

Zug, 27 September 2019



Dear Soroptimists,

As an intensive and exciting Soroptimist biennium draws to a close, it's a good time to reflect on the achievements over the past two years. The challenges and responsibilities of a Federation President and her Board are to keep the organisation alive and, ideally, to facilitate its growth! For this, it is essential to initiate change and to modernise, while at the same time preserving much-loved traditions and continuity in our areas of strength. I was very pleased to see how enthusiastically Soroptimists accepted the biennium motto 'We stand up for Women'. Even more gratifying is that it will remain the core strategy for the next six years. The clear message is that the women's issues will remain a key focus.

Based on the conviction that Programme and Advocacy are top priorities, we continued to support the work of the Programme team and re-launched the project matching website. At the same time, we brought the concept of Advocacy closer to the Unions and individual Soroptimists. The Unions followed our suggestion to appoint Advocacy Coordinators, and our Advocacy team organised a first training. Initial results indicate that we are on the right track.

We further developed the concept of Mentoring by producing a new handbook, which is available in the Member Area of the SIE website. Single Clubs in Eastern Europe were given special attention in their own webinars and a workshop.

The drafts of the new Constitutions and By-Laws were discussed at the last GM and distributed on time. Final deliberations and voting will take place at the next GM.

The Federation launched a new website for Soroptimists Entrepreneurs, giving owners and co-owners of businesses a forum to advertise themselves. Now, Soroptimists can find another Soroptimist when looking for a professional!

To aid efforts to raise our visibility and address younger women, we offered Unions and Single Clubs a Branding Kit with tools for social media communications that can still be downloaded from the Member Area. Talking about Communications, THE LINK is now distributed as a monthly news bulletin and is available on the SIE website. If you haven't already done so, please subscribe via the website!

More complex topics, such as introducing eMembership at Union level and granting the same rights to all Soroptimists by finding solutions for Single clubs, are still under discussion and might take more time. But we are convinced that it is the way forward!

Each year we held a workshop for incoming Union Presidents to strengthen the relationship between Unions and the Federation. These meetings also allowed us to inform Presidents first-hand about our services and expectations. The feedback shows how much this initiative and exchange of ideas are appreciated.

I am grateful that I could rely on a wonderful team comprising the Board, the Enlarged Board, appointees and representatives to different organisations, who through their commitment, initiatives and hard work made this progress possible. A special thanks goes to the staff at SIEHQ, who did their utmost to manage all of the duties, even in the absence of the Executive Director since March 2019.

Our organisation lives through its members, the nearly 34,000 Soroptimists in 61 countries. You fill Soroptimist International of Europe with life; you determine its direction; and you kindly gave me the mandate to be your President for two years. In return, I invested my energy, my passion and my knowledge to serve this organisation. Over these two years, I had the opportunity to meet, discuss, and laugh with many of you – all over Europe and Africa. These are the special moments I will cherish and keep in my heart. These are the special Soroptimist moments that remind us why we joined this organisation.

I wish incoming President Anna Wszelaczyńska and her new Board all the best for the next biennium. As Immediate Past President, I look forward to meeting with you again at one occasion or another, where we Soroptimists will continue to demonstrate how

**We stand up for Women!**

Yours,



Renata Trottmann Probst  
SIE President 2017 – 2019