

Soroptimist International of Europe ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



Photo: 21st Soroptimist International Convention
Kuala Lumpur 19-21 July 2019 | Malaysia

WE STAND  UP
FOR **WOMEN!**

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FOREWORD

from the SIE President

This Annual Report presents all the impressive Projects, Best Practice Awards, Scholarships, Funds and Mentoring, based on the data you submitted for 2018-2019. Documenting these data is key for Soroptimist International, as this information is the justification of our aspiration to be 'A Global Voice for Women'. These data, which we must report on a regular basis, qualifies SIE for participatory status at the Council of Europe and for consultative status at the UN ECOSOC.

Based on the conviction that Programme and Advocacy are top priorities, we continued to promote the work of the Programme team. The re-launch of the Project Matching website was not as successful as we had hoped, but I am confident that over time more and more clubs will recognize the opportunities that this service offers.

The introduction of the SIE Advocacy Coordinator was a logical step to bring advocacy closer to Unions and individual Soroptimists. First results show that we are heading in the right direction. We continued to develop and champion Mentoring by distributing the new handbook and offering many webinars.

In the second year of the biennium we deepened the contact with SIE Unions and shared our ideas in various trainings and workshops. Being very well aware of the special situation of Single Clubs in Eastern Europe, we organized more webinars and a training tailored to the needs of this group. The feedback from participants confirms that this is the right way forward.

To secure the future of our organization, we must take action in various areas. Innovation with far-reaching implications cannot be completed in a single biennium, but it must be started! We should elaborate the concept



of e-Membership to meet the changing lifestyles and needs of younger generations. And we are in discussion with Single Clubs to rethink their status in line with EU regulations. These discussions must and will continue to be addressed in the next biennium.

I am grateful that I could rely on the support of the so-called Restricted Board plus and the Enlarged Board as well as the appointees and representatives to the different organizations. Through their commitment, initiatives and hard work, this wonderful team made the progress and accomplishments of the entire 2017-2019 biennium possible! A special thanks goes to the staff at SIEHQ.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Renata Trottman Probst'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Renata Trottman Probst
SIE President 2017-2019

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

THE BOARD

MEMBERS



THE ENLARGED BOARD

HQ



ABOUT

Soroptimist International of Europe

Soroptimists educate, empower and enable women and girls to improve their lives. Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE) is a network of almost 33,000 professional women who work together at local, national and international levels to achieve this aim. SIE currently has 1,237 Clubs, operating across 58 countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. It is the largest of the four Federations making up Soroptimist International, which counts around 72,000 women as members.

Our ambition is to transform the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities. We want to see women and girls achieve their individual and collective potential, realise their aspirations, and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide. As Soroptimists, we strive for the advancement of women's status, high ethical standards, equality, development and peace, and the promotion of international goodwill and understanding.

One of the ways we achieve this is through advocacy. Soroptimist International of Europe holds general consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and participatory status at the Council of Europe and the European Women's Lobby. SIE also participates in the work of OSCE through its permanent representatives. This allows SIE to advocate at the international level and lobby for the ratification and implementation of treaties concerning women. We also demand that priority issues for women receive their rightful place on the sustainable development agenda.

Our members include women of all ages, representing a wide range of professions. As such, we are a platform to share our knowledge and experience. We want to ensure that all women and girls have the opportunity to become leaders in their communities, and we will continue to lobby for them at all levels of society.

32,919

professional
women

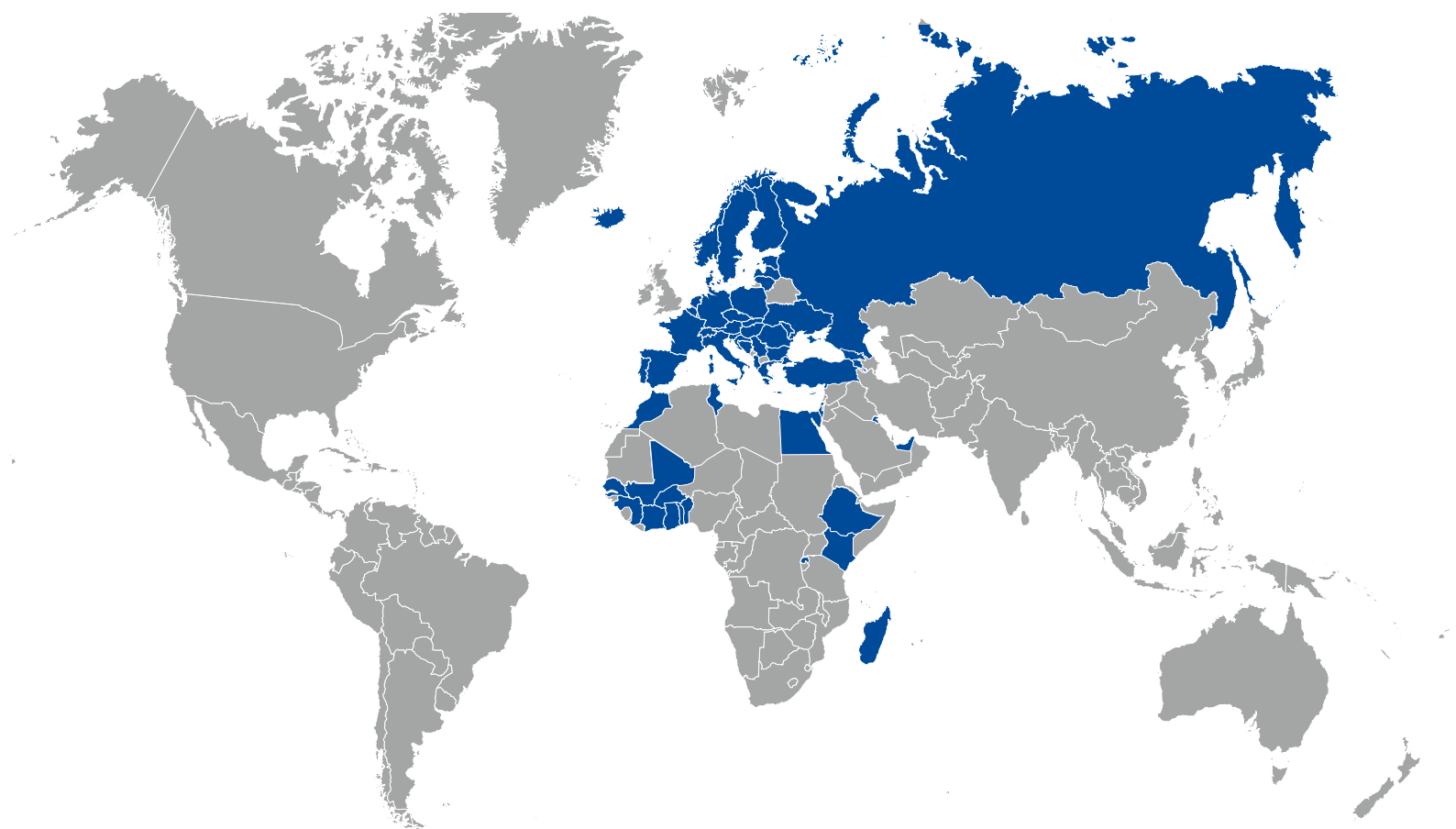
1,237

Clubs

58

countries

WHERE WE ARE



58
countries

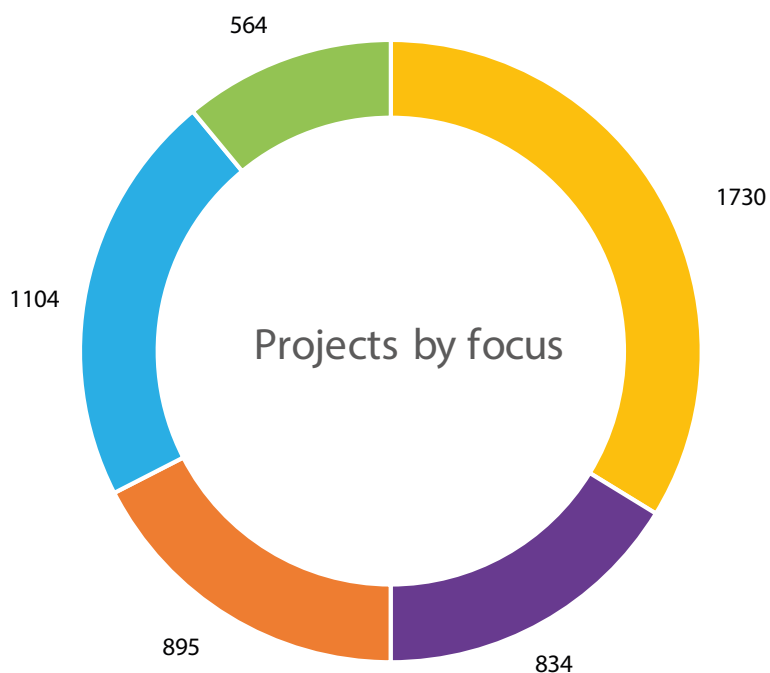
24
Unions

86
Single Clubs

Europe	53
Africa	30
The Caribbean & Middle East	3

OUR PROJECTS

Single Clubs and Unions implement projects that focus on five main areas.



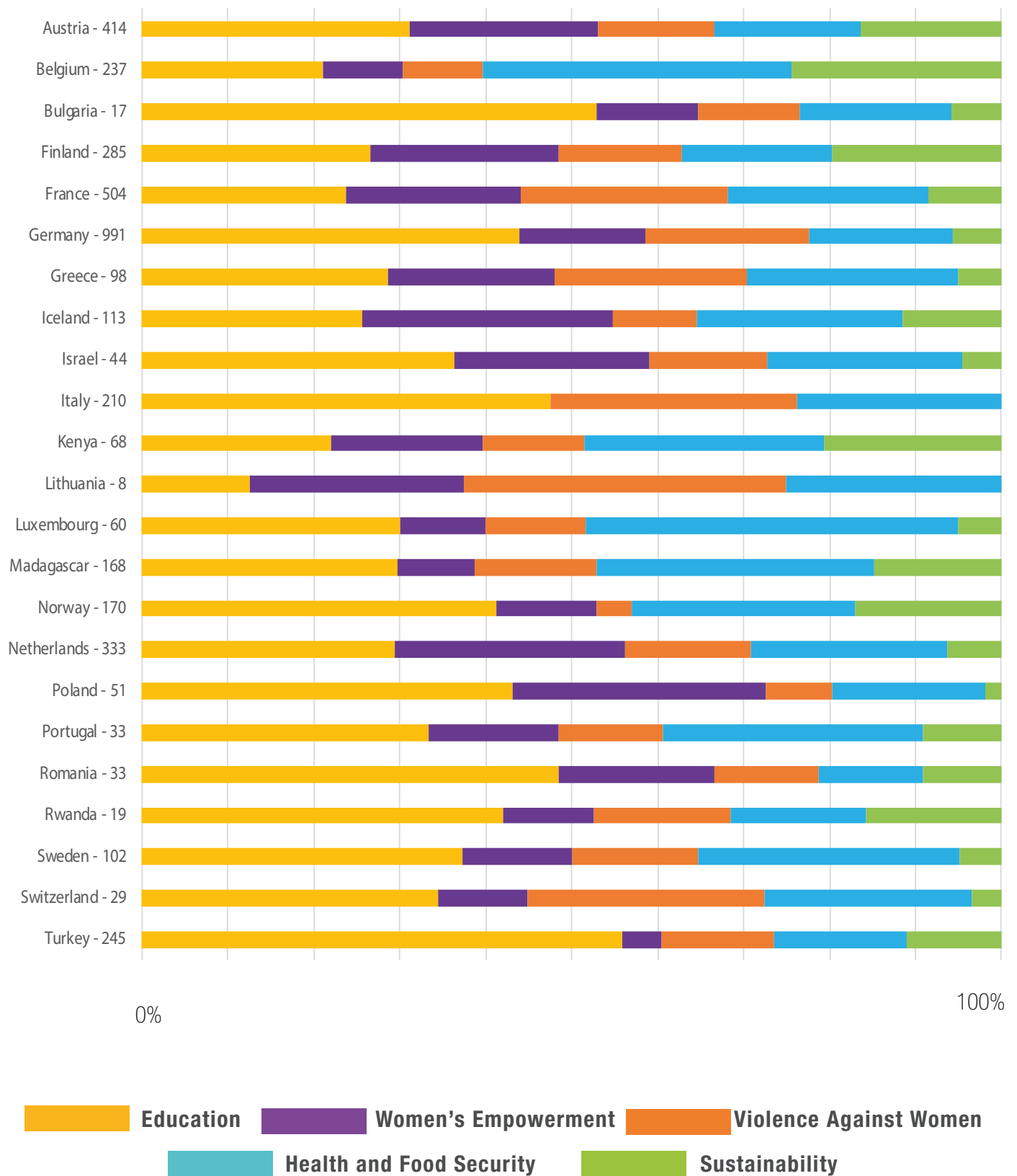
From October 2018 to
September 2019 SIE
members raised

7,565,492 €

and carried out

5,123 projects.

Projects per Union



BEST PRACTICE AWARDS

SIE Unions and Clubs have implemented thousands of projects that focus on our key areas: education, women's empowerment, violence against women, health and food security, and sustainability. Each year, SIE grants Best Practice Awards to top projects.



Special SIE Biennium Award 2017-2019

Union of Austria

Orange the World Campaign

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, also known as “Orange the World”, is strategy by individuals and organisations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

The Austrian Union launched a nation-wide campaign “Orange the World 2018” in cooperation with UN Women NKÖ and HeforShe Graz. The Austrian Soroptimist Clubs were called upon by the Union’s Executive Committee to illuminate (in orange) at least one building/monument/site in their city/region in order to send a visible signal. Videos of a well-known Austrian actress, who agreed — pro-bono! — to be the “face” of the campaign, were shown in public transportations in Vienna.

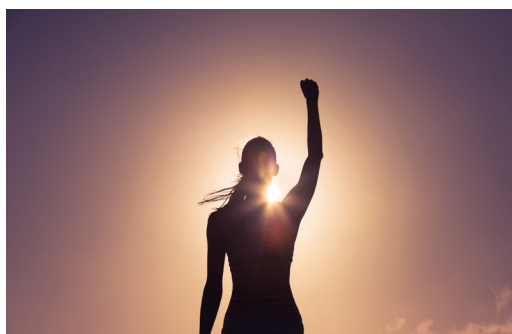
Funds raised by the Union

3,600 €

Funds raised by the partners

3,600 €

TOP PROJECTS



EDUCATION Be a STEM star !

Club of Szeged (Hungary)

Empowering girls and women to enter STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields, and stay the course, is imperative. Soroptimists from Szeged have been working on raising interest among women toward STEM areas by establishing direct links between selected high schools and enterprises. They organised workshops and meetings with role models from various fields. Soroptimists have fully understood the importance of role models to talk to and inspire young girls. This project has gained great success and was covered by local and regional media !

Funds raised:

9,200 €

Number of beneficiaries:

100

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Supporting young single and struggling mothers

Club of Kópavogur (Iceland)

The project involved supporting young single mothers in Kópavogur community for a better life by helping them build a strong self-image as well as encourage them to gain further education. The club helped provide school supplies, supported mentoring programmes, etc. After consulting the Welfare Department in choosing struggling mothers, Soroptimists engaged a mediator to hold diverse seminars, which helped them approach the objectives of goal setting, growing self-esteem, communication, financial and technology literacy. Soroptimists consider this initiative as a long-term project.

Funds raised:

7,500 €

Number of beneficiaries:

110

FUNDS

SIE has established funds to allocate resources to specific areas of work.

Federation Scholarship Fund

awards grants totaling in excess of 100,000 € per year to young women covering needs such as university fees, vocational training, and general support during studies. In memory of our founding President, the Dr Suzanne Noel Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance to female doctors to perfect their knowledge of, and experience in, plastic and reconstructive surgery.

Disaster Relief Fund

targets the specific needs of women and girls recovering from the effects of natural disasters and armed conflicts.

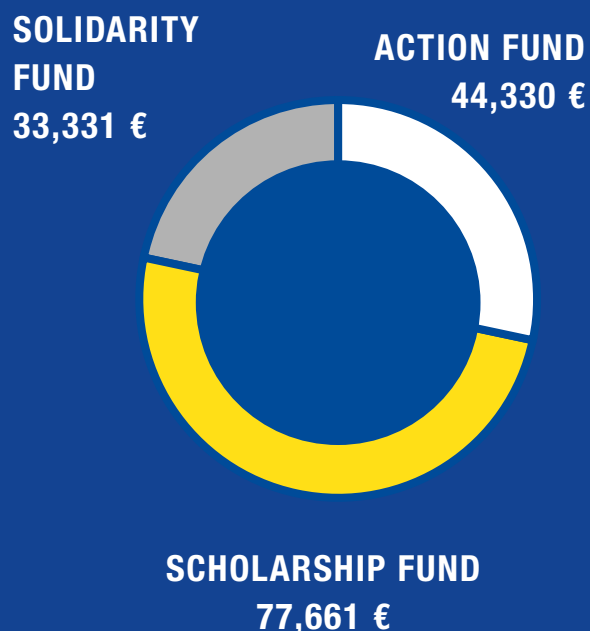
SIE Action Fund

supports humanitarian projects and promotes educational programmes.

Roswitha Ott Fund

provides health care and education to children with special needs and children in need as well as financial assistance.

FUNDS RAISED FROM MEMBERSHIP FEES



SCHOLARSHIP

Education empowers women and girls to realise their potential and thrive in their careers. That is why we find it imperative to support them through scholarships. Contrary to the scholarships given out through the Federation Scholarship Fund where grantees are sponsored by the SIE Federation, the funds for these are raised by Unions and Clubs themselves.

UNIONS

High school
& University



470,967 €

Further education
& Vocational Training



217,650 €

SINGLE CLUBS

High school
& University



55,866 €

Further education
& Vocational Training



13,108 €

1,269

SCHOLARSHIPS
GRANTED

757,591 €

SCHOLARSHIP
GRANTS AWARDED

MENTORING

In addition to the grants given out through the scholarship fund, Unions and Clubs organise various mentoring programmes that empower women to achieve their professional goals. Mentoring programmes pair up young women starting their careers with established professionals to gain insight and confidence and achieve success. In one-on-one sessions, mentors typically advise on how to deal with workplace scenarios and challenges. Most of the women taking part prove the value of these programmes as they obtain employment or even start their own business ventures shortly after. SIE's Mentoring Taskforce has even published a Mentoring Handbook: a go-to-guide to provide additional support to existing mentoring programmes within our Federation.



photo : Katarzyna Blasiewicz

1,132
mentorships offered*

766
Soroptimist mentors

464
Soroptimist mentees

1,125
Non-Soroptimist mentees**

131
Non-Soroptimist mentees who
became Soroptimists

*Data from the Annual Report 2017-2018 were used to best reflect the figures of the following Unions; Austria, Kenya, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Turkey and Single Clubs: Edinet, Uzhgorod.

** Data from the 2017-2018 Annual Report were used for the Unions of Kenya and Rwanda to best reflect their situation.



VIRTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Soroptimist International of Europe as a Federation is comprised of Unions, Clubs and Single Clubs. Women from all over Europe and parts of Africa can become a Soroptimist by joining a Club in the country they live in. Club life is organised by monthly meetings. Whenever there are 7 clubs and/or 150 members in a country a “Union” is formed. These Unions attend Federation-meetings, also participate and vote as such in the annual meetings.

This organisational structure needed some updating to ensure that motivated Soroptimists and potential Soroptimists can join the organisation and be engaged on all levels. So, as from the first year of this biennium 2017-2019 virtual development became key to tackle the limits of this organisational model.

e-Membership

The format of organising our Federation by monthly meetings on club level where activities are planned, projects or advocacy actions are set up, is not appealing enough for many young professional women. These women however are attracted by the Soroptimist vision “We stand up for Women” and would like to join us in our effort to improve the lives of girls and women, but the idea of attending dinners in clubs can be off-putting. Since 2017 we developed a new format of virtual meetings in so called e-clubs.

To guide Unions in setting up this concept, an

international taskforce was formed to roll out guidelines to set up one or more e-clubs on a Union level. It was key to share communication tools, define procedures of admission, compliance with existing clubs, projects practices, etc... now Unions can start to set up compliant eClubs in the next biennium.

Cross-border Unions

In about 30 countries, mainly in Eastern Europe, there are not enough clubs to form a Union, these Single Clubs find it challenging to reach the international dimension that Soroptimist stands for, and in addition, their members do not hold the same rights as those in Unions. To ensure equality of all members, complying with EU and Swiss law, we are encouraging these Clubs to join together in a new format of cross-border Unions. In addition to gaining voting rights, attending trainings, and being eligible to run of Federation offices would be possible. With the added challenge of cultural barriers, webinars and face-to-face trainings were set up to convince the Clubs of the benefits of working together on projects, communication and advocacy to be more visible as an Union and attract more members. The decision of working together is clearly on voluntary basis, so it might take longer to set up some cross-border Unions.

All these changes are aimed at modernising our Federation and securing its future.

ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

EU Voting Campaign 2019



The SIE Advocacy team initiated a campaign throughout the Federation to encourage women to register and vote. This action was especially relevant in view of the expected European Union elections which took place from 23rd- 26th May 2019. The SIE Advocacy team engaged the help of Union Advocacy Coordinators to raise awareness of the important responsibility of voting and also to motivate women to exercise their voting rights and also vote for women candidates. The Federation wide campaign used a clever poster designed by a young designer, Julia Karwan Jastrzebska from Poland. The message “Now is the time for your first time” was quite catchy and drew a lot of attention to the campaign. Union Advocacy Coordinators and Soroptimists across the Federation distributed the campaign poster to encourage women to vote, at the same time putting the Soroptimist logo on display thereby spreading the visibility of our organisation far and wide.

16 Days of Activism against Gender based Violence

November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. It marks the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign,

which concludes on December 10th, Human Rights Day. This year the Union Advocacy Coordinators synchronised their actions by using the same campaign graphics poster, writing letters to their Country Foreign Missions and Ambassadors, and also local authorities requesting them to participate in the theme by lighting buildings in orange. These actions were very well received by some Embassies and local authorities. The same campaign poster was shared widely on Facebook.



SI Club Naharia, Israel

Soroptimists participated in the campaign through activities aimed at raising awareness of, or contributing to the elimination of violence against women. Actions such as illuminating buildings and landmarks in orange, organising talks on gender violence targeting male audience and participation, topical plays and distribution of 16 days campaign information to the public were some of the activities carried out.



SI Belgium, Zottegem

CONTACT



SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF EUROPE

We are a worldwide network of professionally and socially diverse women.
We are a platform to serve communities, share knowledge and experience.
We educate and empower women and girls to lead.
We fight violence against women and girls.
We give women a voice by lobbying at all levels of society.

If you want to make a difference in your community, further women's issues on a wider scale, extend your professional network and make new friends outside your normal circles, we invite you to find out more about us!

soroptimisteurope.org
[@SoroptimistInternationalofEurope](https://twitter.com/SoroptimistInternationalofEurope)



Headquarters: route de Florissant 72, 1206 Geneva, Switzerland
Tél. +41 22 346 08 80 • siehq@soroptimisteurope.org