



The Link

A global voice for women

1/2008-2009 N° 212



SI Europe Congress
Register Now!

Friendship Days
“No Tolerance of Intolerance”

Water Projects
Inspirational

Soroptimist International (SI) is a worldwide organisation for women in management and professions, working through service projects to build a better world for women and children. There are currently over 90,000 members in more than 3,000 clubs in 124 countries.

Soroptimist International of Europe (SI/E) is one of four federations of Soroptimist International. It has over 34,000 members in some 1,200 clubs in 57 countries.

Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships. Please consult our website at www.soroptimisteurope.org for more information about the aims, activities and projects that characterise our organisation.

Note from the Editorial Staff

The Link Has a New Look

When the Governors voted to set up a Working Group to investigate ways to improve and modernise your magazine at their meeting this summer in Warsaw, we had no idea that we would be entrusted with the production of the December issue. This presentation is by no means the final concept, but it does reflect some of the ideas from our first deliberation. Our aim is to offer a magazine that will encourage more of you to read The Link, because at the moment, we are not even reaching a third of our members!

But please be patient. This is just a first step, and there are still many procedures and problems to iron out. Should any of you be interested in working on The Link editorial team, please contact SI/E HQ. We are looking for an English and a French editor, as well as regional correspondents.

Your projects and activities are important so please share them with other Soroptimists. The Link is an excellent tool to show members and the wider public how Soroptimists truly work to improve the lives of women and children.



Cover page

Patricia Wenk, Club Rapperswil and President of the relief organisation Taderass (centre), inspects

the well in repair with Touareg tribesman Dakso Hamidan (right), who is supervising the reconstruction of the well in Niger, and the well's owner (left).

Lapland Magic III (Correction)



There was an error in the invitation to Finland's Lapland Magic III programme in The Link N° 211. The correct email address of Hilikka Vahervuori, Club Espoo, is: hilikka.vahervuori@kolumbus.fi - Tel. +35 85055314 80. Lapland Magic III will definitely take place in Pyhäntunturi from 6th - 10th February 2009. Registration closes on 31st December 2008.

Margot David, Club Bad Nauheim of Germany (above), clearly enjoyed her dog sled ride during the last Lapland Magic experience.

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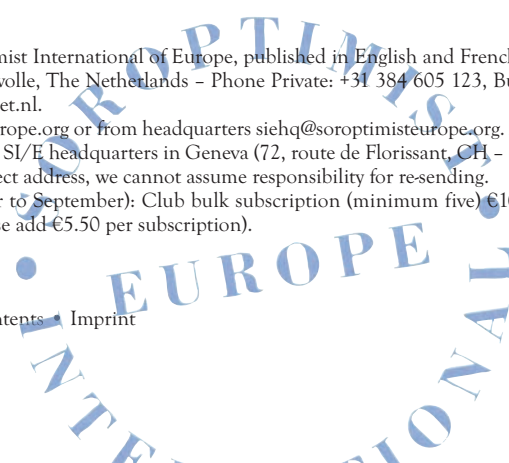
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President's Letter

Dear Soroptimists,

The new Soroptimist year is in full swing. With our European Congress, 2009 will be a particularly exciting year for our Federation. We hope to see many of you in Amsterdam from 10th - 12th July 2009. Read more about it in this issue or go to www.soroptimistsgo4water.nl.

As many of you already know, Marie Jeanne Bosia has resigned as Editor-in-Chief of The Link after 12 years of loyal service. In honour of Marie Jeanne we uploaded her final Link onto the website. We are grateful for all her hard work and fully appreciate that it has been an enormous and time-consuming task. The production of this December issue has been a joint effort, but I would especially like to thank Christine Cromwell-Ahrens for her tireless efforts to get this edition of The Link produced on time. Christine is also chairing the Working Group set up to investigate ways to improve and modernise The Link. The Group is highly motivated, and this issue already reflects a new approach to informing the Soroptimists of the European Federation.

Creating a new SI emblem

At the SI meeting in Windsor, we discussed the Strategic Plan, and in a special letter, I informed the Union Presidents, Single Club Presidents and Governors of the outcome. The SI Board announced a competition to find a new stylized SI emblem. This led to Recommendation 26, stating that in consultation with the SI Executive Officer, the SI PR Liaison will engage design consultants to develop a corporate identity for the organisation. The Board will set a budgetary limit prior to seeking proposals from professional design specialists. The competing professionals must follow set criteria, and the stylised emblem of the three finalists will be put on the internet so that all Soroptimists can cast their votes. The winning stylised emblem will be approved at the 2009 Board Meeting and presented and implemented during the next SI Convention in Montreal, Canada in August 2011. If someone from our Federation would like to join this competition, please contact SI/E headquarters in Geneva.

PR and communications are important priorities in all Federations of Soroptimist International. The current SI/E Board put PR on the top of its policy plan agenda.

Our website www.soroptimisteurope.org has already changed drastically and more changes are to come. The aim is to make the site more user friendly, interactive, eye-catching and interesting. Access to the member area is much easier now. Information from SI/E HQ will be streamlined so you will be able to download more documents. Along with our newly developed website, Buzz Media has created several blogs for SI/E: MySpace, Facebook, Vimeo and YouTube. These modern sites will help us attract younger women to our organisation, which, as we know from the survey presented at the Governors' Meeting in Warsaw, is one of our top priorities. And finally, I would like to draw your attention to the short English and French video clips on our www.soroptimisteurope.org site. Why not send this link to your friends, colleagues, family and Soroptimist friends to let them see for themselves who we are, what we do and where we are going. You can also catch a glimpse of this year's Governors' Meeting in Warsaw with clips that clearly show the cultural richness of which SI/E is so proud. And don't miss the selection of short interviews from various SI/E

members with some personal thoughts on their role as Soroptimists. We believe these additions will attract a younger audience and demonstrate to the outside world that we are truly vibrant and active! So, please help us achieve this goal and show these videos to as many people as possible.



President Mariet takes a hands-on approach to a water project in Kenya.

A Wonderful Network

Dear Soroptimists, you can feel the buzz in our Federation. This is the way forward. We are now showing the outside world that we are an organisation firmly based in the 21st century with a wonderful networking system. Let us share our thoughts and ideas with others, let us be inspired so we can inspire others, let us help other women and support one another and let us mentor young professional women so we can make a difference in achieving true gender equality. I would like to make this our New Year's resolution.

My sincere and best wishes to all of you for a peaceful, healthy and happy 2009.

In friendship,

Mariet

Mariet Verhoef-Cohen
SI/E President

A PROGRAMME OF SUPERLATIVES

The project theme of President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, "Soroptimists go for Water" will be the central focus of the 19th SI Europe Congress, to be held in Amsterdam from 10th – 12th July 2009. The Congress promises to be varied and exciting. Please see what there is to offer because we hope many Soroptimists will join us for this extraordinary and inspiring experience.

Clean water is a luxury in many countries of the world, and securing a water source for life's necessities is often women's work.



The final announcement and all information as well as registration forms for the 19th Congress are available on the website www.soroptimistsgoforwater.nl or can be obtained as a printed version. As you will see, the programme includes many interesting topics for our members. Among the invited keynote speakers are Wangari Maathai, environmentalist and 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner; Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Habitat; and Jacqueline Cramer, Dutch Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment. The participation of international women's organisations and NGOs that implement projects for safe water, fight poverty and encourage sustainable development will guarantee a high standard throughout the theme sessions.

Amsterdam is a sparkling, colourful, dynamic, friendly, creative, and heaps-of-fun city that breathes water from every corner. It is where cosmopolitan meets traditional, where world-famous art and culture meet science and knowledge. In this glorious capital of the Netherlands we look forward to welcoming Soroptimist members, along with their friends and families, to our Federation Congress.

Theme sessions:

Well-known experts will give lectures during the Congress. A host of subjects will be explored in depth and worked out in greater detail during eight professional theme sessions on the afternoons of 10th and 11th July. The theme sessions are in line with the programme areas of Soroptimism and are aimed at practical application. Participants will gain extensive up-to-date knowledge about water and sanitation, and will be given the tools to successfully set up water projects in their own countries. This is guaranteed not only by the water experts who conduct these theme sessions, but also by the participating international women's organisations and other non-governmental organisations that carry out projects to combat poverty and to supply water and sanitation facilities in Africa and Europe. The Congress will be held in the middle of a four-year period during which SI/Europe has chosen "water" as its theme (2007-2011). That is why during the sessions' reports will be discussed on successful projects already started by Soroptimists in Africa and Europe. The following theme sessions are currently scheduled:



1. Safe drinking water and sanitation: a human right or a need? Discussion of various views on legal and political questions.

2. Water, sanitation, hygiene and health. How to turn water from a source of diseases into a source of life.

3. Water and the economic development of women. The conditions needed by women to exploit water in a fair trade way. Would micro-credits help?

4. Gender equity and empowerment of women for sustainable water and sanitation projects.

5. Interactive theme sessions on functional networking. Together we will develop a network to help you execute your own water project.

6. The possibilities and best practices of ecological sanitation in East European countries.

7. Smart sanitation solutions in African countries.

8. Rainwater as an important source of water. Practical examples of its efficient and safe use.

Social Events:

Golf tournament Wednesday 8th July

Right at the heart of the watery and green landscape of the province of North Holland you will find the magnificent golf course Burg Golf Purmerend. This 45-hole course offers golfers tranquillity and space, not to mention plenty of golfing fun.

Friendship Evening

Thursday 9th July, 19:15-22:00

The Dutch Union celebrates its 80th anniversary on the eve of the Congress. They are the old-

The charming and exciting city of Amsterdam will be the venue of the SI Europe Congress 2009.



The Congress will be held in the middle of a four-year period during which SI/Europe has chosen “water” as its theme (2007–2011).

est Union in the European Federation and would like to share this occasion with all participants. We will celebrate with a concert performed by Combattimento Consort Amsterdam, while you can enjoy a drink and snacks. Water will be the musical theme of the concert. This unique and specially organized event will be a perfect introduction to the Congress.

**Dutch Hospitality Evening –
hosted by Dutch Soroptimist clubs
Friday 10th July, 17:00– 23:00**

Come and join us for a real Dutch welcome evening for all, where people can meet and mix in an atmosphere of friendship and hospitality. You will be taken to venues in and around Amsterdam where Soroptimist clubs from all over the Netherlands will be waiting to greet you with food, entertainment and, of course, fun and friendship.

**Open Heart-Open Door Get-Together
Saturday 11th July**

Meet friends from all over the world and share information about this Exchange Programme of SI/Europe.

**Gala Dinner,
Saturday 11th July, 19:00–22:30**

Saturday evening has been reserved for the Gala Dinner. We are still looking into different locations, but it is going to be fantastic, so keep an eye on our website!

**Regatta
Sunday 12th July, 13:30–19:30**

Can you think of a better conclusion to the SI/E Water Congress than to set sail yourself! In conjunction with a renowned shipping company, we have organised a special sailing competition

involving a large fleet of traditional Dutch sailing vessels. Many of these ships were built around 1900. On Sunday 12th July, the skipper will welcome you (and, if you wish, your partner and/or children) on board for a unique experience. The vessel casts off and will set sail to the IJsselmeer, the former Zuiderzee, which is now an inland lake.

Lunch will be served on board. Out on the water, you will receive brief sailing instructions, after which you can practice a number of manoeuvres with the crew and other passengers. At 16:30 the Regatta starting shot will sound for an Olympic Round. After this experience there is time for an onboard drink while setting sail back to Amsterdam where you will disembark at 19:30.

Accommodation

Owing to the high demand for accommodation in Amsterdam in July, all accommodation must be reserved before the dates stated on the reservation forms. Bookings and rates cannot be guaranteed after this date.

Hotel accommodation

We have negotiated very special prices with the NH Hotels in Amsterdam (10 hotels). Please make your reservations directly with NH hotels using the reservation form enclosed in the final announcement or via our website.

Accommodation on boats: a stay in style!

We offer the possibility of a unique stay in the city centre of Amsterdam on board of big comfortable (sailing) vessels. The location of the specially composed fleet of hotel ships is near Javaeiland, within walking distance of the Congress location and Amsterdam’s big attractions. Please make your reservations directly with Naupar, using the reservation form enclosed in the final announcement or via our website.

Do Not Forget Your Visa!

Information on visa requirements can be obtained from the Dutch embassy in your country. Information is also available at the website of the Foreign Office, www.minbuza.nl/en/home. If a formal invitation is required in order for you to apply for a visa, please contact us, and we will send you a personal letter of invitation. Please remember that you must start visa application procedures at least three months in advance!

Home hospitality

Home hospitality can only be offered to a limited number of persons. This facility is mainly intended for Soroptimists with limited financial means and who will only be able to take part in the Congress with this hospitality. Coordinator is Yvonne Scheper of SI Club Amsterdam Amstel. Please contact her directly via yvon@planet.nl.

Hostels, B&Bs, camping sites

There are numerous hotels, hostels, bed-and-breakfast facilities as well as camping sites in the area of Amsterdam. If you wish to make your own accommodation reservations, please visit the Amsterdam Tourist Board website: www.amsterdamtourist.nl.

Congress and post-congress tours

Congress and post-congress tours

ITBholland Travel Service, in close consultation with the Congress Committee, has arranged a large number (41!) of special tours for our congress participants. They even include a few men-only tours! Go Dutch with the Dutch: by bike, hydrocycle, boat or bus. They also offer multiple day tours. Full Information can be found in the final announcement or on our website www.soroptimistsgoforwater.nl.

Post-congress tours organised by Soroptimist clubs

Soroptimist clubs in the Netherlands are arranging a number of special multiday tours, which include home hospitality with Soroptimists whenever possible. Information about these tours is only available on the website www.soroptimistsgoforwater.nl, where you can also make your booking.

Post-congress tour organised by Naupar

A sailing trip on the IJsselmeer and the Waddenzee will start at noon on Monday 13th July, 12:00, and ends on Sunday 19th July, 16:00. After a brief instruction, the ship will leave the harbour of Amsterdam for a trip to some of the most beautiful old villages and towns along the coast. Full information is given on the website: www.soroptimistsgoforwater.nl.

We look forward to seeing you and sharing with you an enriching Amsterdam water experience!

Mariet Verhoef-Cohen,

SI/E President 2007 - 2009

Janny Spierenburg,

Chair Congress Committee 2009

Preliminary Programme

Thursday 9th July 2009

14:00-19:00	Arrival and registration Visit information stands and project proposals
19.15-22:30	Friendship evening, hosted by the Dutch Union of Soroptimist International. Welcome with coffee and snacks followed by a concert

Friday 10th July 2009

07:30-12:00	Registration	
09:30-10:00	Opening Ceremony	
10:00-10:45	Plenary session	Welcome Speeches
10:45-11:15		Coffee Break
11:15-12:30	Plenary session	Keynote Speakers
13:00-14:00		Lunch Break
14:00-17:00	Parallel sessions	Theme Sessions
17:00	Departure for Hospitality Evening, hosted by Dutch Soroptimist Clubs	

Saturday 11th July 2009

07:30-10:00	Registration	
09:00-10:30	Plenary session	Keynote Speakers
10:30-11:00		Coffee Break
11:00-12:30	Plenary session	Presentations of Nominees for SI/E Water Awards Presentations by Coordinators
12:30-14:00	Lunch Break	
13:00-14:00	Open Heart-Open Door Get-Together	
14:00-15:30	Parallel session	Theme Sessions
19:30	Gala Dinner	

Sunday 12th July 2009

07:30-10:00	Registration	
09:00-09:30	Plenary session	Summary of Theme Sessions
09:30-10:30	Plenary session	Presentation of 3rd Soroptimist Peace Award
10:30-11:00	Plenary session	Presentation of SI/E Water Awards
11:00-11:30		Coffee Break
11:30-11:45	Plenary session	Change of Insignia
11:45-12:30	Plenary session	Closing Ceremony

Registration for 19th SI EUROPE Congress 2009

Full registration includes

- Congress Pack including the Congress Programme and other documents
- name badge permitting access to the Opening Ceremony and all sessions
- teas/coffees during breaks
- lunches on Friday and Saturday inclusive

Day registration includes

- Congress Pack including the Congress Programme and other documents
- day name badge permitting access to the sessions of the day of registration
- teas/coffees during breaks on the day of registration
- lunch on the day of registration, if applicable

Registration fees

Early full registration until 1 st March 2009	€ 340
Late full registration until 1 st July 2009	€ 395
Day registration Friday and Saturday until 1 st March 2009	€ 200
Day registration Friday and Saturday until 1 st July 2009	€ 220
Day registration Sunday until 1 st March 2009	€ 175
Day registration Sunday until 1 st July 2009	€ 195
Friendship Evening, Dutch Union (Thursday)	€ 35
Hospitality Evening (Friday)	€ 25
Gala Dinner (Saturday)	€ 75
Regatta (Sunday)	€ 90



USELESS OR USEFUL?

Is reporting to SI/E and SI useful or useless? Clearly reporting is always useful, from the grassroots level to SI/E and SI and vice versa. But even a fact so evident may need to be more closely examined. Let's first take a look at what forms of reporting are relevant within our organisation.



Reporting on projects and programmes

The international SI Board, after consultation with its voting members, determines the programme focus and selects an international 4-year project. In addition, there are projects at the federation level, the union level and the club level. This means there are numerous projects and activities in progress at all levels at any given time.

Reports are needed on all of those projects, resulting in a continuous two-way traffic flow: the members have to know what the priorities are in our organisation; SI must know how its members are performing. So reporting is happening, but for what purpose?

The essence of a service club lies in its project-based activities – the effects of the programme. A service club by definition serves the community, which, in the case of SI, translates as the empowerment of women. Our actions and projects are the reason of our existence, and we therefore need to keep a record of them.

SI and/or SI/E are affiliated to the UN, UNESCO, WHO, the European Women's Lobby and the Council of Europe. Affiliation to these institutions is a right that has to be earned, and a right that needs ongoing maintenance and constant confirmation through one's achievements. Our representatives to those organisations must be able to explain on the basis of the information they receive from our members what Soroptimist International has done, how we have stood up

against trafficking; how we have helped women in Africa, how SI has had an impact on the environment and on equal opportunities for women. The only way to obtain such information is through reports prepared by the clubs. The annual reports from the coordinators are valuable, but the PFRs are much faster. Every club can send its PFR by email or regular post to SI/E HQ in Geneva, but we encourage you to use the online database at www.reports.soroptimistinternational.org/.

We look to obtain a brief but accurate report, preferably in English, although French is acceptable. HQ edits the PFRs and uploads them onto the SI database, the SI/E programme director and the union coordinator. Again you might ask: what is the purpose of this exercise?

- SI collects all information on projects and prepares it as a source of information for the interventions of our representatives in the UN, UNESCO and other organisations, demonstrating evidence of our efficiency and global reach.
- This databank can also be referred to within the Federation and/or SI and so becomes a source of new ideas and cooperative structures.
- The databank provides a wealth of high-quality PR material, containing all the facts and evidence necessary to persuade potential partners or sponsors of the importance of SI.
- Every year a project is selected from this pool for the "Best Practice Award".



Reporting on the functioning and structure of the organisation

The structure of SI is pyramid shaped. The top of the pyramid is the international SI Board, in which each federation is represented by three voting members. Each federation, in turn, has its own Board. The SI Board meets once every year. Here, the outlines of the organisation are drawn in agreement between the four federations. The federations also have a general annual meeting once a year (in SI/E this is the Governors' Meet-

ing) during which federation matters are discussed with the Union governors and Single Club delegates. The impulse is mostly provided from within the members group, to the extent that they communicate their ideas to the Union board via club delegates; the Union board in turn, through governors, has a say in the Federation Board. The Federation President, together with the Past President and the President Elect, presents the views of the Federation at the international SI Board Meeting. Decisions taken there are communicated down through the pyramid system to the members.

Especially given the present reforms taking place within our organisation, it is important that there is effective communication between the Federation Board and the members. For any changes and adjustments to work and to be followed through, we need the support of the majority of our members. Members must be consulted to find out if proposed changes will be accepted, and to hear their vision on a revitalised Soroptimist International. Again, this requires a reporting system within SI and SI/E on the Strategic Planning process and reports from within the clubs that clarify how matters are perceived by members.



Project reports can be useful as tools for PR work

SI must increase its “brand awareness”. We must be more talked about. To use a trendy expression: we need to create a buzz about Soroptimist in the media. Project reports prepared for SI/E and SI can be used for PR via publications such as *The Link* and the TIS, as well as on the website. The European federation wants to be able to post new information on the website regularly, as well as distributing news flashes, press releases and video clips on the Internet via YouTube, MySpace, etc. In order to retain the interest in what we do, website information and

The Latest News at Your Fingertips

Soroptimist International Programme Director Dawn Marie Lemonds announced in October 2008 that SI has **launched an SI Programme Blogspot**. This modern accessible form of communication will be a place to find news from the field such as when SI leaders visit projects, to read reports about UN events or to catch up on the latest Programme Focus Reports. The idea is to provide “snapshots” and excerpts of information that is more comprehensively explained in official reports. It will also be linked to the SI website in the Programme section. “Please be a frequent visitor and feel free to send us ideas or questions,” says Dawn Marie. The address is <http://siprogrammeblog.blogspot.com>.

news must be continually refreshed, and for this we need ongoing input from our members.



Reporting from Clubs and Unions to Soroptimist International

Reporting is very important for our lobbying work. For example, SI recently asked the Unions what percentage of the national budget in their country is allocated to equal opportunity policies for women. The feedback was used for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the UN in New York in relation to equal opportunities policy. Thanks to the answers we received from members, we were able to confront government leaders with the inequity in their respective countries and advocate an improved status for women.

Soroptimist International is represented in a number of international organisations, and we have a voice in these institutions. However, whatever our delegates have to say is primarily determined by the information they receive through the club reports.

Going back to the original question, whether reporting to SI and SI/E is useful or useless, I would say that there are plenty of reasons to suggest that reporting not only is an extremely useful discipline, but a necessary one for the survival of Soroptimist International. *Quod erat demonstrandum*.

Eliane Lagasse
SI/E President elect



TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR LIFE!

“Women in Charge” was the central theme of this year’s biennial Three-Nation Meeting for Soroptimists from Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg.

German Union President Hanne von Schumann-Werder warmly welcomed the more than 180 participants who took part in the event held in mid-September in Ravensburg, Germany and especially greeted guest of honour SI President elect Hanne Jensbo. At the opening ceremony Christa Stewens, Bavarian Minister for Work and Social Order, Family Affairs and Women, spoke with aplomb and charm. She called for a stronger presence of women in political positions. However, the mother of six children and 19 grandchildren knows from her own experience how difficult it is for women to find the time for political commitment while juggling the responsibilities of a profession, partner and family.

Music educates children The venue for further speeches and workshops was the college of education in the delightful Weingarten Cloister, the largest Baroque cloister structure in Germany. The introductory address and film presentation by Linda Reisch, Managing Director of “Musikkindergärten e.V.” Berlin, on the subject of “Music educates - introducing music education at an early age” was particularly inspirational. Above all, it was the children in the film who enthralled the audience by their composure,

creative curiosity and cooperative attitude and who best conveyed a lively impression of the purpose and value of this kindergarten programme for music education.

Reconciling work and family In four workshops, the participating Soroptimists enthusiastically and spiritedly discussed a number of aspects of “Women’s Responsibilities”. The experience of Soroptimist Barbara Steinhagen was, for example, the focal point of the discussion centred on the theme “Top Manager and Mother - is it just a matter of your choice?” She told workshop participants how she was refused a promotion offered by her former employer, Sony BMG, after she announced that she was pregnant. “The decision whether I want to combine family life with a career should be mine alone,” she stressed.

Preserving physical and mental health The workshop titled “Concepts and Ways of Living for Seniors” encouraged participants to find their own best answer for life in those twilight years and to take an active interest in realising the appropriate solution for retirement age. The term “old people’s homes” is still widespread in Switzerland and Austria, whereas it has been replaced by other words in Germany. A concept similar to the “residential care homes” in Germany is increasingly being introduced in Switzerland. Soroptimist Gabriele Heyd, specialist in the 50+ generation (www.heyd-pr.de), warned participants to “take special care of their own health in order to preserve their physical and mental abilities”. In another workshop called “Ageing is Feminine”, there was a vehement appeal “to make one’s own provisions for retirement age in good time” because there are often idealised notions of the financial possibilities in senior years and thus the reality of the situation is all the more painful.

Realities of old age Dr. Juliane Roloff from the German Federal Institute for Population Research compared the gender-specific aspects of

From left: President of Club Ravensburg/Weingarten Susanne Hölzer, Bavarian Minister Christa Stewens, President of the German Union Hanne von Schumann-Werder are shown with the mayor of Ravensburg Hans Georg Kraus



the demographic change in Germany with those in Switzerland and Austria. Her conclusion for all three countries was that women live longer than men and that there are more women seniors than men. Consequently, women more frequently spend their “twilight years” alone. In contrast, men who live to a ripe age are most likely to be in partnerships, often with younger partners. Women more frequently require in-patient nursing care in old age. And women in senior years are more frequently poverty-stricken than men.

Next Three-Nation Meeting After the presentation of the workshop results, Roswitha

Briel, Vice President of the German Union, delivered a brilliant summary of the Three-Nation Meeting and its excellent social programme. The organ concert in the basilica of the Weingarten Cloister was the perfect grand finale of an extremely fruitful weekend.

The next Three-Nation Meeting will be organised by the Swiss Union and is to take place in Arbon at Lake Constance from 17th - 19th September 2010. The theme will focus on all aspects of “Water”.

Kathy Kaaf,
Club Bonn-Bad Godesberg

PUTTING AARHUS ON THE SI/E MAP

“European Days” Offer Interesting Programme



More than 150 Soroptimists headed for Aarhus, Denmark to take part in the 7th European Days of Friendship held from 19th-21st September 2008. It was a wonderful occasion for members of the European Federation to meet new friends and renew old friendships.

Guests from 17 countries greeted each other with warm hugs at the official welcome in front of the Town Hall on a sunny Friday afternoon. Club Aarhus arranged an interesting programme around the theme, “No Tolerance of Intolerance”, introduced by our eloquent SI/E President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen. She gave us her vision of Soroptimism for the next ten years and reminded us once again of the need to recruit younger members.

African health activist Professor Elizabeth Ngugi of the University of Nairobi spoke about giving microcredits to victims of AIDS and HIV in the slums of Nairobi. Birte Holst Jorgensen, managing director of Nordic Energy Research, then presented

her views on what we can do for the climate.

Participants were fascinated when Anders Mogensen revealed his dream about developing a laptop powered by solar energy for every pupil in the world at a cost of just \$100. We will let you know, when his dream becomes reality!

The conference ended with a delightful show performed by two Danish stand-up comedians, who gave us all a good laugh. The event culminated with the gala dinner in a former power station, which was only illuminated by candlelight.

One of our guests summed up her feelings about the event with the words: “An interesting programme and happy festivities, wonderful meals and drinks, sparkling conversations and relaxing moments!” The members of the Aarhus clubs want to thank all participants for coming and for helping us put Aarhus on the map of European Soroptimists with this inspiring get-together.

Hanne Jensbo, SI President Elect
Club Aarhus

Thanking Professor Elizabeth Ngugi (centre) for her interesting speech were (from left): Kirsten Madsen, Danish AIDS Foundation, Kirsten Rasbech, Danish Union Secretary, Professor Ngugi, Thea Dalsgaard, Danish Union President and Judith Ostergaard, Soroptimist in Club Randers.

EXEMPLARY PROJECTS IN AFRICA

Africa faces the most severe water and sanitation challenges of all regions of the world. Providing the poverty-stricken population with safe water and sanitation is an enormous task. Over half of the people live without these basic human needs. The consequences are appalling. Every year thousands of people, mostly children, die because of the dreadful hygienic conditions.

As SI/E Extension and Follow-up and as Project Manager Africa I have had painful experiences on all my trips: children with swollen bellies and diarrhoea that does not stop and people forced to drink polluted water from rivers with very harmful consequences. Water is clearly the key to a healthier life and an important help for development, and this is why I have been working with our clubs in several countries of Africa to build wells and toilets. I also know that not only a lack of education hampers women's development, but also a lack of access to water and sanitation.

In conjunction with her SI/E project, "Soroptimists go for Water", our President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen has asked clubs to channel resources into at least one major water-related improvement

project. Her appeal has had an impressive effect. Many clubs have introduced projects in their own countries, but there have also been many joint projects with Eastern European countries, and above all with our African Clubs. This has resulted in 61 projects: many have been successfully completed, some are still underway and others are in planning. Small, but well executed projects are thriving in far away regions and giving support to the local population, to schools and to kindergartens. It is a wonderful experience to read the incoming reports, to see the photos and to send them on to the clubs involved in Europe.

Women for Water (WfW)

Some months ago SI/E also became a member and partner of Women for Water and is collaborating on several projects with this organisation. Women for Water is a partnership of women's organisations worldwide, who are active in the field of water and sanitation.

The overall goal of the WfW partnership with SI/E is to advance the internationally agreed principles for sustainable water management by turning these into day-to-day practice. The European Federation's big network of clubs is an important tool in this effort. Our activities together with the African Clubs offer grassroots help by initiating small, but important projects.

I am often touched by the generous support of our European Clubs and the commitment of the African Clubs and want to thank all of you who have invested time and money in the numerous water projects. Of course, it is not possible to present all the on-going initiatives. But the photos show two of the finished projects. We hope to be able to inform you about additional successful projects in later issues of The Link.

Roswitha Ott
SI/E Project Manager Africa

This well in Difémou, Mali was realized in collaboration with Club Cochem/Mosel and other German and Swiss Clubs and Club Bamako Lumière, Mali.



A well in Fougadougou, Mali was built with the help of Club Beersels of Belgium together with Club Bamako Espoir, Mali.





Selling Tulips for a Good Cause

As vital as it is, water is not always beneficial. It can also be the source of destruction and disaster. Recent floods in Niger and Mali caused enormous damage. The population along the river Niger suffered terribly from the floods and also lost their donkeys, carts and tools. Club Liestal, Switzerland, financed new animals and the necessary materials in Bla with the help of an original idea: They went to The Netherlands, bought Soroptimist tulips and sold them in their city. With her vast experience and regular journeys to Africa, SI/E Project Manager Africa Roswitha Ott personally made sure the aid reached the neediest people.

Restoring wells in Taderass

A WATER PROJECT THAT INSPIRES US!

More and more clubs of the European Federation are co-operating with partner organisations to realise water projects – especially in Africa, where an adequate supply of potable water can make the difference between life and death.

Clean water for the Touareg nomadic tribe of Niger is the aim of a project introduced in 2007 by Club Winterthur in Switzerland under the name “Aman Iman”. Patricia Wenk, Soroptimist in Club Rapperswil and President of the private relief organisation “Taderass”, has the knowledge and experience to ensure that the financial support provided by Club Winterthur is put to the right use.

Founded by Patricia and her brother in 2004, “Taderass” is working to improve the lives of the Touareg tribe, especially the women and children, in the Taderass region of Niger. The idea is to help the people help themselves so that there can be a more lasting effect. For more details see www.taderass.ch.

The Taderass project supported by Club Winterthur focused on the reconstruction of draw wells to secure drinking water supplies for the tribe and their animals. Many of these wells are decades old and in an extremely dilapidated con-



dition. The nomads in Niger do not have the money to repair their wells. It is obvious that those most severely affected by a lack of clean water are the women.

With typical Soroptimist professionalism, Club Winterthur did not only collect money to finance their project, but also staged awareness events to draw attention to the problem itself. They distributed flyers and had the particularly creative idea of selling water bottles – both in the city centre and at the Winterthur Marathon. These various activities resulted in proceeds of € 4,275. However, the highlight was a “Running Party” at a local sports facility with the age of participants ranging from three to 80! This event alone yielded € 6,475. Thanks to further water bottle sales, a total amount of € 12,950 could be donated to the Taderass organisation. With these funds, Patricia will be able to restore nearly all the wells designated for repair in 2009.

Congratulations to the Club Winterthur members who worked so hard to realise this successful project, and many thanks to Patricia for her untiring work in support of the men and women of the Touareg tribe!

With the funds donated from Club Winterthur, the draw wells are being repaired, which helps secure the survival of nomadic tribes in the desert borderland of Niger.



SHOW SUPPORT FOR RWANDA!

Eleven years after the terrible genocide of 1994 which cost the lives of nearly a million Rwandans, the 1st International Marathon for Peace took place on 15th May 2005 in Kigali, the capital of this African country. In line with the former Federation project, "Women Building Peace", SI/E organised a Peace Marathon in collaboration with Rwandan Soroptimists and with the patronage of the Rwandan Government. Over the years, the popularity of the Peace Marathon has grown steadily, and it has even become part of the international marathon circuit.

The children of Rwanda have always been enthusiastic participants of the Fun Run in conjunction with the Peace Marathon in Kigali.



The International Peace Marathon, first initiated by SI/E, aims to promote the process of reconciliation and understanding – not only among Rwandans but also other African nations and people worldwide. For the 4th time, the marathon took place this year on 11th May with nearly 3,000 participants and sent a powerful message of peace for a country which has gone through so much suffering. The next and 5th International Peace Marathon is scheduled on 24th May 2009. To cel-

ebate this anniversary, more emphasis will be put on entertainment and special excursions after the run to see this beautiful country with its 1000 hills, to meet the Mountain Gorillas and to visit Soroptimist projects.

The Rwandan nation has come a long way in these past few years. I was in Rwanda for the 1st Peace Marathon and again this year. I found the difference between then and now striking. Immediately at the airport I noticed that things were

more efficient. There were more smiles, people looked more optimistic and everything was so clean and well cared for. Clearly, people have not forgotten and there is still a lot of suffering, but people are now more optimistic about the future. I am pretty sure that the Peace Marathon has something to do with it, as every little thing makes a difference. Of course, we will be closely monitoring the political developments in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo and ask you to do so too. But it is important to remember that Rwanda needs our support. So, how can we as Soroptimists support the Marathon?

- We can contact the marathon organisations in our countries and have them advertise the marathon on their website. Create a link to www.kigalimarathon.com.
- We can organise a Peace Marathon evening in our communities where pictures and a video can be shown of previous marathons and information can be provided about how to register and travel to Kigali.
- We can sponsor runners from our countries to participate in the full marathon.
- The run is a good PR tool for SI. Contact media. Send reports and the press release to them before the run. Ask the media to publish articles about the results of the run. And, of course, make sure it is known that it is a Soroptimist project!
- Sell SI/E umbrellas with pictures of the Marathon.

It is very important for Soroptimists to continue their support of this fantastic project. The increase in participation every year shows that the marathon is gaining in importance. We need to remain a partner because we are the ones who started the Peace Marathon and it is a good PR. Last but not least, the women and children of Rwanda need our support.

So everyone has another chance to go to Rwanda next year to experience the 5th Peace Marathon on 24th May in Kigali – don't miss out on it! For more information about the Peace Marathon visit the website www.kigalimarathon.com, the SI/E website www.soroptimisteurope.org or contact me at hafdis@in.is or Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini at betmar@tele2.lu.

Hafdis Karlsdóttir,
SI/E 1st Vice President



Spectacular countryside and warm hospitality await participants in the Icelandic Soroptimist Week.

Icelandic Soroptimist Week

EXPLORE COUNTRY AND CULTURE

The Soroptimist Club of Hafnarfjörður and Gardabær is organising an Icelandic Soroptimist Week to be held from 27th June – 5th July 2009. The Icelandic Soroptimist Week has been offered to Soroptimists, their families and friends since 1989. During the week you will visit the most exclusive places in the southern and western parts of the country. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know the culture, food, countryside and ever-changing weather of Iceland. But most of all, you will make Soroptimist friends for a lifetime!

The hosting Club sisters will participate in the entire journey – cooking meals and enjoying the programme with our guests. Our husbands will join the events on special occasions as well. Accommodation will be provided in a modern school building. For further information, the programme and registration, please refer to our website www.soroptimist.is/soroptimistar/en/home/soroptimist_week_2009/.

Halla-Björg Baldursdóttir,
Club Hafnarfjörður and Gardabær

How BUZZMEDIA will help us spread the word

SEEDING THE WEB

Exciting things are happening in SI/E's PR and communications, especially on the Web. We have started by launching a few platforms and will consolidate them before starting up new ones. We now have a community space (Facebook), the video sites (Vimeo, YouTube, etc.) for viewing and sharing media, and a blog space. We will promote the key platforms intensively, esp. Facebook community and the Blog discussions, as well as the media platforms for new media releases. All this is thanks to our consultant agency on online communications, BUZZMEDIA.

You need to go back to Facebook and the Blog regularly in order to see what is new and post your comments. We will post webclips as often as possible. All the links are joined to www.soroptimist-europe.org – the Soroptimist International of Europe website.

THE NEW SOROPTIMIST PLATFORMS:

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=26400984875>

Facebook is a community platform on the Web where you can invite friends and family who are not members of the Soroptimist or who cannot become members to join in, share in the news and activities of the Soroptimist. You can write stories, share interesting bits of news, send emails, share photographs, stay in touch with family and friends everywhere in the world, and at the same time make more people aware of the Soroptimists as a community. Visit Facebook at least once a week and invite new friends and family and write a little story or post a photograph. If you don't know how to do it, write to Catarina at soroptimist.europe@googlemail.com and ask her.

Reach many more people than you can reach in your daily life. INSPIRE by sharing in an online community!

Blog space:

<http://soroptimisteurope.tumblr.com>

Blogging (from Web-logging) is a wonderful invention of the Web – a Blog Space is a space of forum where you can hold a healthy debate, express your opinions, advance and receive ideas, and help to generate innovative new ways of thinking and acting through intelligent discussion. Have interesting and lively discussions with sisters and others on the other side of the world. INSPIRE through intelligent debate!

YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/soroptimisteurope>

All new Soroptimist webclips will be posted on YouTube. You can watch them there (or on the Soroptimist website) and invite friends and family to come and watch them too by sending them the link. INSPIRE through the visual media!

Vimeo:

<http://www.vimeo.com/soropteurope>

All new Soroptimist webclips will be posted on Vimeo. You can watch them there (or on the Soroptimist website) and invite friends and family to come and watch them too.

INSPIRE through the visual media!

POST YOUR STORY & SOROPTIMIST EVENT PHOTOS ON THE NEW SOROPTIMIST PLATFORMS!

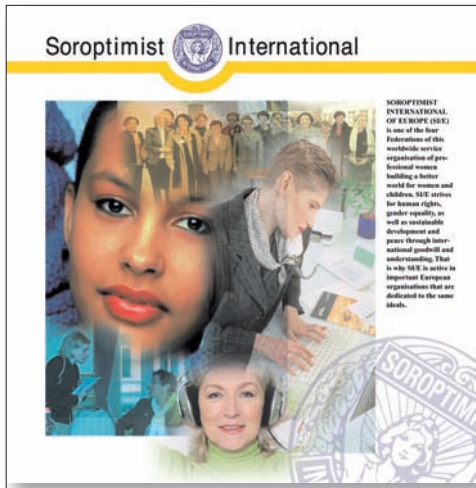
Facebook Group: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=26400984875>
Tumblr Blog: <http://soroptimist-europe.tumblr.com>

SEND THE FOLLOWING LINKS TO YOUR NETWORKS & FAMILY & FRIENDS:

YouTube: <http://www.YouTube.com/user/SoroptimistEurope>
Vimeo: <http://www.vimeo.com/soropteurope>
Myspace: <http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=418523660>

For help write to Catarina at soroptimist.europe@googlemail.com

The new leaflet is an informative PR tool.



SI/E in European Organisations

ORDER LEAFLETS FROM SI/E HQ

Some of you who saw the cover of the last issue of *The Link* may have recognised the photos from another SI/E publication. In fact, it is the cover of a new leaflet explaining the activities of SI/E in the Council of Europe, the European Women's Lobby and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). This leaflet is downloadable from the SI/E website and also available in English and French hard copy versions. They can be ordered free of charge from SI/E HQ. This attractive and informative leaflet is clearly a useful PR tool so why not show your members and local target groups how SI/E is making a difference in Europe!

SOROPTIMIST PRIZE PRESENTED IN YSTAD

Angelica Ulezalka of Ystad, Sweden, is the first young woman to receive the Soroptimist Prize awarded by Club Ystad. Angelica is 24, speaks six languages fluently, will shortly graduate with a degree in political science and is vice president of the local UN club. Her special interest is UNICEF. Angelica was born in Sweden by Polish parents and went to school in France from the age of 14. The certificate of the Soroptimist Prize says "Angelica Ulezalka works for human rights and development by practising international understanding and friendship."

Marie-Louise Wentzel, Club Ystad, Sweden

International Human Rights and Soroptimist Day

RAISING MONEY FOR A GOOD CAUSE

The United Nations General Assembly first adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10th December 1948. In 1950 the 10th of December was established as the official commemoration date, and since then, nations and organisations have celebrated the International Human Rights Day around the world.

Soroptimist International first designated 10th December as its International Day in 1956. In 1981, SI President Catharine Salt (SI/GBI) decided to use this important occasion for an International President's Appeal Day and asked Soroptimists to make a personal sacrifice so that the money could be given to a worthy cause. Today, our members and clubs are encouraged to raise money for the SI President's Project. In 2007, the project was to support the fistula clinic in Addis Ababa. This appeal will be repeated in 2008.



President Annika Moll (left) presented Angelica Ulezalka with the Soroptimist Prize of Club Ystad.

50th anniversary of the Austrian Union

HONOURING ACHIEVEMENTS AND FRIENDSHIPS

“Women – education – future” was the motto and the main message of a late October weekend of celebration in the Styrian capital of Graz. Some 420 Soroptimists and guests participated in the various activities. To begin with a bus full of happy guests went to explore the beauties of southern Styria on Friday afternoon. In the evening an even larger crowd met for dinner in a scenic restaurant overlooking Graz.

On Saturday morning many participants toured historic Graz, one of the 2005 cultural capitals of Europe. But the real highlight of the day was the afternoon celebration in the Congress building. After the opening with the Soroptimist Fanfare, a choir of Sorptimists from Carinthia gave us a charming musical welcome. Austrian Union President Christine Peer greeted a number of distinguished guests, in particular to Barbara Prammer, first President of the Austrian National Council and several regional politicians.

Immediate Past Union President Helga Papst (left) and new Austrian Union President Christine Peer collect the greetings from the international Soroptimist guests.

Many high-ranking Soroptimists were in our midst, including SI President elect Hanne Jensbo, SI/E President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, SI/E Past President Heidrun Konrad, German Union President Hanne von Schaumann-Werder and Luxembourg Union President Gudrun Horst.

Immediate Past Union President Helga Papst presented a historical overview of the Austrian Union, its presidents, projects and growth. Its success is underlined by the soon to be chartered 50th club. IPP Helga made special mention of the educational Albania Project. The clubs of the Austrian Union have raised € 85,000 for this project, which guarantees the education of 160 Albanian women in Rubik for the next six years. Project Coordinator Marianne Graf received the first Austrian Soroptimist Prize of € 7000 in honour of her work. Barbara Prammer, presented her with the Soroptimist trophy, produced by young artists. In her keynote address, sociologist Prammer encouraged Soroptimists to empower women to obtain higher positions and to demand equal pay. She praised our work and stressed the importance of our social commitment worldwide.

In her speech SI/E President Mariet thanked the Club Pannonia of Austria for their exceptional water project in Kenya and presented them one of the SI/E Best Practice Awards. The “Evi Wunder Scholarship,” in honour of one of Austria’s most distinguished Soroptimists who passed away in 2007, was awarded to a member of Club Bamako in Mali. The young physician received € 4800 for her post-graduate work on the development of the country’s medical system.

SI President elect Hanne honoured three Soroptimists for their outstanding contributions to our organisation: Past SI/E President Heidrun Konrad and the two Vienna-based UN representatives, Roswitha Benesch and Karin Tripp.

The celebration was also a suitable occasion for the inauguration of the new Austrian Union President Christine Peer. Helga Papst handed over heavy chain symbolising the office. Union President Christine’s final address stressed the significance of this anniversary, which not only honours the enormous amount of work done, but also underlines the friendship between those who do this work with such enthusiasm and dedication.

Hermine Jacobs-Ferstl, Programme Liaison of the Austrian Union, Club Wien Donau
Christine Peer, President of the Austrian Union Club Wien Donau





The special moment captured in a souvenir photo at the Central Square, Ursula Autengruber (third from right) played hostess to the guests during their tour of Graz.

Friendship Grant experience in Austria

SHARING IN THE CELEBRATION

The Austrian Union organised a very special Friendship Grant this year on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. We invited eight Soroptimists from Eastern and South-Eastern countries of Europe to join the celebrations in Graz, the capital of Styria. The historical old town of Graz is a UNESCO world heritage site and thus clearly worth a visit. Our Soroptimists came from Albania, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Slovakia and Ukraine and spent three wonderful days in Graz.

The programme began with a welcome evening and a guided tour through the town of Graz. SI President elect Hanne Jensbo and SI/E President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen joined the guests in the tour focusing on the architectural features of the town. The next highlight was the first home hospitality experience, when Enja Schmid, Programme Coordinator IGU of Club Graz, invited the group to enjoy a private lunch with Styrian specialities. It was the perfect ambience to relax and have a little rest before the official opening ceremony of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Austrian Union and the gala evening.

After the opera matinee on Sunday, at which SI Club Graz celebrated its 50th anniversary, and

a visit to Schloss Eggenberg, the Friendship Grant programme was officially over, and our guests travelled back to their countries.

During this eventful weekend, the eight Soroptimists from Eastern Europe had the opportunity to exchange information about club projects, collect unforgettable impressions and make new friends. They experienced home hospitality and saw the beauty of Graz. We are so pleased that they all seemed to enjoy this special Friendship Grant and will no doubt tell their club members at home about their memorable weekend in Graz!

Uschi Autengruber,
Club Wien-Donau, Austria, (Past Programme
Coordinator IGU, Austrian Union)

SATIN SEASON IN THE CRIMEA

Club Dnepropetrovsk of the Ukraine invites Soroptimists to take part in its fourth "Soroptimist Satin Season in Crimea" tour from 5th – 12th September 2009. This event will coincide with the club's 10th anniversary, which means there are two important reasons to visit the Ukraine and see its most famous and beautiful sights. More information will soon be provided at the website: www.soroptimist.dp.ua

Contact : Nataliya Nechukhayeva

Tel +380 567442510

e-mail: neta2000@yandex.ru

A DISTINCTIVE TOUCH OF CLASS

In the presence of Soroptimists from more than 70 Italian clubs, five twinned clubs, including Club Lomé Agapè from Togo and seven clubs in Europe, Club Milano Fondatore celebrated its 80th anniversary in the Lombard city from 24th- 26th October.

Joining Club President Marina Manusardi Fara (centre) on the podium to welcome the guests are Italian Union President Giovanna Catinella Dara (right) and Club member and moderator Adriana Bazzi.

On Friday Mayor of Milan Letizia Moratti received Marina Manusardi Fara, President of the SI Club Milano Fondatore, and a delegation including Eliane Lagasse, SI/E President elect, Nilgun Ozler, 2nd Vice President of SI/E, and Italian Union President Giovanna Catinella Dara. Afterwards, President Marina opened the celebrations in the splendid Palazzo Marino, the city council's headquarters, and officials from the city and the Lombardy region greeted the guests.

A tribute to Susanne Noël President Marina highlighted in her speech that French plastic surgeon and promoter of SI in Europe Susanne Noël inspired the chartering of Club Milano back in 1928. She announced that in Susanne Noël's honour, Club Milano Fondatore has created a

research award of € 5,000 to be presented to a young female specialist for her original work in the field of cosmetic surgery.

Adriana Bazzi, member of the Club Milano Fondatore and SI/E Programme Coordinator for Health, moderated the subsequent presentations. Cosmetic surgeon Riccardo Mazzola drew an in-depth portrait of Susanne Noël. Anna Maria Isastia, lecturer in Modern History at the University of Rome and member of Club Rome, talked about the origins of the service clubs and the reasons behind the foundation of women's service organisations. Anna Maria then described the steps leading to the foundation of Club Milano as the first club in Italy. Ada Gigli Marchetti, lecturer in Modern History at the University of Milan and member of the Club Milano Fondatore, talked about the club's activities and prominent members over the past 80 years, including Ada Negri, candidate for the Nobel Prize for literature in 1927. Fulvio Scaparro, psychotherapist and professor of Psychopedagogy at the University of Milan, addressed some of the issues raised by women's organisations.

Pax per aquam Greetings were received from the clubs twinned with Milano Fondatore - Vienna, Lyon, Berlin, Kortrijk and Lomé Agapè. Union President Giovanna concluded with a talk on the future of the Soroptimists and the SI/E project "Soroptimists go for water", which the Italian Union has embraced enthusiastically.

Four members of Club Milano Fondatore had prepared a splendid exhibition on the club's history. Architects Francesca Tinelli di Gorla and Silvana Rosti Rossini constructed the exhibition, while Amanda Olivi and Titti Pecorella were the project leaders. The celebration culminated in a gala dinner in the Diocesan Museum of Milan.



Tour of Thracian Treasures in Bulgaria

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

The internet announcement of the tour organised by Club Sofia II Boyana from 29th May to 5th June 2008 looked interesting, so my husband Harry and I seized the opportunity to visit Bulgaria and learn about the Thracian treasures. It is a decision we will never regret. All members of Club Boyana participated and helped organise the tour in some

way. Seven Soroptimists from Club Boyana and from some other Bulgarian clubs travelled through Bulgaria, focusing on Thracian and other ancient cultures. We toured museums, visited tombs, learned about the history and climbed the rocky hill of Perperikon, where we saw remains dating from 5000 BC and later.

We were also treated to other Bulgarian treasures, such as spring water to bathe your eyes and enjoyable Bulgarian food and wines. The accommodation at different and surprising places was comfortable. Every day offered an interesting pro-



Participating in the Rose Festival were (from left) the guide Galina Ivanova, Mina Paskaleva, Tsveta Ruskova, Lidia Garcheva, Harry Tuil, Liesbeth Tuil, Emilia Petrova, Vesselina Tzvetanova, Silvia Paskaleva and Lyudmila Stovanova.

gramme. They even managed to get me on a horse!

Attending the opening of the Rose Festival and dancing in the rose fields with the local people were special experiences. This festival celebrates the harvest of the beautiful roses from which rose oil, rosewater, rose liqueur, etc. are produced.

The last evening with a bagpiper and a female singer was equally unforgettable. Their performance radiated happiness, and it accentuated our feeling of togetherness. The tour and the new

friends we made in Bulgaria will always remain very special to Harry and myself.

Club Sofia II Boyana Sofia is planning another tour in 2009, which I can highly recommend. I sincerely hope more Soroptimists will participate this time. If you are interested, please contact Evgenia D. Koleva, e-mail koleva60@gmail.com.

Liesbeth Tuil-van Griethuysen
Club Almelo, The Netherlands

Master Class 2008 at Bocconi University

PREPARING TOMORROW'S MANAGERS

“Social Enterprise – Management and Socially Responsible Governance” was the theme of this year’s traditional Master Class supported by the Italian Union, which took place at Bocconi University in September. Italian clubs chose young women who graduated in economics to study a number of subjects concerning contemporary society. The Master Classes are organized in two sessions of three days each and are divided into traditional didactic activities, interactive analyses of case histories and studies, smaller workshops and moderated discussions on subjects and problems facing managers in social enterprises.

Italian Union President Giovanna Catinella Dara opened the 2008 programme in the presence of Giorgio Fiorentini, Managing Director of SDA Bocconi School of Management. Several lecturers from Bocconi University and members from SI clubs of the Italian Union also attended the event. In her speech President Giovanna introduced SI and its main activities. She also informed participants about the projects in progress devoted to achieving better con-

ditions for women and to protecting their rights.

Giorgio Fiorentini pointed out the “common objectives” shared by SI and the university. SI is committed to “serving in local communities and throughout the world”, while Bocconi University is engaged in promoting awareness of the social responsibilities of industrial companies and is committed to creating an economic system based on service to community and not vice versa.

Master Class participants were very appreciative of this experience and the chance to compare what they learned at university with the practical expertise of colleagues from different cultural and geographical backgrounds.

From right: Italian Union President Giovanna Catinella Dara, and SDA Bocconi School of Management Director Giorgio Fiorentini are highly committed to the Master Class programme.



The retrospection
of a former Programme
Coordinator

A LIFE
DEDICATED
TO IGU



Born in the former Prussian city of Königsberg (now Kaliningrad), raised in Duisburg and after law studies at the universities in Tübingen, Cologne, Munich and Berlin, I worked at law courts in Duisburg, Düsseldorf and finally in the Prosecution Department of the Criminal Court in Hamm. After the unification of Germany in 1998, I moved to Potsdam, formerly part of East Germany, to help install a democratic legal system. It was a most interesting time. The ability to compromise was more than necessary. Working together, we had the chance to get to know one another, as well as to learn and thus to understand more about our different pasts. In many cases, this led to lasting friendships.

I was originally a member of Club Duisburg and during this time had contact with our link SI Club Portsmouth in the U.K. When I moved to Potsdam, I helped arrange a successful exchange of a doctor and a lawyer to Portsmouth.

Years later, an SI club was founded in Potsdam, and we soon formed a link with Club Gdansk, Poland. In 2007 and 2008, we invited schoolgirls from Germany and Poland to an International Meeting at Krzyzowa/Kreisau, Poland. At the first event we had just four girls from Germany and 10 from Poland, but this year there were 12 from Germany and nearly the same



Schoolgirls from Germany and Poland got together in Krzyzowa/Kreisau, Poland.

number from Poland! Many of the girls expressed their appreciation of the importance of international goodwill and understanding, and I know what they mean. As a 15-year-old, I visited my pen friend in Portsmouth, England for the first time in 1953. It was a most extraordinary and treasured experience for me.

Indeed, it sowed the seed for a lifetime dedicated to international goodwill and understanding, which is why I volunteered to work as the Programme Coordinator for International Goodwill and Understanding in the German Union. My term ended in September 2008, but I am very grateful for having had this wonderful experience.

Ursula Schenck-Giere, IGU Programme Coordinator 2004-2008, Club Potsdam, German Union



Club Lueneburg supports
Bulungula project

WATER PARTY AT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Club President
Ellen Ringshausen (left) with
students from
Leuphana Uni-
versity who
are analysing
water.

In line with the “Sorooptimists go for Water” project of the European Federation, Club Lueneburg in northern Germany dedicated its traditional autumn celebration to the topic of water. As in the past years, the celebration took place at the public library on 11th October 2008.

The programme was as versatile as the topic itself. Under the direction of Professor Brigitte Urban, Environment and Technology students

from the Leuphana University of Lueneburg at Suderburg presented water projects from South Africa. The Sorooptimists then analysed the water brought by visitors. Achim Pelz even played keyboard variations on the subject of water.

An exhibition displayed old water bottles, taps and waterspouts from Lueneburg as well as historic designs of different wells and drawings of waterspouts from the library. Participants were invited to test mineral waters or could purchase a collection of unique glassware.

Club Lueneburg is supporting the installation of potable water facilities to be realised in Bulungula, South Africa which is part of the “Wells in the Third World” projects organised by students at the Leuphana University of Lueneburg as well as from England, Canada, Switzerland and Austria.

*Ellen Ringshausen, President Club Lueneburg
Angelika Leu-Barthel, Club Press Officer*

Charter on Water and Sustainable Development

SOROPTIMISTS MEET AT EXPO ZARAGOZA

At the initiative of Club Val d'Aran, members of the Spanish clubs of Val d'Aran, Sitges and Madrid and of the Portuguese clubs of Estoril/Cascais and Lisbon Fundador met on 30th August at the Expo Zaragoza 2008. With its programme running from 14th June to 14th September, this exposition was the first of its kind to deal exclusively with "Water and Sustainable Development". A total of 104 countries, three international organisations and all of Spain's autonomous communities and cities took part in this event, which was closely tied to the United Nations' work on water.

The various presentations and country pavilions helped attendees expand their knowledge, while participating in an exercise of civic education. Millions of visitors gained a deeper insight into our planet's water and sustainable development problems.

With a series of activities spanning 93 days, the accompanying Water Tribune was the largest international meeting on Water and Sustainable Development ever to be held. It culminated in the "2008 Zaragoza Charter" (download the pdf at www.expozaragoza2008.es/docs/repositorio/TribunalDeAgua/docs_pdf/carazgz-en.pdf). The Charter is divided into a new comprehensive vision of water, recommendations on the basic principles, as well as recommendations to public authorities, users of water and the general public. It is a "must read" for Soroptimists during this double biennium of "Soroptimists go for Water".

For the Soroptimists from Portugal, the visit to Zaragoza was worth the effort. In addition to the Expo 2008, we enjoyed the city's interesting history and monuments, especially the "Crossroad of Cultures" exhibition and the collection of Flemish tapestries. Despite the distances, we intend to meet again with our new Spanish friends.

Rosa-Maria Walter, Club Lisboa Fundador



The delegation of Soroptimists from Spain and Portugal thoroughly enjoyed their day together at the Expo.

International Day of Rural Women

PORTUGUESE PROJECT WINS PRIZE

The WWSF Women's World Summit Foundation confers annual awards for creativity in rural life on the International Day of Rural

Women. The award honours creative and courageous women and women's groups around the world for their contributions to improve the quality of life in rural communities.

SI Club Caldas da Rainha in Portugal nominated a group of rural lace makers from Pico Island, Azores, for the award, and they ended up winning one of the 13 prizes and \$500. Their handicraft has been passed down through the generations since its introduction to the island in the early 20th century. One of the club members, Teresa Perdigao, who co-authored a book on lace making in this region, had suggested nominating the lace makers. Last year the same club proposed a group of women from Northern Portugal for the award, and they also received one of the international prizes.

Rural women make lace on Pico Island while tending the cows.



INTERNATIONAL SOROPTIMISTS EUROPE

18th April 2009

Teramo (Italy)

Charter to be presented by:
 SI/E President
 Mariet Verhoef-Cohen
Club President
 Emilia Gaviglia Ripani
 Via Tirso 20
 IT - 64100 Teramo (Italy)
 Phone: + 39 0861 411985
 Mobile + 39 328 5312374
 E-mail:
 emilia.gaviglia@istruzione.it

25th April 2009

Melk (Austria)

Charter to be present by
 SI/E Secretary Gerda Huisman
Club President
 Beate Schober
 Schallaburg 7
 AT - 3382 Schollach (Austria)
 Phone: + 43 2754 68650
 +43 380 50 469 20 00
 E-mail: beate@go2kiev.com

6th June 2009

Windischgarsten-Kremstal (Austria)

Charter to be presented by
 Christin Windegger Coleselli
 Governor, Italian Union
Club President
 Ursula Grubelnik
 Hauptstrasse 25
 AT - 4580 Windischgarsten
 (Austria)
 Phone: +43 664 910 8616
 E-mail: u.grubelnik@gmx.at

NEW SI/E CLUBS
 TO BE
 CHARTERED

10th December 2008

60th Anniversary

of the Universal Declaration of
 Human Rights/
 Soroptimist Day

18th February 2009

20th Anniversary

Club Cotonou-Doyen (Benin)

12th - 15th March 2009

General Assembly West

of the Future African
 Federation, Cotonou, Benin

16th - 22nd March 2009

5th World Water Forum

"Bridging Divides for Water"
 Istanbul, Turkey

28th - 29th March 2009

50th Anniversary

Club Sion (Switzerland)

24th May 2009

**5th International Peace
 Marathon**

Club Kigali (Rwanda)

8th - 9th July 2009

SI/E Governors' Meeting

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

10th - 12th July 2009

**19th Congress of Soroptimist
 International of Europe**

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

8th March

International Women's Day

22nd March

World Water Day

21st September

International Day of Peace

25th November

**International Day of the
 Elimination of Violence
 against Women**


10th December

Human Rights Day

(celebrated by Soroptimists
 worldwide)

INTERNATIONAL
 AWARENESS DAYS

FORTHCOMING
 EVENTS FOR SI/E

 Please submit your texts for
 the next issue of The Link to
 SI/E HQ by 31st January 2009!