



The Link

A global voice for women

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CSW58 in New York
Making an Impact on
the Women's Agenda

8th March – UN IWD
Equality for Women
Is Progress for All

BEBE
SOROPTIMISTA



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 some 85,000 members in more than 3,000 clubs in 126 countries. Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE) is one of four SI Federations. It has some 35,000 members in over 1,250 clubs in 59 countries. Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships. For more information about the aims, activities and projects that characterise our organisation, please visit our SIE website at www.soroptimisteurope.org.



Note from the Editor

MENTORING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

SI Germany celebrated the 10th anniversary of its Mentoring Programme in April, and I managed to find the time to attend the event. Firstly, having been a mentor myself, I am a devoted supporter of this wonderful project. And secondly, one of my five former mentees, Katrien Wayenberg, helped organise the reunion. There will be an article about the weekend and the results of a survey among participants in the next issue, but I feel so inspired that I wanted to share my thoughts with you.

'Educate to Lead' may be the current theme of Soroptimist International, but SI Germany introduced its Mentoring Programme in collaboration with EAF of Berlin long before SI took this decision. The format has been an enormous success, both in Germany and also in the extended version with Belgium, Luxembourg and Sweden. This is not only because most participants

have subsequently achieved tangible results in their career development, but also because many former mentees have since become Soroptimists. For instance, two of my five mentees are now Soroptimists, and one is currently part of a group working to found a new club. That is a success rate in recruiting new members of 60 per cent!

Beyond the mere statistics, these recruited Soroptimists are exceptional young women who will help shape the future of SI. In the current discussion about attracting new members, I am convinced that mentoring can play a part. We are not only boosting the leaders of tomorrow, but also gaining access to women who make ideal Soroptimists!

Christine Cromwell-Ahrens, Editor, The Link

Cover page



In the lead up to the 2016 Paralympics in Brazil, SI Italy has chosen the inspirational fencer Bebe Vio to be the Union's ambassador. Photo: Ruggero Vio

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Dear Soroptimist Friends



SIE President Ulla (left) congratulates Hanne von Schaumann-Werder on her appointment as SIE representative to Women for Water Partnership.

By now, I hope most of you will have seen and discussed the SIE Membership Consultation survey in your Clubs. For the first time in the Federation's history, the SIE Board is officially reaching out to Unions and individual Clubs for their personal opinions. Indeed, to achieve an authentic 'bot-

tom up' approach it is crucial that all members of our more than 1250 Clubs answer the survey. Every Soroptimist should have the possibility to comment on the development of the organisation and an opportunity to improve the efforts to gain new members and retain present ones. We therefore urge everybody to participate so that the end result is as representative as possible, when we discuss the future of our organisation at the Governors' Meeting in Copenhagen from 11th- 13th July 2014.

Copenhagen is my hometown, and I am very much looking forward to welcoming Governors, Union and Single Club Presidents and Silent Observers, the Enlarged Board as well as the staff at SIE HQ at this important event. We are pleased that so many Soroptimists have asked to attend as Silent Observers and are doing our very utmost to fulfil these wishes. As the GM will be in the spirit of the bottom up approach, the more Soroptimists present, the better the cross section. I am excited about the outcome of the SIE Membership Consultation and hope it will result in lot of ideas about how to grow the organisation.

Numerous internal and external milestones

I am very impressed by the work of the SIE delegation at the CSW58 and thank them for their efforts. I especially would like to thank President Elect Elisabetta for her brilliant speech on the 'Women and Climate Change' project partnership between SI Denmark and SI Kenya and Chair of the Constitution and Bye-Laws Committee Renata Trottman and SIE Executive Director Anne Simon for their untiring lobbying in the interest of our ambitious SIE Study on Violence against Women (VAW). Please read the informative articles

about the CSW58 and the Study on VAW in this issue.

Many congratulations to SIE Past President and current SIE Liaison Africa Mariet Verhoef-Cohen for her election to the position of President of Women for Water Partnership (WfWP). In addition, best of luck to Governor of SI Germany

Hanne von Schumann-Werder, who has been appointed to replace Mariet as the SIE representative to WfWP.

As I reported in my last monthly letter, the SI Future African Federation (SIFAF) conference in Pretoria in March 2014 was a big success, and it was an honour to experience the enthusiasm for this re-structuring of our organisation. African Soroptimists have taken important steps towards the foundation of a new Federation, and I encourage you to visit the SIFAF website at www.siafrica.org/ to learn more about the details.

Tapping into Soroptimist resources

Throughout my travels for Soroptimist, I am repeatedly impressed and inspired by the women I meet and experience 'in action'. The powerful speakers from all over the Federation are an untapped resource in raising our public profile and attracting new members. For this reason, the SIE Board intends to set up a database of outstanding Soroptimist speakers who can address topical issues, while at the same time drawing attention to our organisation. But for this initiative to be successful, we need your help in identifying talented Soroptimists for public appearances. In the coming months, we will distribute a form to Unions and Single Clubs to gather this information. It is another example of our bottom up approach and a means to both improve our visibility and recruit new members.

Yours
Ulla Madsen, SIE President

MAKING AN IMPACT ON THE WOMEN'S AGENDA



Each member of the SIE delegation to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW58) in New York focused on a different task.

Every year in March, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) holds its annual two-week session at the United Nations in New York, bringing together over 6,000 representatives from 193 states, UN entities and about 400 ECOSOC-accredited NGOs, including Soroptimist International of Europe.

Soroptimist International, is a well-recognised contributor with three accreditations: SI as the umbrella organisation, SIE and recently SIGBI. Amongst their rights – as well as their obligations – NGOs like Soroptimist International is to contribute to the global agenda, in our case by advancing women's status as well as improving their lives, conditions and rights. The list of tangible results is long!

Focusing on the UN Millennium Development Goals

This year, the priority theme of CSW was 'Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (see article on MDGs) for

women and girls'. At various sessions, experts addressed the advancements made in certain areas and alerted participants to the major gaps which still need to be closed. Most sessions discussed the form Development Goals will take after 2015 and what areas will be prioritised.

As SIE President Elect, this year I had the opportunity to lead the SIE delegation, which included SIE IPP Kathy Kaaf, VP Advocacy Elena Savu, C&BL Chair Renata Trottmann Probst, APD Emine Erdem, former Finance Controller Hafdis Karlsdottir and SIE ED Anne Simon. In preparation of the session, we had planned special agendas for each delegate to focus on specific topics, thereby ensuring they could make the best of **continues on page 6**



Participants in the CSW58 in New York celebrate International Women's Day on 8th March and promote support for the Beijing + 20 Conference in 2015.



SI President Ann Garvie (left) and SIE APD Emine Erdem (right) joined the march.



Soroptimist, WAGGGs and World YWCA collaborated at a parallel event.

UN, CSW, HRC, ECOSOC, MDGS...

A GUIDE THROUGH THE ACRONYM JUNGLE!

This article is an attempt to provide a brief summary of the key institutions involved in dealing with women's issues at a global level, as well as their roles, their structure, the complex way in which they are interlinked. It also shows how NGOs such as Soroptimist engage with them to influence the global women's agenda.

The United Nations (UN) is the overall umbrella organisation whose role is articulated around four purposes: 1) to keep peace throughout the world; 2) to develop friendly relations between nations; 3) to work together to help people live better lives, to eliminate poverty, disease and illiteracy in the world, to stop the destruction of the environment, to encourage respect for each other's rights and freedoms, and 4) to be the centre for helping nations achieve these aims. Today, 193 countries are members of the UN.

Following the issuing of the Millennium Declaration in 2000, the UN defined eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the priority areas for development on a global scale.

ECOSOC stands for Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. It keeps an eye



The high-level panel discussion attracts women from all walks of life to discuss women's issues on a global level.

on global challenges whether they be economic, social, or environmental. This body grants consultative status to NGOs. SI, SIE and SIGBI have attained General and Special Consultative Status, respectively. ECOSOC holds annual sessions in alternate years in New York and Geneva.

UN Women is the main UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. Every year in New York, UN Member State representatives evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards **continues on page 7**

MAKING AN IMPACT ON THE WOMEN'S AGENDA (CONTINUED)



The SIE Representatives past and present at the UN in New York make our Global Voice for Women heard.

their time. So, for example, while I paid particular attention to issues relating to education and women's rights, VP Advocacy Elena attended several sessions concerning gender equality and the trafficking of women, a very serious issue in Eastern Europe. SIE IPP Kathy addressed the importance of Water and Food, whereas C&BL Chair Renata extended her knowledge of issues surrounding Violence against Women (VAW), as she recently joined the Advisory Council of the Soroptimist Study on VAW. Emine further explored the five objectives that are closely linked to her responsibilities as Assistant Programme Director.

As in years past, Soroptimist International acted as a liaison for all Federations and organised daily briefings to ensure everyone was up to date on the latest developments. SIE successfully organised two events entitled 'Blue is the New Pink' and 'Pink is the New Blue' focusing on the importance of involving men in the debate on gender equality.

I was invited to speak at a panel discussion on Solar Cookers. I highlighted the many successful projects that our Clubs have implemented in the area of women's economic empowerment. As a subject close to my heart, I placed particular emphasis on the importance of education within the context of sustainable development.

SI and several members of the four Federations, whether individually or together with other NGOs, also contributed

to the drafting of the CSW 58 Agreed Conclusions by participating in a series of daily lobbying meetings, known as 'caucuses'. Structured within the UN framework, the caucuses are crucial for a broad range of delegates – both grass-root and subject matter experts – to be able to give their input to the Agreed conclusions, thereby ensuring challenges faced by women around the world are placed at the heart of the future development agenda. The UN Representatives in New York demonstrated once again how they play a particularly strong leadership role in making our Global Voice for Women heard.

SIE is extremely proud of its ECOSOC status and will continue to contribute actively to improving the lives and status of women and girls throughout the world.

Want to know more?

2015 will be an important year for women and for development: it will see us reach the target date of the MDGs, and we will mark 20 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. And yet two questions remain unanswered: What will be the new International Development Goals? And what place will women and girls secure in the new Development Agenda?

The Report of Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2014/3, published in December 2013 in the lead up to CSW 58, presents the few achievements and the many failings of the MDGs for women and girls – goal by goal, target by target. It does so in a nuanced way that looks at the realities of women and girls hidden within the many statistics that show overall progress on the MDGs. It shows systematically that the question of gender equality underpins ALL development goals and that none of them can be achieved in a profound or lasting way until women stand equal to men. Or as Ban Ki-moon put it at the opening of the CSW58: 'You have an important task before you. Less than two years remain to the MDG deadline. In that time we must also define a post-2015 development agenda. I count on your wisdom and commitment to bring the voices of women and girls to the table. I count on you to champion the human rights of all women and girls. You can count on my full support. We cannot achieve a world of dignity for all until we end gender inequality in all of its forms.'

Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis, SIE President Elect



Gender equality through men and boys – speakers Darnell Moore and Carlos Gomez at a Soroptimist parallel event of the CSW58. (Photo: Devin Martin)



Soroptimist delegates received advocacy training at the CSW58 Meeting.



SIE President Elect Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis (left) and SIE HQ Executive Director Anne Simon were pleased with the results of the meetings.

(continued from page 5) and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. Soroptimists actively participate in this annual session. CEDAW stands for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It is the main international convention on women's rights. Almost all UN Member States have adopted it, which means they have committed themselves to abolishing all discriminatory laws and adopting laws that are grounded in the principle of gender equality. CEDAW convenes its sessions at the UN Office in Geneva three times a year.

The Human Rights Council (HRC) is the inter-governmental body of the UN responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world and for addressing cases of human rights violations, including trafficking and violence against women. Last year, the Agreed conclusions of CSW 57 highlighted the need to have Violence Against Women included as part of the international human rights agenda, something that the HRC is actively pursuing.

In addition to the SI UN reps in New York and elsewhere, several members of the SIE Board now also hold annual accreditations to the United Nations in Geneva. They will pave the way for the Programme Directors to participate in the Training Seminar that will take place in Geneva at the end of May.

Anne Simon, SIE Executive Director

Advocacy work at the CSW and beyond

SHARED VALUES: THE MDGs & SOROPTIMIST

The annual session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women is the highest level forum for women's organisations to collaborate. Our Soroptimist cause makes it imperative that we focus our advocacy work on the event's priority theme, which was the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) this year. But because the scope of the MDGs is vast, we Soroptimists need to translate high level issues into clear, immediate and impactful messages. In contrast to the top-down approach of official declarations, Soroptimist's bottom-up perspective appeals to the ideals of a grassroots movement aiming to make a difference in the everyday lives of women and girls.

This year's priority theme was a wonderful opportunity because of the clear correspondence between the MDGs and SIE's programme objectives:

- 'increasing access to formal and non-formal learning opportunities' with MDG #2 of achieving universal primary education;
- 'improving access to economic empowerment and sustainable opportunities for the employment of women' and 'eliminating violence against women and girls' with MDG #3 of promoting gender equality through the empowerment of women;
- 'addressing the specific needs of women and girls by improving environmental sustainability and mitigating effects of climate change and disasters' with MDG #7 of ensuring environmental sustainability;
- 'ensuring women and girls have food security and access to the highest attainable standard of health care' with MDGs #1, #4, #5 and #6 of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combatting disease.

The MDGs are transformative in that they give a coherent and definitive roadmap to the global development agenda. However, they become meaningless if they are not underpinned by the notion of gender equality. Next year, we will mark the 20th anniversary of the 4th UN World Conference on Women in Beijing and will hold 20th SI Convention in Istanbul. It is therefore of utmost importance that we use 2015 to get the MDG messages from CSW 58 across to all our members!

Emine Endem, SIE Assistant Programme Director

A personal account of the CSW58

ONLY WE CAN BE THE AGENTS OF CHANGE

To many people, New York may be remembered as the city of skyscrapers and cosmopolitan fashion, but to me, it will always be the symbol of a unique experience: being part of the team that represented Soroptimist International of Europe and its 35,000 members at a global meeting that puts women and girls at its core. We were there to listen and to contribute – and to spread the word that Soroptimists are actively engaged in bettering the lives of women and girls around the world.



SIE VP Elena Savu (left) and SIE APD Emine Erdem (right) meet SI UN Rep Angelina Akhvediani at the Advocacy Training Seminar.

This year's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 58 agenda concentrated on carrying on the previous work for further advancing progress with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and finalising the post-2015 agenda. As it would have been impossible to follow all the eight goals at one time, I focused on one of the key MDGs, MDG 3, which is 'promote gender equality and empower women'.

From an advocacy perspective, my choice was rooted in the belief that 'gender equality' in terms of human rights, especially women's rights, is an intrinsic part of all the other MDGs because it involves equal rights, resources, opportunities and protection, and thus, it is directly related to education, violence against women and girls, discrimination of any kind and economic sustainability. And I was not sorry for the choice I had made because each and every session I attended was not

only thought-provoking, but also intellectually and emotionally rewarding.

Whether the session was about the lack of access to education, trafficking in persons, prostitution, girl-child forced marriages, unpaid labour or gender discrimination, it conveyed one standing message: we, and only we, can be the agents of the change we desire. In spite of all the efforts made up to now, pervasive gender inequalities still exist in many places in the world. Therefore, the committed participation of NGOs, in our case of SIE, is essential in the work of the CSW because we all can influence and contribute to shaping the current global policy framework on gender equality and women's empowerment in accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Achieving gender equality means transformation and change at all levels: individual, social and political.

To a large extent, the many sessions I attended reiterated the opening words of the UN Secretary General regarding the important task ahead of us and stressed the idea that it lies within our power as NGOs, as representatives of civil society, to continue to be the voices of the women and girls whose human rights are being breached.

In addition the contacts we, the participants, made during the sessions and the breaks were an advocacy initiative which may contribute to building coalitions and partnerships in the future. I met many people who knew Soroptimist (and this made me so proud!). But equally, I met many other people who had never heard of us. I used this opportunity to tell them who we are and what we do.

A message that we all know very well was repeated many times: being the 'voice' of women and girls cannot stop with the closing of CSW58, it must be ongoing! We play an important role at the level of our own communities and countries in holding our leaders accountable for their commitments. What we do in our own communities, how we treat others at home or in the workplace are all concrete ways of advocating for gender equality! And that is a very important message for us all to take home.

Elena Savu, SIE Vice President Advocacy



International Women's Day 2014

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN IS PROGRESS FOR ALL

As designated by the United Nations, every year on 8th March women throughout the world celebrate 'their' day: International Women's Day (IWD). This year Soroptimists renewed their pledge to combat any form of violence against women and girls, to promote the rights of women, to support women's and girls' education and empowerment.

This special day for women is the ideal opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of our organisation. Just last year, for example, SIE members reported an astonishing 4,500 projects which contributed directly to improving the lives of women and girls. With the millions of euros raised, Soroptimists realised more than 600 projects related to education, in addition to the numerous scholarships and mentoring efforts. They also implemented more than 700 projects dedicated to preventing violence against women and protecting the victims of such violence. As daily witnesses of many forms of inequality across the 59 countries of our Federation in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, our Soroptimists repeat the call for full gender equality. Indeed, for 90 years, we Soroptimists have been fighting for equality at local, national and international levels.

So, Soroptimists throughout the organisation mark this day with special events. For example, SI Targoviste in Romania organised a hand chain in the town centre in front of the Town Hall. They invited young people to join them through an announcement on Facebook. The activity was called 'Stop

human trafficking', which is part of a larger ongoing club project titled 'Trafficking can be prevented'. Some 54 students, club members, friends and even passers-by joined hands to form the chain, thus drawing attention to the dangers of human trafficking. 'The activity not only raised awareness of trafficking among young people, but also increased the visibility of SI Targoviste in the community', says Club President Iuliana Valu.

As **Union President Maria Pyrgaki** reports, SI Greece chose to highlight Programme Objective 4 on IWD by offering support to patients at the Public Anticancer Hospital Saint Savvas, in cooperation with the Company Bazaar S.A. Super Market. A total of 60 packages with diapers for adults, pyjamas and nightgowns for needy women with cancer were donated to the hospital. 'We received an emotional letter of thanks from the manager, the social workers and the volunteers of this unique hospital for our country', says SI Greece President Maria.

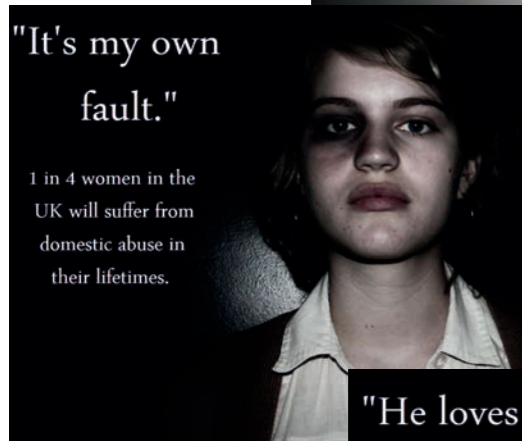
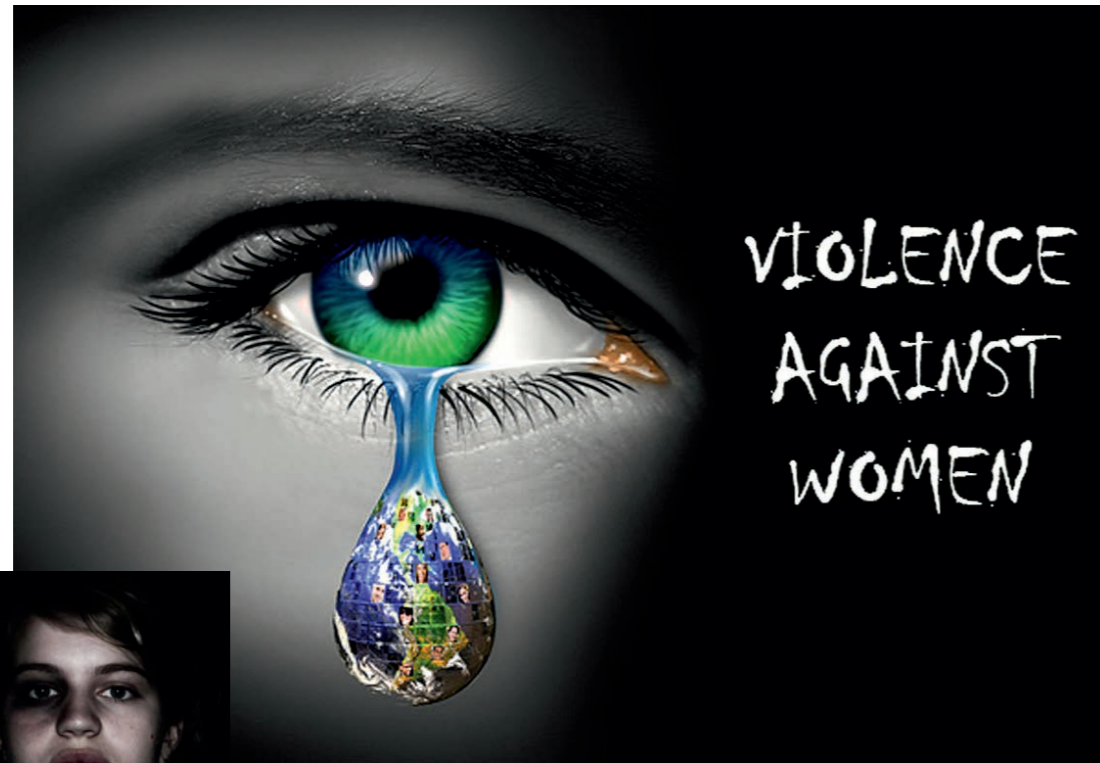
These are just two examples of the many events Soroptimists staged on this important day in the calendar for women! As UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon says, **'Equality for women is progress for all!'**

Romanian Soroptimists and non-Soroptimists joined hands in Targoviste to take a stand against human trafficking.

A delegation from SI Greece together with Union President Maria Pyrgaki met with officials from the Public Anticancer Hospital Saint Savvas, who were extremely grateful for the support.



BETTER UNDERSTANDING FOR BETTER PREVENTION



These powerful posters highlight some of the core problems in connection with violence against women.



2 women in the UK are killed every week by a male partner.

Who has not been touched directly or indirectly by violence? Whether you have suffered harassment personally or know a neighbour, niece, daughter or friend who has suffered sexual abuse or violence at the hand of another individual – many of us have been affected. Just imagine, for example, that one in five women is the victim of rape worldwide! Violence Against Women (VAW) is now considered to be pandemic and amongst the most serious human right issues in nearly all countries around the globe.

Indeed, VAW touches women irrespective of nationality, race, religious, education or social class. And every age is affected – from small children to the elderly. While a lot has been invested in shelters and services to victims – and many Soroptimist Clubs have contributed and still contribute to assist at local level – little has been done to prevent the violence itself.

At the CSW Meeting two years ago, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said in his opening speech: 'Violence against women is an attack on all of us, on the foundation of our civilisation. It destroys health and perpetuates poverty. It strikes against equality and empowerment'. He also noted the lack of information on how various forms of violence affect different groups of women and called for data, also from civil society. Since then, several institutions have carried out studies and surveys to understand the scale of the problem. The EU latest's survey across 34 countries raised a certain level of awareness; a WHO survey is currently being conducted and should highlight some of the causes.

And what is Civil Society doing?

Last year SIE President Ulla Madsen announced a large-scale Soroptimist study which will soon be launched. Determined to be an active player in ending violence against women, SIE will carry out a study to look at men's and women's perceptions by tackling various angles institutional studies cannot touch because of their structures and tight links to governments. So, who is better placed than SIE and its 35,000 members in local communities to be the Global Voice of Women? This evidence-based study will reveal the causes, risk factors and barriers to violence eradication. With this kind of information, we hope to propose prevention strategies and tools.

The approach and methodology of the study have been carefully planned. We have consulted with the most senior authorities at UN Women and with the CEDAW Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. We also received advice from recognised institutions such as the World Bank, WHO and the Council of Europe.

An SIE Advisory Board was recently set up to ensure good governance and authoritative guidance throughout the study: Sigrid Ag, Past President SI Norway, Marie Jeanne Bosia, Past President of SIE and SI, Maria-Luisa Frosio, SIE Extension Committee Chair, Flavia Pozzolini, IPP SI Italy, Gerda Rosiers, President SI Belgium and Renata Trottmann Probst, SIE C&BL Committee Chair.

Judge Silvana Arbia, former Chief Prosecutor of the Rwanda Genocide and International Criminal Court Magistrate and SIE Peace Prize Laureate, will lead a Council of Experts currently under consideration. All Unions and Clubs will soon have the opportunity to participate.

Anne Simon, SIE Executive Director



SI CONVENTION WEBSITE GOES LIVE!

The Organising Committee, chaired by Janny Spierenburg of the Netherlands, has launched a website to promote the 20th Soroptimist International Convention, which will take place in Istanbul, Turkey, 9th-12th July 2015.

Soroptimist International Conventions are held every four years, bringing together Soroptimists from around the world to meet, develop friendships, share experience, hear expert speakers and be inspired!

'If as a Soroptimist you have never attended a convention, I urge you to do so, so that you can experience the real meaning of global friendship and why you are a member of an international organisation', says International President Ann Garvie. 'The Convention will showcase our outstanding and diverse membership.'

The Convention Committee, with valuable support from SI Turkey, is putting together an exciting programme of speakers and workshops associated with the Convention theme, 'Soroptimists Educate to Lead – Fresh Ideas Empowering Women'. A wide range of social events and tours will be offered, providing an opportunity to explore the landmarks in the historical peninsula of Anatolia, before, during and after the Convention. See for yourself at <http://www.si-istanbul2015.org/>.

Where Europe meets Asia at the Bosphorus Bridge – the fascinating and beautiful city of Istanbul is the venue of the 2015 SI Convention.



'IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, YOU CAN DO IT!'

Twenty of the 29 countries in Africa with Soroptimists were represented at the Soroptimist International Future African Federation Conference, held in Pretoria, South Africa, from 20th-22nd March 2014. In the following account SIE President Ulla Madsen summarises the results of this trailblazing and highly successful event.

Wow - what a fantastic experience to attend the SIFAF Conference, to meet committed and enthusiastic women of different cultural backgrounds and to visit the fascinating country of South Africa! I can only congratulate President of SI South Africa Sally Currin and her team on the excellent organisation of this important event in the Soroptimist calendar. The choir of St Mary's School, the venue of the event, opened the conference with the National Anthem of South Africa. Task Force Chair Chinwe Ezenwa-Mbah greeted the participants and introduced keynote speaker Naledi Pandor, South Africa's Minister for Home Affairs. In her inspiring speech on the development of women's

rights and the right to education for everyone in South Africa, Naledi Pandor reminded us that the country is celebrating 20 years of democracy. In line with her own efforts to further gender equality in South Africa, she welcomed the Soroptimist goal to advance the status of women and girls. I had the privilege to meet her personally and invited her to become a Soroptimist!

SI President Ann Garvie, SIGBI President Margaret Oldroyd and I each addressed the audience before the Plenary Session began. During the course of the official session, many crucial decisions were made after animated discussions, a new SIFAF Task

Force was elected and three resolutions regarding the Constitution, the Financial Guidelines (both working documents) and SIAF logo and profile were passed. With these successes, the African Soroptimists have taken an important step towards founding an African Federation.

The five-year plan for establishing an African Federation was initiated in 2012 in Nairobi, Kenya, when members of the first Task Force group were elected. In the coming years, one of the biggest challenges for African Soroptimists will be to extend membership to meet the demand for a SI Federation, which requires at least 2,000 members. Currently, SIGBI and SIE together have a total of 1,711 Soroptimists in Africa. So our African Soroptimists will have to work very hard to achieve this goal. SIE will do what we can to support them. I appeal to all Soroptimists to spread the word about our organisation to your women colleagues or friends in Africa or please simply refer them to the nearest club.

Iwant to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Task Force 2012-2014 for their hard work and efforts, and especially Chair Chinwe Ezenwa-Mbah and the members from SIE, i.e. Vice Chairs Tadelech Debele, responsible for Eastern Africa, Christine Wellfens-Ekra, responsible for Western and Central Africa, and Saida Fitouri, responsible for Northern Africa; Treasurer Rose Owour; Secretary Vivian Namayi; Senior Advisor to the Task Force Maria Soumonni and last but not least Extension Chair Asha Abdulrahman.

Congratulations to all the newly elected members of the Task Force 2014-2016 and especially the members from SIE: Chair Mariam Traore Konate; Vice Chairs Elizabeth Otieno Nyadwe, responsible for Eastern Africa, Raima Osseni Moudachirou, responsible for West and Central Africa, and Saida Fitouri, (re-elected) responsible for North Africa; Finance Director Ghislaine Fagbohoun and Programme Director Brigitte Mantele-Enweani.

The cooperation between the Working Group - consisting of President Margaret Oldroyd and Programme Director Ann Hodgson from SIGBI and African Liaison Mariet Verhoef-Cohen and myself from SIE - and the SIFAF Task Force has been excellent. I want to especially thank Mariet for her deep commitment and hard work in helping club members in Africa understand the set-up and implications of an African Federation. On the last day of the Conference Mariet and Margaret led two workshops for Conference participants on Functional Networking and Membership Matters, respectively.

Iwish the Task Force 2014-2016 and all African Soroptimists the best of luck. SIE will do what we can to support you in this historic development. After all: 'If you can dream it, you can do it'. The next conference will take place in two years. Madagascar and the Seychelles have already offered to host the event.



Soroptimists from far and wide gathered in Pretoria for the Future African Federation Conference.

The Soroptimist Interactive Map

TOO AMAZING TO BE KEPT SECRET!

How many times have we heard Clubs passionately describe their projects and the wonderful experiences they have had in helping women? Many times! And yet, hardly anyone knows how much is really being done. While reports can be read in the SI PFR system, they are only a very small representation of what is actually happening at Club level.



The newly launched Interactive Map on the SIE website will make the thousands of projects more visible and inspire partnerships.

In response to our members' wish to promote Soroptimist and their projects, but also to learn from the best ideas of other Clubs, SIE IPP Kathy Kaaf and ED Anne Simon brainstormed at the end of the previous biennium on how to make these thousands of projects more visible. The result is a simpler and more effective way of reporting which not only fulfils SI and SIE needs of statistics, but actually serves members as well.

Map highlights projects and activities

After finding the appropriate technology, the idea was converted into a prototype of a graphic presentation, which highlights projects and activities, while at the same time creating a visual interface. Thus, the Soroptimist Interactive Map was born. It is now possible to see the various Programmes and Projects in Europe, Africa, MENA and the Caribbean, as well as the Friendship Links between Clubs in the Federation in a dynamic

world map on the SIE website. There are three ways to access the Interactive Map after going to the SIE website at www.soroptimisteurope.org:

> via 'Submit a PFR' on the SIE website homepage, where you will then be asked to provide the password. It is the same one used for PFRs,

> via the Members Area of the SIE website: log in with your own ID and Password, then click on the PFR tab (top right of the toolbar) that will lead you to the button 'Add a PFR' or

> via the Members Area of the SIE website: on the dashboard click on the button 'PFR' in My Club/My Union.

A day or two after approval, key information about the Club's projects is automatically available on the public website. All projects and reports are accessible under the Club's profile in the private area.

Available in several languages, the form is very straightforward and encourages reporting. You can attach as many files, photos, links as you wish! The end objective is to promote and celebrate the wonderful work of Soroptimists, while still handing data and statistics.

This system offers great visibility for the tremendous impact Soroptimists have on women's and girls' lives. Try it! For more information, please contact Bintou Koita, the project manager at SIEHQ, at bintou@soroptimisteurope.org.

10th European Meeting and Friendship Days

COMMEMORATING THE CENTENARY OF WORLD WAR I

The '10th European Meeting and Friendship Days' will take place from 10th-12th October 2014 in Bruges. To mark the centenary of the beginning of World War I, the theme of the meeting is 'Women for Peace'. In addition to the official event with a range of world-class speakers, the organisers have prepared an interesting programme to celebrate the city's wonderful cultural heritage.



The Clubs of West Flanders in Belgium have extended an invitation to the 10th European Meeting and Friendship Days.

The online registration for the meeting and the sightseeing programme are already available at www.soroptimist.be/events, so please book now as the number of participants is limited. The members of the seven SI clubs of West Flanders look forward to welcoming you to their beautiful city of Bruges and to sharing unforgettable days with Soroptimists from around the Federation.

SIE Membership Consultation

IDENTIFYING ENABLERS OF AND BARRIERS TO MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

When the 2013-2015 SIE Board began to implement their Strategic Plan in line with the four goals of the Strategic Model, particular emphasis was given to the long-term needs of the organisation. Although the Federation operates on a biennium basis, SIE Presidents must act as sentinels of a long-term vision and its development at every level and across all geographies. Organic growth can no longer sustain service organisations like SI. Therefore to focus on the

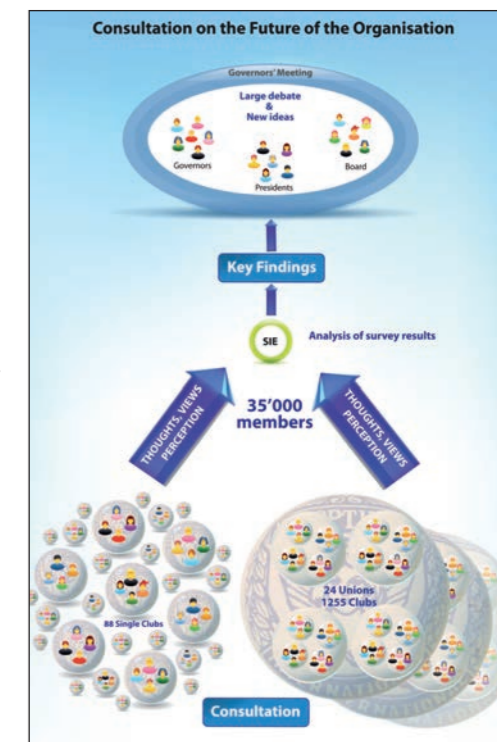
future of SIE and to continue growing our organisation, we need to consider the many challenges that clubs face: ageing populations, dues and economic crisis, changes in society, new attitudes to development and humanitarian projects, etc.

As SIE President Ulla Madsen made clear from the onset, membership, as the backbone of our organisation, must be at the core of our attention. With the support of SIE Extension and SIE HQ, SIE has recently launched the largest ever consultation on the future of the Federation. Union and Club Presidents are invited to participate in a survey and to share their thoughts and perceptions. Club members are asked to provide their views on both the enabling factors of and the barriers to membership. Structures and operating models that were perfectly suited to our organisation in the 1980s may now need to be adjusted to attract a new generation to commit to helping other women. Similarly, some bye-laws that were once essential to protect membership quality may now have become obsolete or even obstacles to development.

The views of our 35,000 members are valued and listened to. Clubs have been debating these points in recent months. Many responses are still coming in and by the end of May we hope all Clubs will have responded. An in-depth analysis of the results will hopefully identify the challenges faced and also specify the recommendations of the Clubs. As the largest gathering of SIE leaders, the Governors' Meeting in Copenhagen will act as a forum for Union and Single Club Presidents and Governors to discuss the key findings. This 'bottom-up' approach will give us the necessary feedback to come up with innovative and creative ideas to retain and attract new members!

Maria Luisa Frosio, SIE Extension Chair

The Member Consultation currently underway seeks to obtain the views of members and to identify needs at Club level.



National Coordinator in Spain

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SINGLE CLUBS

The Spanish Clubs are proud to be pioneers in having introduced the role of National Coordinator and are delighted with all the help and support that has been provided from the Federation.

In 2007 the five Spanish Single Clubs elected a National Coordinator in charge of channelling communications between the Clubs and the Federation. The initial idea was to create a link that would keep the five geographically separated clubs together – an important factor in a country with vast distances between clubs.

Lene Thygesen from SI Costa del Sol was chosen as the first National Coordinator – a position she has held for more than seven years – along with Valerie Giulianotti from SI Marina Baixa as second coordinator for the past two years. The Spanish Clubs have clearly benefitted from improved and more efficient communication between clubs as well as from providing the Federation with a specific contact.

‘We asked the Federation to recognise the role of our National Coordinator. That request, however, could not be accepted officially because National Coordinators were not part of the SIE bye-laws’, Lene said, ‘So we sent a proposal to the Federation to change the rules and were delighted when it was approved at the Governors’ Meeting in 2013’.

The SIE Extension Committee subsequently commented in their Newsletter: ‘The proposed amendment is designed to support Single Clubs who have the desire to increase communication and to improve their work through greater coordination.’

The Spanish clubs have since contacted other European and African Single Clubs and encouraged them to follow Spain’s lead. As they encounter similar challenges and experiences, establishing contact between the Single Clubs of the Federation is vital for sharing knowledge and ideas.

At the Interclub meeting held on the Costa del Sol on 5th April 2014 the Spanish clubs discussed how best to define the role of the coordinators. Speaking from her years of experience, Lene said, ‘Having a job description is key to avoiding any misunderstandings about the responsibilities of the clubs and those of the coordinators.’ SIE President-elect Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis, who was present at the meeting, suggested that the coordinators liaise with all club members and ensure that tasks are divided among them – sharing the workload and using their skills, particularly in matters such as publicity and communication.



SIE President-Elect Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis (centre front row) attended the Interclub Meeting for Spanish Soroptimists in April 2014.



Increasing our visibility

JOIN SIE ON FACEBOOK!

Just one click, that is all it takes to keep informed about Soroptimist activities worldwide. The Facebook icon on SIE’s homepage leads you to news on projects and events, and to announcements and reports from the Federation, Unions, and Clubs, with items added on an almost daily basis. One does not need to be registered on Facebook to access the SIE page and read the posts. But as a member you have the opportunity to connect with SIE and join the ever-growing Soroptimist community of friends present on Facebook, to add your own messages and comments and to establish contact with Soroptimists all over the world. Moreover, by ‘liking’ and ‘sharing’ the page with your Facebook friends, you will help increase SIE’s visibility. It is a great way to communicate what Soroptimists do and the outstanding results we achieve through our programme and advocacy projects.

Go to our website www.soroptimisteurope.org and click on the Facebook button or go directly to www.facebook.com/soroptimistinternationalofeurope and find out about SI Vilnius I’s educational programme for children, the SIFAF Conference in Pretoria, SI Sweden’s Solvatten project, SI Madagascar’s ‘Seeds for all’ project and much more.

Gerda Huisman, SIE Communications Officer 2013-2015

Photo Competition for Soroptimists

WITH YOUR EYES ONLY

Soroptimist International of Europe has announced a photo competition for SIE members focusing on the theme ‘Working for a Healthy Environment’, in line with SIE President Ulla Madsen’s biennium campaign and SIE objectives. The two specific topics are Sustainable Environment and the Fight against Food Waste.

Contestants may submit up to two photos for each topic. The photos must be protected by copyright. If people are shown, the photographer must gain their permission for publishing. This responsibility lies with the sender.

Digital images between one and eight MBs in size should be submitted by email to programme@soroptimisteurope.org. Please send all photos as jpeg files.

The photographer should give her photos a title fitting one of the two topics. Please also indicate when and where the pictures were taken. The organisers request the full name of the photographer, an email address, mobile number and SI Club. The deadline for entries is 15th June 2014.

SIE President Elect Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis will chair the jury, consisting of members of the SIE Board, SIE HQ staff and two expert Soroptimist photographers Vanna Naretto (SI Aosta of Italy) and Erica Sollberger (SI Emmental of Switzerland).

The winners will be announced at the Governors’ Meeting in Copenhagen in July. For more detailed information, please consult the Soroptimist International of Europe website – www.soroptimisteurope.org/.



Right: Gerda Rosiers, President of SI Belgium, handed over a cheque to ICRH, an organisation working to encourage preventative health care for African women.

Far right: A special 75th anniversary award was presented to Patsy Sorensen for her project to combat human trafficking.



SI Belgium celebrates its 75th anniversary

HONOURING OUTSTANDING WOMEN AND SUPPORTING AID ORGANISATIONS

SI Belgium celebrated its 75th anniversary on March 8th, International Women's Day. To mark the occasion, the Union presented cheques of €7,500 each to ZIJN, ICHR and PRAXIS, three organisations campaigning to stop violence against women and girls. The Belgian Union also paid tribute to two exceptional women for their commitment.

The theme of the 75th anniversary was 'fighting all forms of violence against women and children'. The speakers gave us an excellent presentation of their projects, and the organisations Praxis, Zijn, Payoke, Médecins du Désert, Solfa and ICRH explained how they operate. Praxis provides guidance for perpetrators of violence, Zijn deals with mainly honour-related violence and Payoke works to combat human trafficking. Médecins du désert, Solfa and ICRH operate mostly in sub-Saharan Africa to provide medically-safe birth facilities and treat fistulas and also to promote preventative health care by working with local authorities.

The presence of Sabine de Béthune, President of the Belgian Senate, helped give the event a high pro-

file. Unfortunately, she presented a rather gloomy report on rape, especially gang rape in Belgium, although the situation was more positive with regard to domestic violence. However, there is still a lot of work to be done.

In the afternoon, we presented the projects of SIB clubs, and there was a special award for the best project to mark SI Belgium's 75th anniversary. A cheque for €15,000 was presented to Patsy Sorensen, who will be able to expand her work to combat human trafficking. Another prize – a cheque for €12,500 – was awarded to Marie-Claude Dupon to support her volunteer work with the French-speaking Sports for the Disabled League.

SIE President Ulla Madsen, the many guests from SIE and other Unions as well as the 250 members of SI Belgium who attended our celebrations, all appreciated the tangible enthusiasm of the event. For more information, go to www.soroptimist.be.

Gerda Rosiers, President, SI Belgium

Donations put to good use

AID FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY

The war in Syria has forced thousands of people to leave their homes and flee to the Nizip Container Camp, one of the 23 refugee camps in Turkey. Thanks to donations from SIE and SI Germany, SI Turkey was able to distribute food packages to Syrian refugees who have settled in this camp.

SI Turkey President Mine Kavala together with Union Treasurer Hüray Böke and 2nd Vice President Sevil Koca arranged for and distributed the food packages in person, which benefitted 5163 people.

The Nizip Camp was established in February 2013 and has many facilities including schools, playgrounds, a library, a health care centre, religion centres, etc. In addition to being a venue for social gatherings, the on-site community centre offers courses in among other things weaving, drawing, handicrafts, computer skills and languages. Regular seminars are also organised on health and educational issues.

On behalf of the Syrian refugees we would like to thank all the people who have contributed to this very worthwhile humanitarian cause.

Sevil Koca, 2nd Vice President, SI Turkey

SI Turkey President Mine Kavala delivers food packages to Syrian refugees at the Nizip Container Camp.



From Italy to Ethiopia

SOROPTIMISTS 'ON THE ROAD' AGAIN

Meeting other Soroptimists around the world is International Understanding in its true sense! A group of 16 Italian Soroptimists from eight clubs travelled to Africa last February to visit Ethiopia. Currently, there is only one Single Club in the capital Addis Ababa, but President Asefash Haileselassie informed us that a second club will soon be chartered in Awash, a small town near Addis Ababa.

Ethiopian Soroptimists remember well that SI Martina Franca in Italy helped them build toilets for girls in a school. With 'Love for Children Organisation' they are now actively involved in the fight against HIV. As the risk is much higher among women and girls, it is important to spread information, improve health education and change behaviour.

Talking about women, in the most important cemetery of Addis Ababa we discovered the tomb of Englishwoman Sylvia Pankhurst, who died there in 1960. Emperor Hailè Selassie had invited her to Ethiopia. She fell in love with the country and its people and decided to live there in her later years. Her mother Emmeline was a famous political activist, who founded the 'Women's Social and Political Union' in 1903 to promote women's suffrage and equality in the public life.

Wilma Malucelli, Past President, SI Italy



Italian and Ethiopian Soroptimists gather round SI Addis Ababa President Asefash Haileselassie (centre back row).

An inspirational ambassador in Italy

BEBE VIO PERSONIFIES SOROPTIMIST GOALS



A role model for all, Paralympian fencer Bebe Vio will act as an ambassador for SI Italy.

SI Italy recently announced that Bebe Vio, an inspirational young woman and athlete, will be their Ambassador leading up to the 2016 Paralympics in Rio. Five years ago, Bebe contracted fulminant bacterial meningitis and within some twenty-four hours had to have both legs and arms amputated under the elbows and knees. Just ten months after this surgery, she started to fence again.

Torchbearer of the Italian team at the 2012 Paralympics in London, Bebe has won the Italian as well as world championships in fencing. She is training conscientiously to fulfil her dream of winning a medal at the Paralympics in Rio. But beyond her fencing prowess, Bebe is an inspiration to all by virtue of her determination to overcome her disability.

From the next school year 2014-2015, Bebe and her success will be mentioned in the books of the fourth and fifth primary school classes to educate children about diversity, dignity and human rights through the example of this young woman. Her life exemplifies how to break the barriers of prejudice.

SI Italy has chosen Bebe Vio to be their ambassador as a testimonial to hope and perse-

verance in the face of adversity and to demonstrate how it is possible to overcome the challenges of disability to achieve success. She will carry the Soroptimist logo on her uniform and wheelchair, symbolising our respect for this inspirational young person as well as underscoring the similarities of our goals in striving for a better world for women and girls despite all adversity.

Daniela Beccarello, SI Venice Mestre

SI Iceland

CELEBRATING 40 SUCCESSFUL YEARS

The first Soroptimist Club in Iceland, SI Reykjavik, was chartered on the 19th September 1959. Fourteen years thereafter the second club, SI Hafnarfjörður and Gardabaer, was founded in 1973. And just a year later on 8th June 1974, Iceland established a Union.

On the occasion of its Annual Meeting on 10th May 2014, the Icelandic Union will celebrate the 40th anniversary of its founding. To mark the date



Past President Ingunn A. Sigurdardóttir, President Mjöll Flosadóttir and President Elect Thora Guðnadóttir look forward to celebrating the 40th anniversary of SI Iceland.

an excursion around the Reykjanes peninsula will be organised for foreign visitors, with a stop at one of the Soroptimist projects, Krysvík, and another stop at the Blue Lagoon.

For further information please see the SI Iceland website – www.soroptimist.is – or contact Kristin Einarsdóttir at holsberg@simnet.is.

SI Greece

SUPPORT FOR WOMEN PRISONERS



The delegation of Greek Soroptimists organised supplies for the women prisoners on 10th December 2013.

On UN Human Rights Day, 10th December 2013, Greek Soroptimists visited various groups of women inmates at the Eleona Thebes prison, delivering 50 cartons with health and hygiene supplies, sweets, toys and clothes to women prisoners, their children as well as girls between the ages of 17 and 21. Women prisoners are allowed to live with their children from birth until the age of three. Prior to the visit, SI Greece had engaged in lengthy negotiations with prison officials and social workers.

Everyone agreed it was an unforgettable experience. Subsequently, the prison staff, social workers and prisoners expressed their gratitude for the support in an emotional thank-you letter.

Maria Pyrgaki, President, SI Greece 2012-2014



MARIET VERHOEF-COHEN ELECTED PRESIDENT

The General Assembly of the Women for Water Partnership (WfWP) elected SIE Past President (2007-2009) Mariet Verhoef-Cohen President as from 1st April 2014. She succeeds Founding President Alice Bouman-Dentener.

During her biennium as SIE President under the motto 'Soroptimists go for Water', Mariet encouraged Soroptimists to work towards universal access to water and sanitation as a prerequisite for women's empowerment and their social and economic development. She also has an impressive track record in addressing a wide range of women's issues and in realising water projects in Eastern Europe and Africa.

Mariet will continue with the WfWP motto, 'Women and their Organisations as Agents of Change'. 'I feel very honoured to have been chosen as the new WfWP President and will do my utmost to build on Alice's work in order to expand WfWP's efforts', Mariet said. She will be officially inaugurated as the new President at the WfWP General Assembly & Gender, Water and Development Conference to be held in East London, South Africa in July 2014.

SI Germany Past President Hanne von Schaumann-Werder will replace Mariet as the SIE representative to WfWP. She too has a vast amount of experience in initiating water projects.



Mariet Verhoef-Cohen (l.) and Hanne von Schaumann-Werder

International Singing Competition in Düsseldorf

SOROPTIMISTS SPONSOR AUDIENCE AWARD



Düsseldorf Soroptimist Hanne Schaumann-Werder (2nd from left) joined organisers and other sponsors of the International Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition at the press conference in January 2014. Photo: Susanne Diesner

The SI Clubs of Düsseldorf are sponsoring the Audience Award to be presented at this year's 33rd International Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition, whose final rounds will be held at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in their city from 29th June to 6th July. The prestigious competition for young opera singers of all nationalities has qualifying rounds in 56 cities. Of the some 1000 contestants, about 150 will make it to the final rounds in Düsseldorf.

The jury of the final rounds consists of opera and casting directors of internationally renowned opera houses, who award additional engagements to the participants. Numerous agents and representatives of international opera and concert houses visit the final round as observers, which is why the International Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition, founded in 1982 in Vienna, is considered a springboard to a career in opera.

Five years ago, Soroptimists in Austria initiated the sponsorship of the Audience Award. Last year the competition took place for the first time outside Vienna, in Amsterdam. Here Dutch Soroptimists sponsored the Audience Award, which is €2,000. The main monetary prizes amount to nearly €15,000. In addition, there are various Special Awards donated by Opera and Media Jurors and by

Partners of the competition. Dr Hanne von Schumann-Werder, Governor of SI Germany and member of SI Düsseldorf, says, 'This International Singing Competition is particularly impressive because it brings together contestants from various countries, religions, cultures and backgrounds through a single instrument: the voice.'

SI Lipari

EXPERIENCE THE AEOLIAN ISLANDS

SI Lipari of Italy is delighted to invite Soroptimists to another Week in the Aeolian Islands tour from 19th-26th July 2014. This excursion, which is organised every year, offers an opportunity to strengthen and discover new Soroptimist Friendships in the beautiful settings of the Aeolian Islands. Experience the spectacular nature, volcanology, archaeology, art and history of the islands, while also indulging in the delicious local gastronomy.

Please go to the SIE website to download the programme, the list of hotels, the registration form, as well as the Club's contact details: www.soroptimisteurope.org/activities/agenda/week-in-the-aeolian-islands.

The programme of the Aeolian Islands tour will offer ample opportunity to enjoy the breathtaking vistas.



SI France

€55,000 TOWARDS THE FIGHT AGAINST VAW

SI France's 2012-2014 programme is based on the four UN International Days, and especially 25th November, which is devoted to the campaign to eliminate violence against women. To mark this day, the French Union managed to mobilise 82 clubs to organise the simultaneous screening of the film *Wadjda* throughout the country.

There were 64 screenings in all, followed by debates with those involved in the fight to stop violence against women, and 7,800 spectators appreciated the film. Haifaa Al Mansour from Saudi Arabia directed *Wadjda*, which has met with critical acclaim and won awards at the Venice and Dubai festivals.

All the money raised from the evening – €55,000 in total – was donated to the campaign against violence. But this national campaign was also a local event. The profits were given to local organisations providing support for women victims, and it helped publicise Soroptimist and our activities.

Christine Dagain, President, SI France

SI Weinheim/Bergstraße

MORE THAN JUST A TOURIST TRIP

Sixteen people, mostly Soroptimists, took part in the trip to Benin and Togo, organised by SI Bregenz member Isolde Weiss. We were joined by Christine, Princess of Abomey, and welcomed by Soroptimists from SI Cotonou, making our visit

far more than merely a tourist trip. The Soroptimists there are working on a project to improve sanitary conditions in a school in Abomey-Calavi, and they also provide educational support and donate material and food. As the head teacher pointed out in her presentation, 'As soon as we discover we need something, the Soroptimists are there to help...' Afterwards, the Club President graciously invited us to her home and offered us refreshments and a delicious traditional meal.

On our third day, our African sisters took us to the Vidjingni Centre for disabled children and orphaned girls. The Centre, which accommodates 45 children and is run by nuns from the Augustine Order, is funded by donations. Sister Sabine, the Director, thanked the Soroptimists warmly for their support and donations. We were extremely impressed by the nuns' work and the help given by the Soroptimists in Benin.

The trip was very interesting and varied. The most rewarding aspect was the insight it gave us

European Soroptimists posed with their hostesses from Africa during an unforgettable trip.



into local people's everyday lives, with no electricity, no television and no newspapers – all the things we consider essential in our own modern lives. The importance of access to education for everyone – including girls – in order to improve living conditions became enormously clear at every location of our trip. Learning French – which is only taught at school – is also crucial for professional training.

Tineke Gröbe-de Vlaming and Roselyne Versini-Waas, SI Weinheim/Bergstraße (Germany)

Please submit your contributions to the next issue of *The Link* by 15th June 2014!

NEW SIE CLUBS TO BE CHARTERED

10th May 2014

Heiligenhaus-Velbert (Germany)
Charter to be presented by
Gabriela Kosicka, Governor
SI Poland
Club President
Alexandra Ruthmann
Kettwigerstrasse 72
42579 Heiligenhaus
Phone: +49 202 56 92 12 28
E-mail: rutiebaby@web.de

24th May 2014

Frankfurt Vision (Germany)
Charter to be presented by
Eleni Koutselini, Governor
SI Greece
Club President
Marianne Schmettow
Herrenapfelstrasse 4
60435 Frankfurt am Main
Phone: +49 69 366 05 687
E-mail: marianne@schmettow.de

31st May 2014

Cieszyn (Poland)
Charter to be presented by
Siren Hammer Østvold
Governor, SI Norway
Club President
Halina Malaszkiwicz
ul.Z.Kossak 8/7
43-400 Cieszyn
Phone: +48 605 230 452
E-mail: roal@op.pl

19th July 2014

Fürth (Germany)
Charter to be presented by
Tonny Fieldt Kok-Weimar,
SIE 1st Vice President
Club President
Elisabeth Reichert
Daimlerstrasse 48
90766 Fürth
Phone: +49 911 974 10 41
E-mail: elisabeth.reichert@
fuerth.de

FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR SIE

26th April 2014

25th Anniversary
SI Sint-Truiden (Belgium)

6th May 2014

25th Anniversary
SI Luxembourg-Melusina (Luxembourg)

24th May 2014

25th Anniversary
SI Karnten Unterland (Austria)

27th May 2014

25th Anniversary
SI Athens Lycabettus (Greece)

27th May 2014

25th Anniversary
SI Skagafjörður (Iceland)

10th June 2014

25th Anniversary
SI Vannes (France)

14th June 2014

25th Anniversary
SI Martigny (Switzerland)

24th June 2014

25th Anniversary
SI Cuxhafen (Germany)

12th-13th July 2014

Governors' Meeting
Copenhagen (Denmark)

10th-12th October 2014

10th European Meeting &
Friendship Days
Bruges (Belgium)

9th-12th July 2015

20th SI Convention
Istanbul (Turkey)

INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS DAYS AND EVENTS

5th June

World Environment Day

