“Orange the Soroptimist world” with 16 Days of Activism

Dear Union and Single Club Presidents

Although some of us may already have started to post reminders of the so-called “oranging” season, the actual 16 Days of Activism campaign to raise awareness of gender-based violence begins on 25 November, the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Over the course of the subsequent 16 days leading up to 10 December, International Human Rights Day, the United Nations, NGOs and women the world over will be drawing attention to this extreme violation of human rights. And we Soroptimists intend to make ourselves heard as well!

With one in three women experiencing physical or sexual violence worldwide, this problem continues to be a global pandemic. As a leading women’s organisation, Soroptimist International and our European Federation, in particular, are planning several ways to publicise this important campaign in line with the UN Secretary General’s call to “Orange the world”, which uses the colour to symbolise a brighter future without violence. Activities will range from the “oranging” of our websites to a unique SIE calendar with remarkable facts and figures about this human scourge. During the 16 days, we urge you to check our SIE website regularly to keep informed of all the news and initiatives. www.soroptimisteurope.org

We invite our Unions and Clubs to join in this campaign to raise public awareness and to mobilise authorities and individuals to bring about change. You may choose to post orange messages on Facebook or dress up your Union and Club websites in orange. To reach a wider audience, we suggest you ask your local communities to orange streets, schools or landmarks. After all, the Peace Palace in The Netherlands, the European Commission building in Belgium and the Council of Europe building in France will all be lit in orange! Let your imagination inspire you! It is very important that we remind the world: violence against women and girls is a consequence of inequality and discrimination. Through improved awareness it can and must be stopped.

Please help us keep the world orange for 16 days! Be active and call for commitments by politicians to be matched with concrete action and adequate resources to end violence against women and girls worldwide! And remember: the 16 days culminate with the celebration of what we refer to as Soroptimist Day on 10 December! So, let’s stand tall in orange and show the world how proud we are to be part of this organisation!

Yours,

Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis