades now, our members have been designing and implementing truly original projects. The Convention will thus also be the opportunity to explore together ideas and strategies for the future of our organisation. **Engage into the future** and contribute to the global consultation on the future of our organisation, reinforcing its unique and successful model.

The SI Convention Chair Emine Erdem and the local committee invite you to visit the **SI Convention website, which is regularly updated.** Simply go to: www.si-istanbul2015.org. You will find various information on the event, including a **detailed programme** and an **online registration form!** A large number of registrations has already been received. Do not miss the chance to be to be part of this exciting international event! You can also visit and "like" the SI Convention **Facebook** page.

BEST PRACTICE AWARDS 2015

Each year, the Soroptimist International of Europe Best Practice Awards **recognise outstanding Club/Union projects which have made an original, impactful, and lasting contribution to improving the lives of women and girls around the world. We encourage you all to participate!** Last year, an impressive 113 projects were submitted—a number which in itself is a true success story. This year, we hope to maintain this excellent dynamic and to receive an even higher number of submissions!

This year's winners will be awarded at the Governors' Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, in May 2015. In addition, they will receive recognition in a special Best Practices 2015 brochure, on the SIE website, and in *The Link*, all of which will help make their work known to Soroptimists and others around the world!

A call for Best Practice Applications containing further details will be launched before the end of November. Don't miss your chance to make your outstanding projects known!

You can see the winners of the 2014 Best Practice Awards and access brochures from previous years [here](#).

11/2014

PROGRAMME NEWS

2015 EXPO IN MILAN

As you might know, the Soroptimist International Clubs of the city of Milan in Italy are organising a special programme for Soroptimists from all over the world at **EXPO 2015**, the universal exhibition entitled *Feeding the planet, Energy for life* that will be held in Milan from **May to September 2015**.

The special programme by Soroptimists for Soroptimists called *Living the future - Soroptimist for Expo* will be held in Milan from **June 8th to 11th**.

We are also delighted to announce that the Soroptimist EXPO 2015 website is now live and that **registrations are open!** Make sure to register now in order to benefit from the lowest prices – the sooner the better!

For all information and to register, please go to www.soroptimistforexpo.com. You can also visit the EXPO 2015 [Facebook](#) page to get the latest news!



PEACE PRIZE 2015

Who will be the successor of the 2013 winner, Judge Silvana Arbia?

A call for the nomination of candidates for the **6th Soroptimist International of Europe Peace Prize** was sent to you a couple of weeks ago.

The Peace Prize, which is awarded every two years, **honours a woman or a group of women deserving special recognition for their**

remarkable achievements to promote peace. Each time, the Jury is chaired by the SIE President Elect and composed of four other experts, who are selected by the SIE Board.



The prize consists of a **certificate** delivered by SIE and signed by the President and the Chairperson of the Jury, a **statue** designed by Bettina Scholl Sabbatini, and a **monetary award of 20,000 Euros**.

The **deadline to nominate candidates is set to 30th November 2014**. For more information about the call, please click [here](#). We look forward to receiving your nominations!

SERBIA JOINS EUROPEAN FEDERATION

With the **Chartering of the Club of SI Subotica** on November 8th in the presence of President Ulla Madsen and Extension Chair Maria Luisa Frosio, **Serbia joined the European Federation of Soroptimist International**. The Chartering took place in Subotica's stunningly beautiful City Hall and was followed by a gala dinner for all guests, including fellow Soroptimists from Hungary and Slovenia, members of other service organisations, and local dignitaries. For more photos of the event, please click [here](#).





11/2014

BEIJING+20: REVIEWING THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN EUROPE

In recent editions of the *Programme News*, as well as on the SIE website, you have had the chance to read about “Beijing+20” – the fast-approaching 20th anniversary of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. At the start of November, the assessment of how far the world has actually come – or not – in fulfilling the goals of the *BPfA* started in earnest. **At the United Nations in Geneva, 56 Member States from the ECE region (which comprises all of Europe, Central Asia, the US and Canada) came together to review what their governments have done, and still need to do, to achieve the goals of the *BPfA*.**

As it has done throughout the history of the women’s movement, and throughout the life of the *BPfA*, **civil society was actively engaged in lobbying for women’s rights at this event as well!** In fact, between November 3rd and 5th, in the three days prior to the start of the intergovernmental meeting, more than 700 representatives of **250 women’s organisations from around the ECE region** gathered at the UN in Geneva to give *their* input for the future advancement of women’s rights.

Soroptimists contributed to the event actively both in the preparatory stages and during the meeting itself. The delegation, which included SI President Ann and SI President Elect Yvonne, was made up of **representatives of the four Federations, as well as SI**. SIE was represented by President Ulla Madsen, Vice President Tonny Filedt Kok Weimar, Extension Chair Maria Luisa Frosio, Council of Europe Representative Bettina Hahne, Executive Director Anne Simon, Programme and Advocacy Officer Ana Barfield, and Programme and Advocacy Researcher Gizeh Becerra.



Delegates made recommendations, particularly in the areas of **education** and the **elimination of violence against women**, networked with other organisations, and lobbied government representatives.

In particular, SI’s representatives to the United Nations, Wilfrida Hendrickx and Sabine Kinzer, organised the very well attended **round table on “Education and Training of Women”, at which SIE’s Extension Chair, Maria Luisa Frosio, delivered the keynote address**. In her speech, Maria Luisa gave an overview of the progress and remaining gaps in the education of women and girls in the ECE region and inspired NGO representatives to share their first-hand experiences and knowledge regarding these issues.

We encourage you to read all of these recommendations, and all others made on the 12 priority areas of the *BPfA* throughout the NGO Forum, [here](#).

As the title of the outcome document of the NGO event says it best, ***Every Woman, Every Right, Every Minute – Everyone is Responsible and the Time is Now!***

Ana Barfield, Programme & Advocacy Officer



11/2014

COMING TOGETHER TO FIGHT TRAFFICKING

"Depriving someone of their liberty, exploiting them and trading them as commodities for profit are serious human rights violations. Trafficking in human beings cannot be tolerated in any form [...]. We have developed ambitious legislations and measures to fight trafficking in human beings and we see that the political will [...] is there. The focus must now be on implementation: we need to translate the legislation into reality. We have an obligation, moral as well as legal, to act. And we need to do so in partnership with international organisations, third countries, civil society organisations, the private sector and all other relevant actors within the EU and abroad. To eradicate trafficking in human beings, we have to act together."

*Cecilia Malmström,
EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, 2014*



The EU Anti-Trafficking Day, marked since 2007 on October 18th, is a yearly reminder that "trafficking is an international phenomenon, knows no borders, nationality or religion." According to EUROSTAT, **women and girls remain by far the largest group (80%) of victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation continues to be the most widespread form (62%) of trafficking in the EU.** Trafficking in human beings is a **serious crime and an extremely grave violation of human rights:** it stems from, uses, and fuels violence against women and girls and annihilates their chances of education and empowerment.

Each year, this day is also an opportunity to reflect on the responses to trafficking that

policy makers, civil society and our own organisation have given so far. **The 35,000 members of SIE have condemned trafficking through many projects:** building shelters, providing counseling and rehabilitation services, establishing protected courtrooms, raising public awareness. We can see this clearly through SIE's new PFR database. **Soroptimists must continue to build on this impressive work by using the pool of existing ideas to further contribute to a more comprehensive approach to combatting trafficking, at the national and international levels.**

To this effect, **we should continue calling on our governments to sign, ratify and implement legal instruments such as the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention,** which recognises gender violence as one of the root causes of human trafficking and applies its 3Ps strategy to it: Prevention, Prosecution and Protection. Unfortunately, at present, there are still 21 member states that have signed but not ratified the *Istanbul Convention* and 15 that have not even signed it.

I suggest that Soroptimists add a further P to this strategy: Partnership. **Let's set up alliances with other organisations, and be even more effective advocates against trafficking!**

Elena Savu, Vice President Advocacy

IMPORTANT DATES

Nov 20	Universal Children's Day
Nov 25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
Dec 1	World AIDS Day
Dec 2	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
Dec 10	Human Rights Day
Dec 18	International Migrants Day

HAVE COMMENTS?

This is YOUR newsletter! If you have a comment, document, link, or anything else that you would like us to communicate in an upcoming edition of the newsletter, please share it with us! Feel free to send your news to programme@soroptimisteurope.org.

CONTRIBUTORS

Maria-Elisabetta de Franciscis, President Elect
Christine Peer, Programme Director
Emine Erdem, Assistant Programme Director
Elena Savu, Vice President Advocacy
Renate Smith-Kubat, SIE Representative to the EWL
Anne Simon, Executive Director
Ana Barfield, Programme and Advocacy Officer
Bintou Koïta, Programme and Advocacy Assistant
Gizah Becerra, PhD student, Gender issues