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PROGRAMME NEWS



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PROGRAMME TEAM!

Dear Soroptimist friends,

As we greet you for the first time as the new Programme Director and Assistant Programme Director, we would like to congratulate and thank our predecessors, Ulrike Neubert and Ann-Christine Soederlund, for their guidance throughout the transformation of SIE Programme strategies.

Programme development is the existential goal of our organisation. By putting collective potential into practice, project missions are the fundamental means of our public visibility. Our grassroots structure gives us the capacity for global impact. The magnitude of our membership is more than capable to make a difference in all social levels across Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE) member countries simultaneously. To these ends, observing regional differences, focusing on organisational synchronisation, increasing the visibility of our works, aligning with strategic partners, and using media effectively will be areas of concentration for us.

Dynamism is the first requirement for strategic leadership. We need to be swift in responding to global challenges such as those highlighted in this month's theme of fighting Violence Against Women and in our current President Ulla's biennium theme of working for a healthy environment. Furthermore, to align to the European Strategy and Business Plan and President Ulla's request, in the *Programme News* newsletter we will follow the 'Bottom -Up' approach and focus on the wonderful and concrete work done by our 35'000 members.
We hope to be ever in touch with you as we generate more projects.

Christine Peer, Programme Director
Emine Erdem, Assistant Programme Director

This month we talk about: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

November 25th and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women — the occasion to raise awareness of the fact that women around the world are subject to countless forms of violence in the home, at work, in public places, in peace or in times of conflict. Physical and sexual violence have been addressed punctually in recent decades, but research and activism continue to shed light on the broader scope of violence which intersects with economic dependence, lack of access to education and to adequate health care.

In this sense, November 25th is a day of remembrance which also serves to make visible an issue that is critical for the advancement of women's rights. This is the reason why November 25th also marks the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism, which end on December 10th, International Human Rights Day. These days of activism were conceived a decade ago on the advent of the Vienna Conference of Human Rights to highlight the fact that violence against women wasn't simply a private issue but a critical and gross violation of human rights. During these 16 days, civil society works tirelessly to highlight the fact that violence against women denies women's inalienable rights to life, dignity, and security of person.

This year's theme for the 16 days of activism "From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women!" is meant to highlight the multi-faceted intersections of gender-based violence and militarism, covering issues such as violence perpetrated by state actors, the role of small arms in domestic violence, and sexual violence during and after conflict. The director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, has stressed that the effects of conflict and natural disasters often lead to a breakdown in social structures, which can leave women exposed to sexual violence. We have seen this in recent conflicts, such as the Syrian civil war, as well as in disaster situations such as the typhoon which hit the Philippines this past November 7th. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that of the total number of people affected by Typhoon Haiyan, 47,600 are women aged between 15 and 49 who are at risk of sexual violence.

November 25th and these 16 Days of Activism let us advocate for responses which include practical actions that see to women's needs as well as long-term aid focusing on empowering women economically, seeing that girls' education continues, and ensuring access to emergency contraception and responsive health care and long-term counseling. For Soroptimist International of Europe, November 25th is not just a day of yearly observance, but a reminder of the course of action they committed themselves to and for which they have been acting concretely and advocating incessantly since 1921. Click here to see Soroptimist International of Europe's Statement on the occasion of November 25th.

Sources:
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/16Days2013/Pages/16DaysIndex.aspx
http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/nov/13/phumzile-mlambo-ngcuka-violence-women-un

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35,000 SOROPTIMISTS FIGHTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS!

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

Female Genital Mutilation

Soroptimists in Ellwangen-Jagst in Germany partnered with **Terre des Femmes** to support the **Bangr Nooma**, an association based in **Burkina Faso** dedicated to the prevention of female genital mutilation (FGM). Funds raised by Soroptimists contributed to the hiring and training of a social worker whose role it is to educate thousands of people in the rural area of Toukin on the dangers and negative health implications of FGM.

Soroptimists of the **German Bitburg-Prüm Club** partnered with **Target** to raise funds towards a childbirth clinic for genitally mutilated women and girls of the Afar Tribe in **Ethiopia**. The Afar, who number 1.6 million and lead a semi-nomadic life in Ethiopia's Danakil desert, took up Target's idea of declaring FGM a sin and banning it in their tribal law in 2003.

Children Victims of Violence

The **Italian Union** has over the last two years undertaken a truly exceptional project to protect children victims and witnesses of crimes when testifying in court. Implemented in partnership with the **Italian Minister of Justice,** the project has seen the creation of almost 50 protected hearing rooms in courts across Italy which allow children to testify without having to face the accused. This initiative has also been the subject of a book, *When Justice Meets the Child*, edited by Flavia Pozzolini, **Union President of Soroptimist International of Italy**. It represents a collection of papers on the subject of the protected court rooms by experts in the fields of psychology and national and international law.







For more details, please see: http://www.soroptimist.it/public_nuovo/783-28-09-2013-UK_FR_web.pdf

Laws on Violence Against Women

The **Soroptimist Club of Cotonou Doyen in Benin** partnered with the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** to promote the 2012 Law on Violence Against Women adopted by the Government of Benin. As awareness of the law remains low, Soroptimists organised a training for 60 members of **six clubs** on the Law itself as well as on communication and dissemination strategies, with the aim of championing the law, training the local population on it, and ensuring local women take ownership of it.



Psychological Violence

Israeli Soroptimists of the Club of Negev organised a series of activities – cooking and eating together, giving lessons on makeup and dressing up, going to the movies and theatre together – for women with special needs living in independent housing who have been abandoned by their biological families or whose families are no longer living. Soroptimists wanted to alleviate their isolation and feelings of rejection. Their aim was to help them integrated while at the same time sensitizing society to accepting them.

Human Trafficking

Soroptimists in Craiova, Romania, partnered with the **National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANTIP)** as well as **School Inspectorates** from several counties to raise awareness of the issue of human trafficking. Targeting local youth, the campaign involved theatre shows, a poster competition, video materials, as well as conferences, movie screenings, and discussions in schools. The campaign's goal was to involve young people with the issue of human trafficking in a hands-on way thereby sensitizing them to the dangers of human trafficking and ensuring greater caution on their side.
Similarly, **Soroptimist from Slatina, Romania**, partnered with **Soroptimist International of Denmark** to raise awareness of human trafficking principally among rural children.

Domestic Violence

French Soroptimists of Angoulême organised a lecture by the director of a local association that supports women victims of domestic violence in the region of Charente. Entitled "Osez en parler. Mettre des mots sur des maux." ("Dare to speak out. Giving words to wounds."), the lecture sought to heighten public awareness of and denounce violence against women, regardless of the social or cultural environment it occurs in.

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GENERAL PROGRAMME NEWS

PFR

We have heard you!

During the past year, many members have shared their disappointment with the Programme Focus Reports (PFR), expressing their frustrations from many angles. This translated into a clear decline of PFR submissions by SIE but also by all other Federations. The system is currently being revisited and Federations will have the opportunity to address members' concerns. As several of you have already experienced, SIE is taking this matter very seriously and assessing individual problems with the Unions and Single Clubs.

In parallel, the Board has engaged into promoting your projects and celebrating members' work better. The new SIE interactive world map will be ready shortly. Wait to hear more about it soon!

BEST PRACTICE AWARDS 2014

Soroptimist Best Practice Awards recognise outstanding Club/Union Projects that seek to improve the lives of women and girls around the world. In order to better promote your work, we encourage you to participate!

The winners will be awarded at the Governors' Meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, in July 2014. In addition, they will receive recognition in a special Best Practice brochure, on the SIE website, and in *The Link*, all of which will help make their work known to Soroptimists and others around the world!

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

To see Best Practice Awards brochure from previous years, visit:
http://www.soroptimisteurope.org/programs/best-practices

PROJECT MATCHING

SOROPTIMIST PROJECT MATCHING

The Project Matching initiative has met with popularity among Soroptimists since its very launch which is why we would like to take this opportunity to encourage even more clubs to engage in this mutually beneficial mechanism! Have you already supported a project or are engaged in a partnership with another Soroptimist club or a local organisation? Do you have a project that needs additional support? Is your club looking for a project to contribute to abroad? Please share some information about your activities, existing or new, on the Project Matching website.

Here are two examples of recent projects from Project Matching:

Truck farming and fruit trees plantation for women in Tia - Club Bamako Espoir in Mali (ML 0005)

The purpose of this project was to develop truck farming and a plantation of fruit trees to be managed by the Women's group of the Tia village in order to:

- Improve the living conditions of women and families;
- Develop truck farming and a plantation in Tia village to create income through the sale of fruits;
- Enable villagers to buy food during winter, send their children to school or have better access to healthcare by increasing income.

The total cost needed for this project was **EUR 7'312** and thanks to the generous donations of **SIA Midwestern region, SIA Sedro-Wooley,** and **SIE Kalmar in Sweden**, enough funds have been raised to develop the project enabling SI Bamako Espoir to start building three wells in a garden a hectar and a half in size in the village of Tia. We look forward to hearing more about the progress of the project from the Club of Bamako Espoir!
Please see more information:
http://soroptimistprojects.org/projects/ml0005-truck-farming-and-fruit-trees-plantation-for-women-in-tia

Capacity building for women to start their own small agribusinesses - Club of Kibungo, Rwanda (RW0002)

This project seeks to help vulnerable women currently working in the informal job market gain the education and skills necessary to create and maintain small agribusinesses while working in a cooperative.
The main goals of this project are to:

- Train women in the basics of accounting, credit management and monitoring, project evaluation, marketing, and the practice of new agricultural techniques (such as organic farming);
- Train women in basic health knowledge such as nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, and family planning;
- Create a fund to provide small business loans to female members;
- Create a vocational school to help women acquire work in the formal job market.

The budget needed for this project is **EUR 5'300** and the Club is still seeking funding. For more information, see http://soroptimistprojects.org/projects/rw0002

For more information about Project Matching, please go to: www.soroptimistprojects.org

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PRESIDENT ULLA'S THEME

President Ulla, in a recent interview in *The Link,* makes the distinction between Soroptimist's global mission and her biennium Campaign 'Working for a healthy environment'. She reaffirms her eagerness to implement the strategic plan and the Soroptimist engagement to improve the lives of women and children through Education, Leadership and Empowerment. During her biennium, she also encourages Clubs and members to fulfil what she considers to be the **individual and collective responsibility of any organisation: to ensure sustainable development and to protect the planet**. Amongst other challenges, Ulla emphasises the scarcity of resources and dreadful waste. Projects can focus on protecting and preserving the planet, by avoiding waste, recycling, saving energy, reducing pollution, promoting public transport, protecting and creating parks, increasing the use of solar energy etc.

"Waste Not, Want Not" on World Food Day

As women still bear the disproportionate responsibility for household activities such as shopping and cooking, it comes naturally to Soroptimists, as a group of women working towards a healthy environment, to raise awareness of and to find solutions to the problem of the 1.3 billion tons of food wasted every year. World Food Day was celebrated on October 16th in honour of the establishment of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in 1945. The theme for 2013 was "Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition." The EU resolution against food waste reports that 60% of the waste from European households could be avoided. FAO's focus on the economic empowerment of rural women is closely linked to Soroptimist objectives concerning food security and climate change.

Learn more about Food Waste!

We highly encourage our members to check the following content to gain further awareness of the subject and get inspiration for community or joint projects.

FAO of UN's official page for World Food Day:
http://www.fao.org/getinvolved/worldfoodday/home/en/

10 Steps to stop food waste - European Commission:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/sustainability/docs/tips_stop_food_waste_en.pdf

European Commission Health and Consumers' website:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/sustainability/index_en.htm

Young Professionals' Forum For International Development's "Waste Not, Want Not" campaign:
http://youfidrome.wordpress.com/2013/10/17/waste-not-want-not

HELP HELP RECOVERY!

Floods in Olbia, Sardinia - Italy

Just a few weeks ago, on September 7th, 2013, Club Gallura, in Olbia, was inaugurated with the presence of Soroptimist International of Europe **Past President Kathy Kaaf**, **President Elect Maria-Elisabeta de Franciscis**, and the **President of the Italian Union, Flavia Pozzolini**. Club Gallura is the fifth Soroptimist club on the Italian island of Sardinia.

Soroptimists were therefore even more shocked and saddened to learn about Storm Cleopatra which hit Sardinia on November 18th. Cleopatra has caused terrible casualties (at least 18 people, including four children, have lost their lives)[1] and significant material damage, washing away cars, flooding homes, and destroying roads. The area impacted the hardest is the port of Olbia and its surroundings, in the northeast of the island. All Soroptimists have reported to be safe.

A state of emergency has been declared and 20 million EUR set aside for emergency relief, with priorities given to reaching remote areas, saving the lives of those still unaccounted for, and providing for those left homeless.[2]

In this chaotic context SIE addresses its empathy and solidarity to the people of Olbia. We will be keeping all Soroptimists informed of any support needed by the Italian Union to support Club Gallura.

1 http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/deadly-cyclone-cleopatra-and-floods-hit-sardinia/
2 http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/apocalyptic-storm-floods-parts-of-sardinia-killing-at-least-17-1.1549700

Typhoon Haiyan - Philippines



After the horrific devastation of Typhoon Haiyan which hit the Philippines on November 7th, Soroptimist International of Europe activated its Disaster and Recovery Fund, a joint SIE and SIA Fund which help collect donations and support major disasters through local Clubs, to help the people of the Philippines. In the past, such funds successfully helped disaster recovery in Haiti and Japan. According to the SIA Board and Governors, who are closely supporting their members, there is particular need to ensure the physical safety of women and children following the typhoon. The quick implementation of funds for projects to help provide goods and services necessary for women and girls to rebuild their lives is paramount to the safety and well-being of these vulnerable citizens.

Soroptimist International of Europe extends its full support and heartfelt concern to Soroptimists in the region and all the people of the Philippines. Please send your generous donations to:

SWIFT: **UBSWCHZH80A**
IBAN: **CH30 0029 0290 IN10 5239 0**

WOMEN'S ISSUES: WHAT'S ON

October 18th: European Anti-Trafficking Day

This past October 18th was the European Anti-Trafficking Day which was the occasion to raise awareness about the fact that millions of women, men, and children are deprived of their freedom and that their very lives are commodified as they are sold to either the sex industry or into slave labor.

European institutions, such as the the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Co-operation and Security in Europe (OSCE), in collaboration with the United Nations, have been working towards a concerted global response to fight the scourge of trafficking in persons. These organisations have recognised that in order to eradicate such a complex issue, strong partnerships have to be the backbone of coordinated efforts existing within a human rights framework. The necessity to move from a national security model to a human rights-based approach in order to better protect, assist, provide remedies for, and re-integrate victims has been stated.

As part of this coordinated response, policies that are gender-sensitive and take note that women are overwhelmingly victims of sexual trafficking must be included, as well as measures which address the factors which make women vulnerable to trafficking such as discrimination, lack of access to the labour market, lower wages and large-scale unemployment.

Sources:
OHCHR. News Release. "Victims of trafficking: Human beings with human rights that must be protected". October 18th, 2013
www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/Docs/Publications/default_en.asp

18th Meeting of GRETA in Strasbourg

Trafficking in women, men and children across the world commodifies people thereby violating their most basic human rights. The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings entered into force on 1 February 2008. Parties to the Convention are monitored by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

GRETA held its 18th meeting from 4-8 November 2013 at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, adopting final evaluation reports on Luxembourg, Serbia, and Slovenia. On October 18th, in a common statement with the UN Special Rapporteur and OSCE Special Representative to this violation that victimises women the most, the President of GRETA Nicolas Le Coz said: "Given the worrying proportions human trafficking has taken, there is a need to move from a national security model to a human rights-based approach in order to better identify and assist victims of trafficking who are often undocumented migrants."

GRETA's country reports can be found at:
http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/Docs/Publications/default_en.asp

European Women's Lobby: "Act against Rape! Use the Istanbul Convention!"

Rape is one of the cruelest forms of gender-based violence. Demanding justice for victims, a series of public events will take place in 33 countries all over Europe during the 16 Days of Activism against violence against women between November 25th and December 10th. The Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women is a concrete tool for change, asking for a redefinition of rape based on the lack of consent and not just the subjection to physical force. As of now, the Convention's ratification is limited. The Council of Europe and the European Women's Lobby have joined forces to promote it with the aim of eradicating gender inequality on this front. At the EU level an event will be held for the closure of the project on December 10th in Strasbourg.



EWL Barometer on Rape in Europe in 2013:
http://www.womenlobby.org/Publications/Reports/article/2013-ewl-barometer-on-rape-report?lang=en

CEDAW Recommendation No. 30: A Decisive Milestone for Women in Conflict

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has served as an international bill of rights for women since its adoption in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. The new recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations was adopted on 18 October 2013 in consultation with its five field offices to ensure the consideration of regional sensibilities. Giving specific guidance in respect of crimes against women by non-state actors, the Committee for the first time explicitly calls upon states to ensure access to safe abortion services and to remove punitive provisions, making this recommendation a landmark for women in conflict zones.
The general recommendation is available here:

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/GComments/CEDAW.C.CG.30.pdf

IMPORTANT DATES

Nov 25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
Dec 1	World AIDS Day
Dec 2	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
Dec 3	International Day of Persons with Disabilities
Dec 10	Human Rights Day

Freja Forum 2013: Equal Opportunities, Democracy and Challenges of European Civil Society Organisations

The Freja Forum was held between 3-5 November 2013 in Brussels in the organisational framework of the TAIEX Instrument of the European Commission. The Freja Forum is a platform for networking and co-operation for CSOs in the Western Balkans and the EU. The Freja partnership took effect in 1997 with the long-term goal of establishing strong work for democracy in the region, the first project being the education of women in Croatia which later spread to other countries.

In November every year, the Freja Forum gathers to discuss developments in civil society. The vision is to establish a platform for capacity building of European civil society organisations with a commitment to equal opportunities. This year the Forum focused on the role of women's organisations in public-private partnerships working on economic empowerment. The European Women's Lobby also presented its experience of advocacy over the last 20 years, presenting tools for strengthening lobbying strategies and identifying concrete goals.

Visit the Freja Forum website for more news about the 2013 meeting: http://www.frejaforum.com/

2013 Global Gender Gap Report by WEF Reveals the G20 Nations' Failure to Address the Issue

In connection with the correlation between economic development and gender equality, the last report of the World Economic Forum (WEF) bears out a striking conclusion: that the economic magnitude of the leading industrial countries doesn't necessarily bring about a narrowing of the gender gap. None of the G20 giants could make it into the top 10 list of countries with the smallest gender gap. The first five places were taken by Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and the Philippines.

The report therefore suggests that economic growth cannot be understood as a guarantor of gender equality for all women in a country. The idea that women's equality can be achieved through their 'equal' contribution to their country's GDP should be discarded in favour of an approach that seeks to improve the myriad different ways in which women are integrated into society.

2013 Global Gender Gap Report:
http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2013.pdf

AND DID YOU KNOW…?

Paying It Forward: Soroptimist International of Europe Donation to "Birthing in the Pacific"

"There are still 1,000 women dying a day due to pregnancy and childbirth complications. That is like two giant jumbo jets full of women crashing down daily," says Julie Marsaban of SISWP. The Project of "Birthing in the Pacific" was initiated by SI South West Pacific and adopted by Soroptimist International in the context of the Immediate SI Past President Alice Wells' December 10th Appeals, who kept the critical issue in focus throughout 2011-2013.

Birthing in the Pacific is saving women's lives by providing training and equipment to midwives, clinicians, health workers, and birth attendants. SIE members have donated more than **150'000 EUR** to this existential project for thousands of mothers and their babies, receiving a note of appreciation directly from SISWP. We encourage all Soroptimists to promote the project and its concrete achievements.

For more content and latest news on "Birthing in the Pacific", please visit:
http://www.soroptimistinternational.org/our-projects/december-10-appeal/birthinginpacific

Judge Silvana Arbia, Winner of the SIE Peace Prize 2013, Donates Award to Rwanda

Judge Silvana Arbia who was this year's recipient of the SIE Peace Prize donated the full amount of her award, **EUR 20'000**, to Soroptimist projects in Rwanda. Arbia announced her wish to channel back the monetary award to Rwandan Soroptimist projects and particularly those focused on education. We would like to publicly declare our thanks to her here for this truly exceptional gift.



HAVE COMMENTS?

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

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